

SACRIFICE, AHIMSA, AND VEGETARIANISM: POGROM AT
THE DEEP END OF NON-VIOLENCE

Volume II

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi

January 2006

Chapter 6.0 Middle class and scheduled caste

6.1 Ranjit and his *realiti*

In 1999 in Ahmedabad, I met Ranjitbhai for the first time. I was immediately attracted to his intelligence and curiosity. We got along well and spent much time together driving around the city in search of lunch experiences. These trips more than once resulted in a visit to one of his many sisters who live scattered in diverse neighborhoods throughout the city. Being a prior instructor of Bharat, who shares my flat, he also visits me at home often and even stays over night.

Usually we eat meat, and Ranjit likes best “soup items,” preferably goat in a rich thick, heavy sauce. Once he also invites me to his home village and his mother prepares chicken for us. He always balances “hot” food with “cold” food. Meat is a hot item. It heats the senses, the mind, and should not be taken in excess and preferably with some yoghurt (*dahi*) or curds (*chaas*). These cool items in turn should never be mixed with lemon, for example, which supposedly leads to severe skin diseases. Ranjit is very particular about these things as are many residents in the city. He has an entire mental list of do’s and don’ts that he has learned at home or reads in the occasional health manuals that he buys. The fact that I display precious little attention of these rules, and don’t develop skin rashes, convinced him that Germans, Muslims, or both, have different bodies than Indians. He never takes my example to be necessarily applicable to himself.

I can never help but sense a certain fascination on his part for my own promiscuity in eating and drinking. I always excuse my excess by the fact that I could afford it financially in India. As in other contexts, however, the lack of care to ritualize eating, that is, the lack of control, is on the one hand seen as childish and immature, but on the other also desired and enjoyed.

I was surprised to learn that on several occasions Ranjit called himself a vegetarian. I only realized this strange fact, because for a while I made it an annoying insistence to ask everyone about meat consumption in the city. Discussions of the matter were so frequent that almost all of my friends and acquaintances became involved in it at some point in time. Ranjit called himself a vegetarian in the presence of only certain people, members of middle classes and upper castes, or people like Bharat who seemed to put much emphasis on these matters. But what was surprising was not the fact that he concealed strategically what he sometimes ate. In a social milieu that understands meat consumption to be equal to illicit alcohol, illicit sex, or smoking, this behavior was to be expected.

Rather, what astonished me is that he voiced his assertion to be *shuddh shakahari* (vegetarian) in my presence without having informed me of his deceit, nor with any seeming discomfort towards me. In other words, he never felt compelled to explain himself to me afterwards. Shymalbhai is not in self-denial and has no problem to admit that he eats meat, and defending the practice vehemently at times. Instead his calibrated behavior is overly conscious of the milieu around him and the communicative power of meat in the academic circles that he naturally frequents. Ranjit does not actively try to conceal, but rather he tries to avoid a specific form of silent signification, which he knows all too well. He simply resists offering certain people a reason to feel confirmed about what he signifies. Since I was working on the topic, he naturally felt that his behavior did not need further explanation.

Financially secure, Ranjitbhai wears neatly ironed Western pants and shirt, as well as clean closed-toe shoes. He abhors the sight of sandals. In many ways he resembles the young Mohandas K. Gandhi: small head, intelligent eyes, wiry body, and he speaks a simple and competent English, which sometimes becomes overly polite, as if to compensate for the lack of deference he is able to express in English.

He fancies English sayings and proverbs that have made a deep impression on him. Ranjit is impressed by the expressive power of sayings, whether from local poets, English thinkers, or lyrics from Western rock stars, like Madonna. His occasional use of the wrong verb, or Gujarati syntax in an English sentence, never paralyzes or stops his flow of thought. Although his mother tongue, Gujarati, is far better than his English, he rarely mixes registers, or uses Gujarati words in English sentences. Either because he is a language teacher or because he must keep the two registers apart, I never hear him speak *Gujarezi*, the wild mix of both English and Gujarati common among his socio-economic class in Ahmedabad. *Gujarezi* facilitates abbreviated communication as it allows one to evade complicated translations by framing sentences spiked with words from the other language.

When Ranjit is excited, however, he loses his English speech, sometimes rendering him totally inarticulate. These states resemble attacks, where even words that he has pronounced many times before become abbreviated in forms hard to understand. He enters into a register between English and Gujarati, where English syntax, phonology, and vocabulary are shadowed by a Gujarati, which rises to the fore at times, breaking its way through the language he studiously cultivates. It is as if his focus has shifted to Gujarati, but his mouth still voices English words, or what's left of them. The result is a debris of English, neither intelligible in one register, nor in the other.

It is often in moments when Ranjit wants to be most meaningful that, tragically, all meaning escapes him. I learn to stop him in mid sentence and ask him to continue in Gujarati. But often he unconsciously reverts back to English, as if he had to say it in English to satisfy his demand of expression.¹ I never quite understand why

¹My attempt to explain Ranjit's linguistic oddities may be mere speculation. As far as I know, however, his stammering never happened in the register of Gujarati, or in writing, but only when he had to perform spoken English. Saying something in English is for many Gujarati speakers something like

he does not mix registers like other interlocutors do when speaking to me. I myself have worked through a number of languages and often am in the position of inhabiting several at the same time. In my teenage years, I stuttered, and still today I fear falling back into it (especially when thinking about it). Hence I quickly came to empathize with Ranjit's problems as they remind me of my own stuttering. The feeling of being incapable of manipulating sound coming out of one's own mouth in order to create meaning, especially in moments when it counts, is frightening. Despite these problems, Ranjit resolutely maintains his self-confidence. He never lets his stammer hinder his curiosity and pleasure at conversation in a social context, even though in many of these contexts he is expected to fail, for Ranjit is a Dalit, a member of the scheduled castes, one of Gandhi's "children of God." He is the very first member of his village group to obtain an academic position, as professor at his college, part of Gujarat University.

Ranjit is interested in foreigners and I am not his first such acquaintance. He once had a Thai friend, and he is fond of telling me of their funny encounters and misunderstandings. He also sports a Kenyan friend at the university, with whom he drinks tea regularly. He is enjoying the pleasure of difference, and places much emphasis on asking me things, making me describe details, and observing me when I speak, act, and or explain something. He is never shy of critique and always takes me at my word. The second time we met in 1999, he makes me an unexpected compliment. He says, "Hallo Parvis, let me tell you, really, you have none such distance upon you." I did not understand what he meant. Ranjit was commenting on the fact that I had sat next to him and eaten with him, a Dalit.

coming to a punch line. Once it is in English it is somehow more objectified and substantive than before.

6.1.1 Hallo and listen

Ranjit often says “hallo” when addressing someone in a conversation, such as, “Hallo! Let me tell you...,” or “Hallo we have to take the other restaurant as I am very much too obliged to visit my other sister also.” The “hallo” inaugurates any significant argument or statement. The intonation of his “hallo” is the same as when Gujaratis answer the telephone, and initially I find it funny. Soon however, I grow annoyed of it. It takes me almost a year to disabuse Ranjit of his habit of saying “hallo” when he actually means to say “listen...”

Later I happen upon a popular English language manual, “The Rapidex English Speaking Course” (from Pustak Mahal, New Delhi), a book, which can be found in many middle to lower middle class Gujarati homes, often on a coffee table right next to the phone. The manual translates the Gujarati “*sambeLo*” (listen) correctly as “listen,” but then also adds as a synonym “hallo.” The authors, apparently, did not understand that “hallo,” spoken in a rising intonation as in a question, is only used when answering the phone, or when greeting somebody unknown. It is not usually used in speech situations as a form of address where one tries to get someone’s attention. In the U.S., I noticed the recent use of “hallooooo?” as an ironic address, to suggest incomprehension or idiocy on the part of the speaker.

When answering the telephone, many Gujaratis repeat “hallo” several times. Perhaps the connection is weak or the traffic noise is too loud, and since they cannot see you, they are making sure you are still there. In these cases the interlocutor simply makes sure you are listening. But more often, the “hallo” is not meant as a question and does not necessitate an answer. Rather, it inaugurates the next sentence the exact

same way Ranjit uses “hallo,” although he himself owns neither a landline phone nor a cellular phone.²

6.1.2 Son and king

Ranjitbhai Solanki was born in 1965 and is now 37 years old. . He has two children and a wife, who live together with his mother in his home village of Rakanpur, 15 km from Ahmedabad. In his home village, amongst his caste peers, he is undoubtedly the most successful Dalit. His village of birth is in the district of Mahesana. Although wealthy by village standards, he insisted against his wife’s wishes to keep on living in his village’s “untouchable” quarter, where he is building a house. His wife, however, regularly becomes aggravated about this decision. She left Ranjitbhai and their two kids for 6 months in 2002 to 2003 moving back to her parents. Ranjitbhai was not allowed to talk or telephone with his wife as his in-laws forbade any contact. Ranjit suffered much under the separation. In 2003, he finally gave in and moved to the city, thus symbolically separating himself from the patronage position and obligation to his poor caste brethren in Rakanpur.

“Solanki” is both a surname and a title. Ranjit tells me that it is usually used by Kshatriyas, but also by other groups. “We are the heritage of Siddharaj Solanki, one of the historical kings.³ It is said that we are the survival of that generation (...). Our generation [line, lineage] goes up to that extent [goes as far back]. In honor of that Solanki title, surname, is there.”

²Nowhere is the sophistication in using cell phones more advanced than in the beeping world of India’s middle class where this technology has become much more than just a tool. In the context of Ahmedabad’s cellular professionals, it was difficult to determine if need preceded demand or the other way around. Technology is no longer merely a tool external to the person but part of the person’s body. Where men sitting on street corner teashops used to scratch their scrotums, now they play with their cell phones. Many unlikely characters collect around the distribution, use, and repair of cell phones. Through their sheer enthusiasm, competency, flexibility, and creativity, they make it worthwhile observing. I doubt that even techno-savvy teenagers in the West can compete with this self-acquired competency.

³The Solanki Dynasty ruled between the 10th-13th centuries with the capital in Anhilvada Patan, today Patan. Siddharaja Jayasimha (1094-1143) was one of the most splendid of Gujarati kings.

Ranjitbhai is, as mentioned, a member of the “schedules castes,” an expression he will always follow by the abbreviation “SC.” He says, “You are very well aware of Dalits, scheduled caste, SC, and tribals, SC and ST [scheduled caste and scheduled tribes]...they are concerned to [considered as] downtrodden, downtrodden suppressed, depressed classes people [he emphasizes depressed].” He continues, “And I am one of from.” The word Ranjit leaves out in this last sentence is of course “them.” He does not finish to say “And I am one of *them*,” but he says, “I am one of from,” as if he wants to stress he comes *from* them, but is not *of* them.

I ask how it is possible to carry the name of a king, the name of a Kshatriya if he was a member of a scheduled caste? Ranjit says, “It is long back. Siddharth Solanki...that goes long back. It was just before two three four hundred years back. It is just the name of Siddharaj Solanki [king Solanki]. It goes up to that extend which is written in the notes of those who are having generation notes [genealogies], Charan, Gadhvi, Barot, Desai [names and functions associated with bards, panegyrists, and genealogists in Gujarat]. Each and every community has their own Charan, Barot, Gadhvi. And they keep the history of one’s community. From where you came, from where your ancestors came, how they existed [lived], and who were the ancestors of forefather’s father’s fathers and to (...) what extend it stops [where it stops]. Everything is written in the books of (...) them.”

I ask about the name of his caste. “Hindu Harijan,” Ranjit answers, and recounts what the genealogist said about his community. “He says that, ‘you are generated out of the son of king Siddharaj Solanki’ (...).” The community was “generated” by the line of the son of the king. What I did not know at the time, and I doubt that Ranjit was aware of it either, is that Siddharaj Solanki did not have any sons. His bloodline ended with his death. The famous ruler, who was close to the

Gujarati Jain saint Hemachandra, died childless. Is it possible that Ranjit's genealogist was unaware of this fact? What did the genealogist mean by "son"?

Alexander Forbes, in *Râs Mâla*, describes Siddharaj as indulging in "lustful excess," including "intrigues with women of the sacred Brahmin caste" (1997:171). This presents another possibility for constructing the beginning of a generation (line), albeit an illegitimate one. However, that would imply descent from a Brahmin and Kshatriya union, a rather bold claim for a Dalit. The *Râs Mâla* reports that, as was foreseen by the Jain saint Hemachandra, the king's nephew Kumarpal ultimately became successor to the throne, a man whom Siddharaj had persecuted and tried for many years to assassinate. Some explain Siddharaj's reticence against his own nephew with the fact that Kumarpal's mother was of "low birth."⁴ Does Ranjit's genealogist refer to Kumarpal, the king's nephew, as the "son"?

There is a third possibility, one that Ranjit would be reluctant to voice. It can appear in the form of a racist slur, or what some might think is a funny suggestion or joke. King Solanki was not only famous for his support of arts and architecture, or the scholar-saint Hemachandra. He is also believed to have defeated with his own bare hands the infamous ghost (*bhut*) "*Barbaro*" or "*Barbarak*," which used to harass ascetics in their recluses. This is part of Gujarati folklore. In contemporary cartoon-like depictions, Siddharaj Solanki has a rosy, whitish face, a black royal moustache, and wears colorful clothes, while he wrestles down a black creature, a muscular, hairy man with a beard who wears merely a *lungi* (Vyas 1998:132). Some say that once the king had overpowered the creature, tied it with ropes and brought it home, it turns out to be a non-Aryan tribal leader with great occult powers who became the obedient servant of the king (*ibid.*).

⁴Cf. Forbes (Vol 1, [1878] 1997:174) but also in Vyas (1998:132).

The Gujarati dictionary translates *babar* as “stupid, uncivilized, uncultured, member of an un-Aryan race” (GED). Forbes reports how the king regularly calls upon *Barburo* and his army of ghosts for assistance in war (Vol. 1, [1878] 1997:158-9). Some parallels to the character Hanuman of the Ramayan are obvious. Hanuman initially also dwelled in the forest and became the devotee of king Ram. Today the monkey God is often depicted as kneeling in front of Ram and Sita; even if depicted alone, he still is often kneeling. Many Gujarati communities considered “backward” and “low” associate Hanuman with spirit exorcism, in the same way that Muslim Pir are at local shrines. The legendary devotion of the monkey God Hanuman is probably the most important identificatory matrix for members of lower caste groups in a context of upward caste and class mobility. Those identified with something impure or low, can through devotion (*bhakti*, literally adoration, love) establish a hierarchical relationship to a master (like Ram or king Solanki), which does not cancel their signification but alleviates them from sin. Through their submission they become purified.

At first, it looks as though Ranjit’s formerly “untouchable” community is traced to the line of one of the most splendid of Gujarati kings. But on reflection, the trace leads us to the son of a sonless king. That the king is reported to have engaged in lustful sexual excess suggests possible illegitimate offspring. In that case, the community traces its line to that which is sin and filth in the king’s life, the possible son of illegitimate sexual unions. A persecuted nephew ascends the throne (as a son would) after the king’s death, but his mother’s status, too, remains highly doubtful. Another “son” could be the creature “*Barbarak*,” the tamed anthropomorphic beast of the wild who becomes the king’s close devotee (“spiritual son”). Devotion, so strong in Gujarat through the influence of *bhakti* tradition, is where you love that which has power over you.

In other words, however one explains the history of the Dalit, the ambiguity of origin is never overcome. Ranjit's insistence on using the odd word "generated" (from generation) instead of "offspring" or "descendant" reinforces this ambiguity. It should be noted, however, that despite the ambiguity of the line, it nonetheless establishes a valid connection, a relationship to authority. Thus Ranjit starts out by stressing that he is "Hindu Harijan" (not merely a Harijan) and there is no doubt about the Hindu before the Harijan. Ambiguity concerns only the "Harijan," not the "Hindu." Prior to independence, an "untouchable" was at times thought of as not even *shudra*, not even Hindu, but beyond the pale. We can see a sort of compromise strategy, a genealogy, which calibrates the origin to a point where the past is blurry and full of suggestive gaps. But while ambiguity of status remains, exclusion has been overcome because one becomes part of a shared Hindu past.

Ranjit's community is legitimately "Hindu," generated somehow from king Solanki. The present views the entire past as that which is "ours," the "Hindu past." This perspective is essentially a national one, and offers the possibility even for the descendants of someone like the "barbarian" *Barbarak* to be a Hindu (as long as he knows his place, as long as he kneels before the king). Unaware at the time I interviewed Ranjit that there had ever been a son of king Siddharaj Solanki, I ask why his ancestral community was *harijan* if they were really descendants of kings. He responds with a story about the degradation of his community, "(...) If we ask to them [genealogist] like this, that he [king Solanki] was *kshatriya* and we became converted [degraded] into Harijans and all that, (...), they reply like this:

'Oh, there were very tough days, and ...some people were needed to clean some thing, if any...(…), animal dies...[in case any animal dies]. Or those, the person who are cleaning...all the things...car...carcation [carcasses, corpses] all that, they were given some money. They were paid some money. And there were even toughest

days [sic!]. It was too difficult for the person, the most responsible person in the family. So that he can maintain their own family. So, it was very high time [difficult times], economically very toughest time. Due to that they were cleaning. I am not sure about it, but this is the tradition, this is the history. They [genealogists] just say that this was the thing (...) [the cause]. These, the people of this community, they were concerned to money only. Due to getting money, due to, I mean, sweeping all these things [carcasses], instead, in against of that, they were paid [in exchange for that they were paid]. Due to earn money...they did that work. And it became the traditionality. Those who work cleaning..."

Ranjit is talking about his own community. He begins to say "we" but then he inhabits the third person speaking of "those, the persons who are cleaning" and "these, the people of this community" placing distance between himself and his own community. He is professor of a college and he is no longer involved in cleaning anything. Given his success and social position, he displays an apt sense of place, through the clever deployment of the very words of his own community's genealogist. But when Ranjit has to name what his community traditionally is identified with-- "carcasses," the bodies of dead animals--his speech is arrested. He says "car...carcation."

After he recounts the words of the genealogist, that "they" (his ancestors) were given money to clean out the remains of life, he repeats how tough the times were and that the "most responsible person of the family" could not have done otherwise. Identifying with the father role himself--as husband and father he is one of those responsible persons--he defends making money through polluting work. He says, "So that *he* can maintain *their* own family."

Ranjitbhai is simultaneously inside while outside of his own community. He speaks on two levels here, as father who takes care of his own family ("he"), as well as

someone who feels responsible for “them” (“their” families), the rest of his own community, who he sees being seen from the outside, from the other side of the unnamable carcasses. Ultimately, he returns to the claim of the genealogist who explained that Harijans are not Kshatriyas because they polluted themselves in the exchange for money (“in against off that,” that is, substituting purity for money, sacrificing purity).

Ranjit is clearly ambivalent about the genealogist’s claim, this simplistic way of explaining and legitimizing the low status of his own community. He says, “I am not sure about it”; but he is not completely opposed to it either. After all, it is “traditionality.” I am astonished about the absence of open resistance to the genealogist’s narrative. In fact, it shocked me. “And you accept that?” I ask, waiting for Ranjit’s usual clever resolution. But he surprises me, and utters only, “huhm,” neither affirming nor denying anything, but departing into what I take to be a sort of defeat. Then he offers me a dry laugh.

Was he laughing about the fact that he had to accept the genealogist’s version? Was he laughing at the naïve and inexpensive idealism of an outsider who has no idea what a local Dalit is up against when dealing with the reality of caste in Gujarat? Or was he laughing because he himself could not even completely disagree with the genealogist’s claim? After all he concludes, “It became the traditionality.” It became their--“our”--tradition. Perhaps the reason for Ranjitbhai’s ambivalence is reflexive self-doubt that he feels at odds with the reality of his own community. He feels so deeply the lack of something, the lack of “education” and the lack of concern or compassion for one another. He often tells me, one has to “face the reality,” meaning his own reality and he accuses many of his caste brethren of avoiding this painful self-introspection.

When Ranjitbhai and I visit a Muslim shrine at Usmanpura Park frequented by many lower caste groups for spirit-exorcism, I see a large group of diverse colorful saris strewn on the grass. Ranjit sees my gaze and says “scheduled caste, SC.” I ask him how does he know the group is of that caste, and he mentions skin color, behavior, the bright colors of the saris. The group interests me. Ranjitbhai looks at me and then looks at the scene. He turns to me and asks, “What is this with us? Why are we like this?”

6.1.3 Father of son

When Ranjit tells me about his childhood and teen years he does not mention discrimination and oppressive experiences of being Harijan in Gujarat. Rather, he tells me an endless series of struggles, quarrels, and dramas of families against one another who all belong to the same community, live in the same neighborhood, in the same village surrounded by other caste groups.

His father Laljibhai Jenabhai Solanki, died some seven years ago. He was a good man, says Ranjit, “no words to describe.” He had five children, four daughters and three sons; one daughter and son “were died early in life.” When his father was 30 years old, Ranjit’s paternal grandmother passed away. His widowed grandfather remarried, against the advice of Ranjit’s elder brother. But Ranjit’s father supported his father’s remarriage wholeheartedly. Ranjit’s grandfather had an additional four sons and one daughter with his new wife before he passed away, at the time when the eldest son of his second marriage was fourteen. An immense responsibility landed on Ranjit’s father’s shoulders, who then tried hard to support his grandfather’s second family as well as his own.

The scene turned finally ugly when Ranjit’s father turned 55. “The sons of my grandmother, my father’s stepmother, they totally went in against of him. With the help of some neighbors they gave maltreatment. They did not go to what my father

said. They gave big quarrel.” The quarrel lasted for over ten years. At every marriage function and every social function, Ranjit remembers, they confronted his father on some issue or other, he adds, “blackmailing in brackets, let me tell you.” The grandfather’s second family now aligns with hostile neighbors and dramatic emotional clashes between members of his family have become the order of the day. I ask what exactly the conflict is about, but Ranjit just tells me “what they demanded they did not tell clearly.” He says that he himself does not really know anymore.

Ranjit describes his elder brother as cunning (*luchcha*), whose only success is being the father of four daughters and four sons and living independent of his father and mother; and he is envious and seems to feel threatened by Ranjit’s success “socially and economically and all that.” He used to instigate quarrels with his mother and father without any reason. Ranjit remembers his mother at the time, who is still alive and lives with him, who “tolerated like anything.” She was constantly helping and a “co-partner” to his father. “She was (...) the blind follower of my father. What my father said she used to do. ‘If this is the destiny then let me do,’” Ranjit compliments her. His father used to say, “I have to tolerate. This is our responsibility. We have to do. We will do. We will not listen to anybody, those who tell us in against of our family...” He continues, “My father’s definition of life is nothing but toleration. Toleration, toleration, toleration.”

6.1.4 As per your reality

Ranjit’s avoidance of talk of discrimination does not mean it never occurred. Even today in this home village, neither Ranjit nor anyone of his community can enter any of the temples of the dominant group, the Patel. The absurdity is obvious, him being one of the most successful and wealthy residents of the village. “Uptil [sic] now we are strictly forbidden to enter... for *arti*, for worshipping, because we are *harijan*, we are Dalits, we are the lower graded people.” When I visit him in his home village

the first time, he accompanies me until the main plaza of Rakanpur village, but then excuses himself. It was only then that I realized that he would not proceed to enter the temple that I wanted to visit. Ranjitbhai did not ask me not to proceed, but he simply excused himself. Fortunately, I understood the moment and accompanied him to his home.

Ranjit is like his father, not particularly religious, but his father did, together with his wife, make sure to worship Chamunda Mata (*kuLdevi*, “Goddess of one’s generation”) and the puzzling Jogani Mataji, a Mother Goddess always depicted sacrificing her own head for the sake of two lovers who appear in union lying in a lotus flower (see Figure 19). Holding her own severed head with one hand and a large sword in another, Jogani Mataji--wearing a chain of skulls around her neck--is drinking her own blood aided by two retainers who join in the feast. Although associated with blood and death, she nonetheless sacrifices herself to herself for the sake of two lovers.

Her status is highly ambivalent among Gujaratis. Reactions from the middle-class higher caste Gujaratis to a Goddess like Jogani Mata can be negative. She is identified with lower sections of society. Many people act surprised, astounded when I tell them that I know of her. Their surprise makes me, in turn, suspicious. In the city she dwells at the side of the road and in villages only in specific neighborhoods. People usually dismiss her as “primitive” and “uncivilized.” The general practice is to approve of any worship to any Hindu divinity as legitimate and praiseworthy. This is the legendary tolerance of Hinduism, which any middle-class Gujarati is proud to elaborate upon. At the same time, however, the form of the Goddess reveals the quality of character of those venerating her. The God you worship reveals your nature and the darker the Goddess, the darker her devotee.

Despite the varied status of the Goddesses, one should never make the mistake, however, to think that a Goddess like Jogani Ma is merely venerated by members of lower caste groups. As with many divinities in the Hindu pantheon generally, she represents a principle that cannot be exterminated. Her call is sometimes heard by members of groups, who claim more nobility also. And as much as there are Jains visiting Muslim shrines for spirit exorcism, there are also people who associate themselves with her despite what appears to be an unlikely affinity.

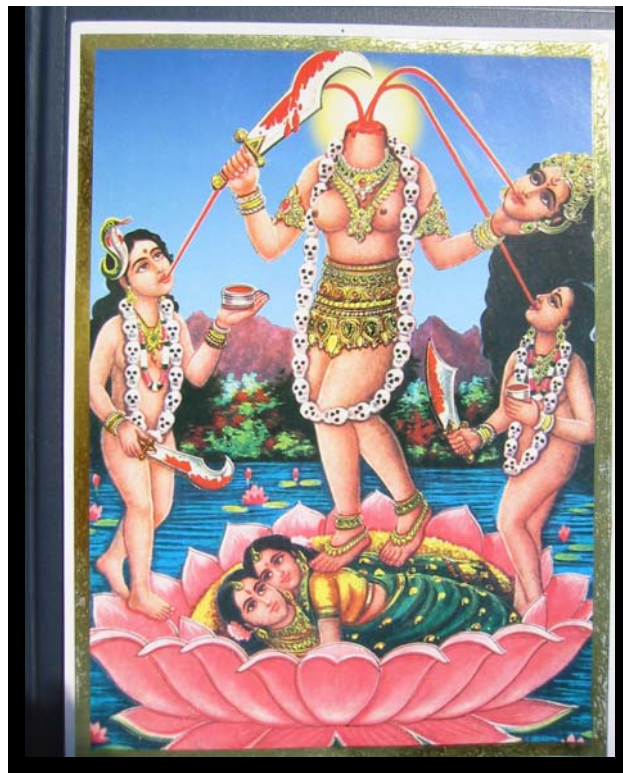


Figure 19. Jogani Mataji, popular Goddess amongst members of lower groups in Gujarat. In rural context, the temple of Jogani Mata is often situated in those village sections that are inhabited by members of lower castes. In the city she often dwells on the side of road in small structures. There are those who insist she is no a Goddess at all, but a demon and a monstress.

Most of the village temples in Rakanpur, the major as well as minor ones, are Patel temples of Amabaji Mata, Kodyal Mata, and Shivji (Shankar Bhagwan Mahadev). The Chamunda Mata of Ranjit's community is located in their own village

quarter. When I ask him if the practice of denying entry to members of lower castes is not prohibited by law,⁵ Ranjit confirms, “Nobody is there with us to break the law.” This is an interesting slip. He means to say “no one is there to enforce the law,” but the pressure of the social is so strong that to impose law would precisely feel like “breaking” the social script. Hence he corrects himself, “I mean, to break this traditionality.”

What would happen if Ranjit were simply to enter the Chamunda Mata temple? “They won’t tell me anything on the face. If I go right now even if they won’t utter single word, because I am highly educated man. They know me very well. They know my backside [they know what stands behind me]. If they tell me anything, I will launch a complaint against them and the punishment of this law is very dangerous. If I complain against them, I will simply write down he has called me *DheDa*.”

The term *dheD* or *DheD*--the first aspirated, the latter aspirated with a retroflex--is one of the most potent terms for “untouchable” in Gujarat. The term can never be used without serious consequences. Others had used the term in my presence, but usually to tell me not to use it. I ask him what *DheDa* means. “A person of lower graded caste who does that work of cleaning,” he replies, “the dead animals and all that, person who does lower graded... sweeping and all that. Actually we don’t sweep.”

DheD and related terms are explained in the Modern Gujarati-English dictionary without circumlocution:

⁵Bombay Harijan Temple Entry Act, 1947, and Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 (Act, No.22 OF 1955).

DheD, *s. m.* An individual of the class of sweepers, etc.; a scavenger; a sweeper; a man of the lowest caste; an untouchable. 2. a mean person. 3. Anger, wrath. 4. *adj.* low, vulgar, dirty.

DheDvado, *s. m.* (...). The part of town where the untouchables dwell; the sweeper's quarter. 2. A dirty place. 3. An unpleasant and dirty person. 4. A rubbish."

DheDaaU, *adj* (...) Relating, pertaining or belonging to the untouchables. 2. Rough; coarse; prepared by an untouchable.

DheDu, *s.m.* a troop, body, or number of low caste people

DheDo, Same as DheD *q.v.* 2. A low, wicked man.

DheDiu means "fit for a scavenger, base, low" and *dheDi* is a girl held in contempt. The expression *dheDgujri* is "barbarous mixture of languages," a mix of *dheD* language and *gujarati*. "*DheD gujarati*" is both the "Gujarati language spoken by the low caste people in the Surat District" and "a corrupt form of Gujarati" (all entries are from TMGED). We now understand better why Ranjit is so concerned about spoken language.⁶

Ranjit's family owns land. His father's work, before his death, was already no longer sweeping or leatherwork but farming. He owned three acres of land, which today is jointly owned (Ranjit calls it "joint wealth") by the three brothers

⁶ In writing this, I review the dictionary translations of the pejorative term for sweeper, *dheD* and *DheD*. Whereas *dheD* is found easily, I crosschecked spellings only to realize that the important and lengthy entry in the two volumes of TMGED was to found under *DheD*, not under *dheD*. Although there was empty white space, there was no entry. The term *DheD* simply had no definition. Instead I found the entire entry physically pasted over with a white thick paper. I still can't fathom, that while elaborating on the denial of "untouchability" in Gujarat, I would come across it so literally. The dictionary's first edition was 1925. My edition is from 1989 and was a gift to me by my language teachers at Gujarat University upon my departure, all Brahmins, Jains, and Hindu Vaishnavas (Vaniyas). I do not know if they personally were responsible for this manipulation, or if it is part of the reprint of 1986. Whatever it may be, I also do not doubt their good intentions. This manipulation in order to efface an embarrassing entry seems to speak volumes about how an issue is effaced to the effect of its full reemergence in another context.

(classificatory brothers including first cousins). Recently it has grown to six acres. The land suffers from serious “water problems,” as does all of Gujarat, but if the rain is good, they successfully cultivate *bajra* (millet), *kaThol* (pulses), and *juwar* (kind of corn). All three brothers work elsewhere, and therefore employ paid workers from their community to cultivate the land. They are “lower than even me,” Says Ranjit. His brothers earn about 3000-4000 Rupees a month, while Ranjit earns a salary of 14 000, which he says allows him to survive well. “Economically, I do not have any problems.”

In his village, Ranjit says about the “Patels and other upper graded people,” that, I cannot have tea from their saucer, drink from their glass, they will not take me into their houses.” They will simply not allow it. Because he is an accomplished man now, he could, of course, challenge their claim and simply enter the village temple. But, he explains, there certainly would be some kind of commotion and the police might be called. He might be arrested and, as he is “doing service in a school,” it is best not to give his enemies the chance to destroy his career. He concludes, “I don’t tolerate although I tolerate. And if we don’t make any revolution, though we can. Until now we don’t have so much a group which can fight and unite.”

6.1.4.1 Being a Dalit teacher

First, Ranjit was a teacher in a secondary school in Ahmedabad, Sabarmati area, then an assistant teacher for English and Gujarati language in grades eight through ten. For the last four years he has been working at AJ Teacher’s College in Ahmedabad, instructing on the teaching of English and of Gujarati. But his most beloved subject is another class he teaches called “Modern Problems and Issues of Education in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools of India.”

Students, who are already between twenty and twenty-five years old, and often with a Ph.D or M.phil., attend the college in which he teaches. They are all “PG”

(post graduation). Ranjit likes working with mature students. “They are mostly Shah, Parikh, Amin [all Vaniyas], Trivedi, Archarya, Bhatt, Bhambhatt, Desai [all Brahmins], but also some members of lower groups such as Jadav, Darbar, Solanki, and Makwana.” To list the surname in this way is common in Gujarat to indicate caste without having to refer directly to it. There are also a few Muslim and Christian students in his college.

Ranjitbhai does not hide what he calls “the reality” to his students at the college. He means that he does not hide his caste background. He says, “If you come to me then what is wrong with me that I will hide something?” He tells me that, “Every year some few students come to me, those very near to me (...).” He describes a graduated girl student that came to his office this year, who “with the help of our distance could ask me (...).” Ranjit means to say that a female student could ask him openly about his caste background, given the intimacy that the hierarchy between student and professor implies.

He continues, “She said to me, ‘Oh Sir, we [*apNe*, you and me] are having up to that extend [we are close], (...) we have resulted in friendship, we are friends, and if you don’t mind, there won’t be any reaction upon me [come over me], but will you tell me in which caste you are born, Sir?’”

Although his own statements offer evidence to the contrary, Ranjitbhai asserts, “It is very hard for the students to know from which caste I am coming.” Those who are from his own caste with the exception of himself, “They speak a typical language, Gujarati typical language [a dialect]. With the help of that language they [his students] can also come to know, [that] ‘oh, professor is coming from lower graded caste’ (...).”

Ranjit has been living in Ahmedabad for 10 years now, and he has worked in the field of education for over 20 years. Though he visits his home village often, his

own allegiance is to the city, “I have been serving the people of city, the students of city.” He proudly tells me that because he is a teacher and a lecturer of languages, he has kept, “no dialects, no involvement of any typical language (...). I just talk in English and the very purest Gujarati, *shuddh Gujarati* (pure Gujarati).”

“It is an intelligent question, let me tell you,” Ranjit says inaugurating a short monologue in response to a query about his strategies in class, when he tries to make his mature students reflect. “Whenever I talk about the problems of castes and creeds, and religions, downtrodden people so far as my subject ‘problems of education’ is concerned... (...) Just before I start to talk about education, I start with about religion, with man.”

Inhabiting his role as a teacher as if in class he says with empathetic hubris, “Why do we believe, why do we become the staunch believer of any traditional religion? (...) We have been educated to that extend, we have been graduated, post-graduated, M.Phil... We are higher graded educated person. (...). Why do we believe in the traditionality of our illiterate parents? Why do we? If they are the staunch believers in these things, then you are the great medium, or media, or the weapon, so that you can convince, you can make them convinced, that this is not the right way, the beliefs uptil now, which were your belief. They are not, they aren’t, they were. (...)” [sic!]

Ranjit believes he has a positive influence on his students. But, he says, his colleagues do not have this kind of influence, “On the face they just smile with me. They do everything positively. (...). But after four years I have come to know...” He does not, however, feel resentful against his colleagues, for he never expected his job to be easy. At one level, he is aware that his caste background plays a role in the way he is perceived and what is expected of him. He quantifies, “They keep one-two percent discrimination in their heart. They don’t tell me directly.”

He mimics what his colleagues say to him, “Oh, Solanki, you are well educated person. We do not talk against you. We do not talk individually against you. But some Dalits are having this kind of problems. Dalits behave like this, some do like that... They are very much poor education, they are poor in expressions, poor in marriage.” In other words, they will talk with him about other Dalits, those that are not educated like him. I ask Ranjitbhai what his colleagues mean by “poor marriage.” Why should some Dalits have a “poor marriage”? He pauses for a long time, and I realize that I have hit on a sensitive topic.

Because of my discomfort, I suggest another question, but he insists on answering the first question. He enunciates slowly, seeking the exact words to express himself, “They think that if you are lower graded [person], (...) and if you find...you will find such a girl who can adjust with you [to the fact of who you are], who can participate with you...So you will find such a girl where you are having your... this kind of background in the reality, this is your reality. So you will select the person as per your reality. And the newcomer will engage with you, [who] will be one of the constant partners of your life, will be of same category, will be of same grade. They just reflect like this...”

In other words, if Ranjit escapes the signification of inferiority through his “education,” this escape is then cancelled out by the fact that he has to marry a girl of his own caste. His caste inferiority is reintroduced through the back door. His marriage is “poor” because in Gujarat a marriage partner is indicative of one’s status. In a society where endogamy is prescriptive, and hypergamy a preferred strategy, the wife is the mirror of the husband, of who he is. She becomes the token of her husband’s status and success. Ranjit is an educated man and his colleagues do not doubt that. At least they would not dare to question his education openly in front of

him anymore. But his implicit *Anspruch* (claim) to the recognition of this status is halted through the reference to his marital possibilities.

An educated Dalit like Ranjit still has to marry a girl from a Dalit background, a girl, he puts it, “as per your reality.” This girl is one whom his non-Dalit colleagues would under no circumstances ever consider marrying. Ranjit is humiliated when reminded that he might be distinct in education with respect to his caste brethrens, but, like them, he can only marry a woman “as per his reality.” It may be that Ranjit is projecting these perceptions onto his colleagues that they in fact think of his “reality” otherwise, but in any case that is what he hears them say.

Implicitly, there is an even deeper level of humiliation than simply the reminder that he can only access women considered more inferior. It is common to hear remarks to the effect that all women who are members of formerly “untouchable” castes are morally inferior, “loose,” or “prostitutes.”⁷ That is precisely one of the “secular” reasons mentioned nowadays why women of lower caste background are so unmarriageable. That is, the stigma of caste inferiority is supposed to remind him that he cannot access women of higher status, but simultaneously that men of higher status can at any time, at least sexually, access Dalit women.

Ranjit continues, “They don’t like the liberty [freedom] of Dalits. They don’t like the liberty of Dalits, socially, economically, or politically. Somehow in their heart, they don’t like but they don’t tell me very openly.” Ranjitbhai tells me of an exception amongst his colleagues, someone he particularly dislikes, “One Mr. Patel is there. Traditional Patel. His days are near to be ended and I am thinking, I [will] let him have a peace[ful] depart[ure].” Mr. Patel is going to retire soon from his service at the College.

⁷When a Vagri woman selling vegetables smiles at me, Bharat pesters me for weeks, insisting she wanted to have sex with me, a rather unlikely deduction. His reasoning was that as a Vagri, she must be a “very loose woman.” In his imaginary, inferior status is always coupled with licentiousness, vulgarity, voluptuousness, all those things tabooed and forbidden.

Unfortunately Ranjit is obliged to maintain daily a close working relationship with Mr. Patel, who teaches one entire half of the subject that Ranjit has to teach. Unlike his other colleagues, Mr. Patel constantly stress how, through reservation policy, education has lost it's standard. He starts his lectures with a discussion of "merits and demerits of lower graded persons, those who come into the field of education." Mr. Patel laments about the introduction of "lowness" into academia, that is, "lower manners, lower merits, lower expressions, lower education." He blames this influx for the crisis of education in Gujarat. Ranjit vents his frustration, "There is only of total population seven percent reservation for us (SC, scheduled castes), but they are against it. (...) I am thinking, without reservation how would I have ever been over here? [meaning, at this college and at this level of accomplishment]." He continues, "And with the help of reservation, this is the existence with myself. If I have been selected as lecturer in AJ Teacher's College then with the help of reservation policy. And my godfather is Dr. Ambedkar. Nobody else."

He recounts his work experience, "In the initial stages they thought about me being lower graded person. But they came to know my abilities. They know my qualities. It was very hard." Ranjit had to prove himself for six months. Being a hard worker, he labored overtime and took on double loads of students and exams. Mr. Patel used to tell him that he had "no good power over English, no good power over expression of any subject." He adds, "Some student constantly conveyed the same words to me," by which he means that they also complained about his English, which wounded him deeply, as he always tried to be cordial with them. It is likely that as a teacher of English he was confronted with students of higher educational and class backgrounds whose English was better than his.

This humiliating experience prompted him to learn entire classes by heart. He says, "I challenged them nonetheless. Experience is the best of teacher." He rote-

learned everything and thereby managed his classes well. Even today, I observe in my visits that while other teachers are more formal with students, Ranjitbhai compensates with cordiality and warmth. Nowhere is Ranjit's social vulnerability better expressed, however, than in his trials to get the salary that he was entitled to when he first got his job at AJ Teacher's College.

6.1.5 Resisting the bribe: trials to receive a salary

When Ranjitbhai left his job at the secondary school in Ahmedabad, he had to pay a penalty of 18 000 Rupees, which was three times his monthly salary at the time. The law mandates this fine for leaving service early. But when he started at AJ Teacher's College, he did not receive a salary for a full twenty-four months, because, he says, he refused to pay a bribe. School authorities, those who had been responsible for his hiring, learned that Ranjit had sold a plot of land, one acre, for which he received 200 000 Rupees. This was approximately the same amount of money that they wanted as a bribe. After a long talk with his mother, he refused to pay.

It is usual in Gujarat, as elsewhere in India, that to obtain any government job, from the post office employer to the lecturer to the policeman, one is obligated to pay during, after, or sometimes even before the infamous "selection process." It is an open secret, self-understood but often denied in any specific case. I met several state employees and teachers who could recall a case where money transfer of one or the other kind were involved, if not in one's own selection then in the selection of one's immediate colleagues. Calculating bribes that have to be paid is part and parcel of planning to get a decent job. Usually the bribes are high enough to indebt the employee for a couple of years until he has paid his dues, which makes the newcomer comfortably docile and submissive.

Ranjit remembers the exact date and time, and even the weather on the day of his important selection interview. He describes his interviewers: there was a member

of the Gujarat government state body, three members from Gujarat University, one person was a so-called “subject expert” (a Brahmin, Ranjit stresses), one of the managerial body, one from the college body (the principle of his College). Ranjit remembers the Brahmin who asked him twenty questions for forty minutes on a rainy day. He had terrible stage fright and perspired strongly, “like anything,” he says. “The Brahmin asked questions on grammar, all in English.”

Ranjitbhai got the job but they withheld his salary. No one ever came to him and asked him directly for money. But his letter of appointment was never signed, mysteriously, although his appointment had been approved. They never answered his consequent letters either, and whenever he met specific members of the selection committee personally, they suggested that they should meet privately: “Better you come to me. I will talk to you. We will decide what should be done.” Or “Why didn’t you come? (...) I told you to come to me, but you did not come.” Ranjit knows, “They wanted to get into contact with me privately.” In that way, “They will (...) compel me to give some of the amount. (...)” With the moral support of his mother and caste affiliates, Ranjit decided to challenge the college, if only to see “what may be the demarcation line, what may be the limit not to pay me.” In other words, how long would they persist on not paying him while he was working overload?

Ranjit says, “I am totally in against of giving donations or bribery and all that. I believe in merits, performance, *realiti*. I don’t believe in any castes and creed, and discrimination and nothing else.” Twice he files complaint against the College, the University, and the government body. Twice the courts ruled in his favor. In both cases he had to prove that he had the necessary qualifications, something he is very apprehensive about. “I possess all kind of the qualities, all kind of degrees, all kind of percentages, I have been the successful man in the protocol interview.” This double certification of his success is now precious to Ranjit though the pain in being

questioned about his qualifications runs much deeper than it would with members of other caste groups.

The court gave two or three orders and Ranjit remembers the exact wording by heart, “The state government finance department is advised to waive the pay bill of Solanki Ranjit.” He explains to me what he had to learn, too, at the time, that this means that they should “pass the bill” and pay him his salary. The Chief Minister of Gujarat allowed for visits on specific Mondays in Gandhinagar, and he met four times with him in person--Keshubhai Patel at the time--in order to make a personal complaint. He used the opportunity to also meet with “colleagues of Keshubhai” on the ministerial level. Ranjit even went to meet the Gujarati finance minister, Vajubhai Vala. He visited the Chief administrative officer five times. He met the education minister. He wrote letters to the SC and ST unions on the national level, the union of professors (whom he recalls were quite helpless), as well as a letter to the President of India, K.R. Narayan, himself a member of a lower caste.

Channeling the words spoken to him resounding in his head, the logic that accounts for the failure of all his attempts at redress, Ranjit says in a formal tone, “University remains an autonomous body, government tries its level best. Government cannot impose the laws and orders on a private institution. And university is an autonomous body.” [sic!] He was told many times, “This is government’s limitation,” meaning the government has no influence over appointment and selection procedures of colleges. But he recounts that Chief Minister Patel, who he, like most Gujaratis, calls Keshubhai would remember his face and say, “Oh, you are familiar to me. I have seen you many times. How [Why] have you been over here?” Ranjit replied using English, “Sir, I am Ranjit Solanki serving at AJ Teacher’s college since last seventeen months. (...) There isn’t any fault at my side. (...) I haven’t received salary due to non-receipt of approval.”

Keshubhai signed a letter to the university with the help of the office attendant, which, according to Ranjit, was very “forcefully” written. He summarizes, “This man, he has been selected in the reserved category; with this man, there isn’t anything wrong with this selection, why didn’t you pay him, why didn’t you approve him. Better you give...”

I was confused at this moment in his story, as I thought Ranjit had already been approved and simply had not received a salary for seventeen months. The slip above when Ranjit says “approve” shows what the resistance to pay him his salary amounts to for Ranjit emotionally, a reversal of the approval. In addition to financial difficulties for many months, the resistance by the selection committee signified an outright rejection of him and thus a symbolic reversal of the entire approval process.

“They wanted money, and they wanted to tell me that is why they wanted my private meeting. I did not want to wish to sign that blind check...” To meet with a member of the committee in private would have meant that the demands for bribery made, become inevitable. He says, “If I tell, Oh Parvez, I will give you 50 000 Rupees. For the sake of my tongue, I will have to pay 50 000 Rupees. Why? Because, I told [said so]. But if I don’t go, then whatever it may be, I had firmly decided that, whatever it may be, life is once. If I die then I will die...in the premises of my institute, in the name of non-receipt of this approval, the non-reception of this approval, of Gujarat University.”

Ranjit decided not to go to meet the members of the selection committee privately. “And they thought that, ‘This is a downtrodden candidate. What is his stubicity [stubborn-ness, obduracy]? One day will be with him to extract the money. He will come to us.’ . “But...,” Ranjit says with emphasis, “I never went there.” He simply held out twenty-four months, two years, of what he sees as a sort of probation period, which made it impossible for him to not get permanent employment. He

overloaded himself with work, “more than my capacity” as he says, so that there was little complaint about him at the institutional level.

The principal was with him, but especially Mr. Kollinchandra Yagnik, the manager secretary of the College, and once collector of Gujarat state. Yagnik is an influential person. He is part of the Ahmedabad Education Society, ex-collector of Gujarat state, and ex-Vice-chancellor of North Gujarat University. Most importantly, he is a Gandhian. Ranjitbhai remembers him very favorably, “He is the man of a thesis on Gandhi.” He morally supported Ranjit. “He is the second Godfather of mine,” Ranjit says. He remembers that Mr. Yagnik invited him to marriage ceremonies and handed him the *thali* personally (the plate with food and sweets). Often he went into his office for solace and this competent Gandhian, who always listened quietly, wrote many letters to the Vice-chancellor of Gujarat University, using the right tone, using the right language, asking what had gone wrong.

The university usually replied that some ordinance was not followed at the time of the interview, to which Yagnik wrote in reply, “What are the ordinances that were not complied with at the time of interview? You better clarify. You better tell.” Finally in the twenty-third month of his job, the Vice-chancellor of the University, Mr. Vora, indicated the approval. A meeting was organized with Ranjit, secretary Yagnik, and the principal of AJ Teacher’s college in Vora’s office. The Vice-chancellor said to the secretary and the principal, “You better apologize in writing, that ‘this was our mistake, and please do something so that Mr. Solanki can receive his salary’...” The Vice-chancellor wanted the principal and the secretary to take the blame. But Yagnik replied, “I will write that letter if you write me a letter telling what we did wrong, where are the ordinances we did not follow?” In Ranjit’s estimation, it was a “great embarrassment of vice-chancellor, because he had never sent a single letter mentioning any reasons.”

The reality of corruption is strenuous and necessitates nerves of steel, something Ranjit admirably possesses. Corruption means that any reason will do to withhold what is proper in order to squeeze money out of the person in question. Ranjit did not want to meet the members of the selection committee personally, as his very selection indebted him to accept their demand for compensation, the bribe. The lack of shame and tact to ask for bribes from the very first Dalit in a College selection underwrites how any social difference is transformed into a possibility for extra income.

The persons responsible for this ordeal knew that Ranjit was well off enough that he could pay. They did not expect him to resist, however. What they perhaps did not know, or did not care about, is the emotional insecurity and pain they were subjecting him to for two entire years. This violence was itself but a continuation of the lack of recognition he constantly faces.

What is astounding about the entire episode, and what commends my deepest respect, is that Ranjit not only resisted the bribe, but that he also did not search for help where others might have. As we have seen, in similar situations where support was needed, both Pratab and Bharat sought help with institutions such as the RSS. Ranjit, in turn, although he rarely will speak of the organization, holds a deep grudge against it, and identifies RSS members with the upper caste divide and communal politics.

6.2 Experiences with violence

As a child, Ranjit says there was little meat in his house, although his father did once in a while eat it at home. And then he studied for fifteen years and lived in a hostel with upper caste people, which again meant he had little access to meat. Ranjit tells me that the “upper graded Hindus” (high caste) who abstain from eating meat consider meat-eaters not really Hindus. But today, he says, even “the [most] pious and

purest Hindus, behind the curtains eat meat, consume wine, play cards with money, seduce prostitutes in brothels.” When he was younger, he was never told that they were eating meat and drinking wine, but today many people say so.

During the reservation riots in 1985/86, Ranjit was living in the Dalit section of the Narsi Mehta Hostel of Gujarat University.⁸ According to Ranjit, the riots were organized by “aristocratic people, those that are called Hindus who very mercilessly attacked Dalits and killed them.” He stayed in Ahmedabad for two months before returning to his village. But in the village, too, tension was running high. There was a rumor that local Patel, Thakor, and Rabari had planned to burn the *mohallas* (lanes, areas) of the Dalits.

A local Patel boy came to his family and told them that an attack plan had been pre-conceived, and at that time he even saw the kerosene, petrol, and acid that were ready for use. Ranjit’s father was blunt at the time and reacted quickly, calling for a meeting with leaders of other caste groups in the village. Ranjit is convinced that only due to his father there was no bloody clash in Rakanpur at the time.

6.2.1 Visit to Gulbarg Society

Ranjit lives in a village thirteen km from Ahmedabad, and he commutes to work every day with a brand new model Hero Honda motorbike, one even more fancy than what Bharat shares with his brother Mahesh. Ranjit has three sisters living in the city, and two live in “sensitive areas” and all of which he visits regularly in his in-law’s home with much care and concern. Whenever I spend time in the city with him he makes sure to use the fact of driving through a specific neighborhood to check on

⁸Narsi Mehta (1414-1480) is Gujarat’s most famous *bhakti* poet. Born into an orthodox Nagar Brahmin family, he composed many *bhajans* and *padas*, devotional songs for Lord Krishna, and he coined the term *harijana* (literally, children of God) to denote the marginal section of Gujarati society at the time. He also criticized the caste system. Mahatma Gandhi later adopted the term *harijan* for all formerly “untouchables.” Today many members of lower caste groups reject the term as both stigmatizing and patronizing.

the wellbeing of his sisters. One of Ranjit's sisters lives close to the site of the Gulbarg society, which had been a major site of violence during the pogrom. I can convince him to visit it with me eleven days after the inferno in March 2002, in which 70 people were killed. I shied away of going alone.

On that day, Ranjit and I are both nervous. Many people we know would never venture into this area so soon after the violence. No investigative report has yet been filed, but newspapers have published accounts of the violence, and rumors are circulating about their veracity. Gulbarg society carries the air of horror and death, while the city is still filled with violence.

When we approach the area the houses are small family dwellings; they are small but ubiquitously brightly painted with many symbols and signs marking them unmistakably as "Hindu." The usual density and confusion of inner urban space is strangely supplemented by what seems to be an attempt to order the multiplication of lower-middle class to lower class families in houses placed adjacent to each other, all cement and concrete. The houses look too tiny and too humble for their shrieking colors announcing their existence. None has more than one storey and most seem to consist but of a single room. I am too nervous to take pictures.

What is absent in height, however, is balanced out by a proliferation of rectangular cement street temples, all 1.5 meters high. All are bathroom-tile temples and, significantly, they do not impede traffic as usual. In the middle-class areas of Ahmedabad, street temples often are placed right in the way of traffic, or on miniscule traffic islands, as if the Gods and their poor purveyors (the self-fashioned priests, saints and sadhus) place themselves in the way of a neglecting public, flowing by in an endless river of vehicles, doing time. The temples often slow the self-forgetting business machinery down, remind the drivers of timeless Gods, and help the religious entrepreneurs to make a living.

Here, however, the temples are placed neatly on the “sidewalk” out of the traffic’s way, as if by plan. One temple looks identical to the next as if produced in an assembly line and I wonder if they were all erected the exact same day. Usually temples are erected where the divine is said to have appeared, outside of the logic of urban planning and foresight. I wonder if all the Gods and Goddesses appeared at the exact same minute, on the exact same road, in the exact same interval to each other. Hanuman and Amba Mataji, Chamunda and Ram.

At the first crossing in Asarva, we ask for directions from a group of four men standing in the shade of one of the rare trees. They stand with a woman at their side, struggling over something. One has a large cut on his head, right over the eyebrow. Even under the bandage the wound looks quite deep and I catch myself wanting to disinfect it. We can smell inebriation, but they behave normally. They explain the way to the one “Muslim society,” but then tell us it was “dangerous to go inside” (*ander ma jawana to katarnak chhe*). I consider for an instant if he might mean that there are ghosts of the murdered Muslims there, but Ranjitbhai interrupts my thought, stiffens up, takes off his helmet, and says in an indignant tone, “I am a Hindu, this is a foreigner.” One of the men cannot but smile and says somewhat apologetically, “na, evu nathi” (that’s not how I meant it). I want to know what precisely is dangerous, but Ranjit’s mood has gone sour and he wants to leave immediately.

“They were Vagri people,” Ranjit says as we drive away. They actually pointed us into the right direction, but Ranjit is nervous and gets lost, blaming it on the drunken men. We have to ask again. There are many people on the street. I see a *sadhu* on one corner and an entire group nearby. I find it strange to see so many saints visiting such an area, but there is no time to investigate. People seem engaged in their work, but they also definitely eye us intensely. We reach a crossing where a paan shop is located at which a group of men has gathered. The entire group, including all

the Rickshaw drivers, point us in direction of Gulbarg without even waiting for a question. Obviously, we are not the first ones visiting the site, and we seem to be visible like a red flag in the bright sun of a white desert as not coming from this area.

Gulbarg appears suddenly on the road, as if out of nowhere. It is a richer apartment complex, surrounded by brick walls. . In the front several shops point toward the street. In the back behind the wall stand several huge AMC Slum Quarters, and an AMC Labor Quarters, where a railway track leads to Himatnagar. Opposite the front, only relatively poor people seem to be living. We ask police guards at the gate if we can enter the enclave. They decline and direct us to the officer in charge to get permission. We cannot find him, however. Later we realize that he is hidden from sight in one of the neighboring shops watching the Zimbabwe-India cricket match.

Thus we enter the compound without permission. We meet another journalist from Dehli, a clean-shaven man with a handsome face and a soft voice. He is from the 'The Tribune' and will be writing a piece on Gulbarg. He is the first person we see who seems as disturbed as we are. He has employed a guide named Shankarbhai, from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. We join them and walk around the devastated colony. Plants are burnt, walls are blackened, and doors are broken. There is no echo of the dead, not a single sound. I think how immensely important memory is as nothing else survived to tell us what happened.

Shankar, the guide, has an account of more or less four sentences: A huge crowd came and overtook the outnumbered police guarding Gulbarg society, who in turn fled in fear; then the crowd attacked the colony and stormed in after the M.P. Afsan Jaffri foolishly in self-protection had fired a private gun killing members of the crowd; then the wall in the back was broken and members of the crowd entered from

the front and the back simultaneously, killing everybody in their way. He points to the house of Jaffrey, right on the corner where we are standing.⁹

We see many remnants of burnt vehicles, scattered parts of scooters, and motorcycles are strewn across the compound (see Figure 20). Many suitcases are lying round, some opened, some closed; their rims are burnt. Clothes spill out of the open ones; they are dusty and have lost all color, singed by the incredible heat of the fires. The closed suitcases lie dead in the sand. There is a large pile of schoolbooks, and Ranjit, being a teacher, picks one up. The schoolbook contains a child's handwriting and the pages are neatly divided with a color crayon. One page is written in Gujarati, one page is written in English. The child's name is Shail, third grade. She has painted two Netaji pictures in the back and front of her notebook: "This is Gandhiji" and "This is Nehruji," are the underlined subtitles, written with special care. We look at the painted pictures and Shankar stops talking. All four of us remain silent from then on.

The police officer in charge shows up. He does not mind that we entered Gulbarg without his permission, but merely excuses himself, saying, "My India is playing Zimbabwe." He reaches toward me to shake my hand, smiling, while still watching the TV in an adjacent shop. He has absolutely no interest in us. The neighbors decline to speak to us. We are told by some by-standers in the street that they have nothing to tell us. A woman selling groceries waves us away when we approach. Even Ranjit, who speaks the best fluent Gujarati in our small group, is not successful. A young man tells us we better leave now. We do, feeling uncomfortable, and people gather on the street corners to watch us talk to the shop owners.

⁹For an account of what happened at Gulbarg society see chapter two.



Figure 20. Inside the courtyard of Gulbarg society after the massacre.

6.2.1.1 Dream after visiting Gulbarg Society

That night, on March 11, 2002, I have a dream, which I try to recall in the morning, but I fail to account for most of it. It was a dream of body parts, and perhaps too shocking to remember. When I try to retrieve sequences of the dream, however, I remember another disgusting dream also involving body parts, which I can't place in time. I do not remember whether or when I ever have dreamt this, but I assume it was not in the previous night.

The dream I remembered fully that night was of a man jumping from a high swimming pool board and landing on the pavement instead of in the water. I remember the sound and sight of his body hitting the ground next in a crash. It was like an accident because he did not land in the water where he was supposed to land. The sound was unexpected, indescribable. The body burst into many parts as if torn apart revealing white flesh (I think of the French term *gonflé*, expanded, swollen). The man was darkish, but he was not black. His skin seemed rotten, but in retrospect I think it was burnt. The shocking part was how the body disintegrated into many parts

upon impact with a strange “thumb” noise that chills me even now while writing this. So much for the remembered dream remembered.

One odd part of the prior’s night’s dream, the one I actually dreamt, I am able to recount and write down without many problems after remembering and writing the above. There was a scene where my lower teeth are being installed in a cheap *Blech*-facility [tin, *Blech* is German for a soft bendable metal but pronounced in English might sound how Germans often pronounce “black,” that is, “*bleck*”] in my mouth and that only Cornell University does all that for a reasonable price. I thus have to go back, back to Cornell. These strange metal devices have been stored in the mouth, which I had overlooked day by day for a long time. Only when I suddenly can take the teeth out of my mouth do I realize this. My mother tells me, “It will be okay with your partner” [meaning that he will accept this disgusting fact], while I throw some money in a pond, and I worry about the fact I can take my lower teeth out of my mouth literally. There are spaces on them, which have not been cleaned for a long time. I find it disgusting, too.”

I ponder over the dream. I seemed to have been looking in the dream for a possibility to save my teeth by claiming that my bad treatment of them (eating sweet *goL*--a typical Gujarati sweet-- and smoking cigarettes and *bidi*) is not all that bad, as they can be replaced where I initially got them, at Cornell University. This is just a phase; it will pass. My bad treatment of my teeth will have no effects because they are replaceable. I will be able to return to Cornell and to my lover. The dream expressed a wish and a fear simultaneously, that there are outside forces which take care of them and save them. The dream expresses this concern and at the same time resolves it. But how do teeth and violence go together? Perhaps there is a connection between rotten flesh and rotten teeth, as well as “black” and the German *Blech*.

Why did this segment remind me of a dream dreamt once before, another dream of body pieces, of which I can recount only a segment? Could it be that the remembered dream and the forgotten segment are one and the same? But what sense would that make? Why make me forget if I remember nonetheless?

6.2.2 Touch in an untouchable space

We drive from Gulbarg to the residence of one of Ranjit's three sisters, north of the society. This one lives in a "ghetto," Ranjit explains, populated by Vagri and Chamar in Meghani nagar. But it is not a sensitive area as there are insignificant numbers of Muslims around. Many Vagri are vegetable sellers and Chamar are a formerly untouchable caste, now called a "scheduled caste."

His sister has "cancer," Ranjit tells me, and recently someone stole the money from her house. She is very upset and asked him to visit. This is one of the areas where many attackers of Naroda Patia came from. Ranjit tells me not to say anything stupid. In the nez (small village-like neighborhood), I see people with wounds who stand by idly. One young man has cuts on his limbs, others on their arms and heads. People stare as much at us as at Ranjit's motorbike. Wounds from communal clashes are visible for days after the clashes. They mark specific people as haven taken part in street activities. I see them regularly in Ahmedabad.

People live close to each other in this urban nez. Space is so dense that as I move I touch what feels like a hundred people, while Ranjit directs me to the home of his sister. This nez swallows all space. There are small tiny alleyways, and even plazas with temples, as if a miniature city. The only difference is that many houses are mere hutments (jhupDu), but a few are small, one single room cement houses. Many of the cement temples seem more sophisticated architecturally than some of the hutments, as if the Gods have to be better housed than the humans. Ranjit says that

many temples have been financed by local Hindu organizations, as a sort of developmental aid.

Walking with Ranjit through this small, crowded village I have a memorable physical experience. I immediately realize in the overcrowded small lanes, that the density of the space compels a very special bodily hexis, which I am fundamentally unfamiliar with. There is only an evading and avoiding the other. Every physical movement--walking, sitting, talking, standing, smoking, or even driving a vehicle--must already be a sort of avoiding of another. Everything everyone does in these dense lanes is always already also a making room for someone else passing by. The body is forced to move in a sequence of evasions. People make room for the other without even realizing that they do it. I know this experience from walking busy streets in Bombay, New York, or Berlin, but here it seems intensified.

When we pass a man standing in a group of people he hears us and swerves gently to the front to make room for us without looking, not even changing the tone of his voice. He is concentrated on something else but his body swings back and forth automatically. Physical flexibility is automatic because the frequency of passing one another is so high due to the density of population. Movements of the body that try to avoid the other are ubiquitous and part of the condition of possibility to inhabit such a space in the first place. There is no sequence of relaxation and expansion alternating with a subsequent flexing and reduction of the body to make room for cows, people, and vehicles. There is no sequence between making room and occupying space. It is only "flexing" and a "make yourself small" kind of movement and getting out of the way for others.

The physical flexibility of bodies is astounding as well as the fact that everyone is perfectly able to ignore what amounts to difficult labor for me. I feel like a fat sack dragging myself through a geographies of bodies who evade me but into

whom I crash, push, and step like a spastic without control over certain muscles. I literally have not learned to walk here, or even to stand, or sit. It is the first time in my life that I move through a space, which by physical motor (motorisch), I am not really able to master, that is, moving without getting in the way of others. What I first attribute to my comparatively considerable body size is really my own inability to perceive and bend, flex and thin out, anticipate and estimate.

I have never learnt to be so flexible, to avoid other objects passing me so constantly and I am fumbling, loosing orientation when I try to move my shoulder out of the way of a passing shoulder, while letting my elbow not bump into the person behind me, while keeping away from the torso in front of me, to watch out with the head simultaneously (the huts are very low), and then not to step into someone's heel or on someone's toes. The bodies of the residents are resilient to space as they are thin, wiry, relatively small and "flexed." You are constantly in the way of others but "in the way" is the form of a being. In fact, their movements are so automatic no one seems unnerved. People sleepwalk while dodging cows, dogs, kids, garbage, excrement, humans, bikes, cars, and goats.

They have arranged themselves to stay and live for good here. Goats, children, even cows, clog in the narrow pathways, not big enough for a single fat Westerner, as do local Mandirs (temples). There are many old and young men, but also women. The women can be direct and lack the usual timidity. They have no problem looking you straight in the eye, as much as some prefer to look away. And they lack the disturbing piety of the typical Hindu chaste caste women, or some Muslim women, who often divert their eyes.

There are an endless number of children for whom I lose any sense of tenderness, a typical numbing effect of India's masses on me. I feel nothing for all these children. It shocks me about myself. There are too many. All houses are

painted with symbols and signs, colorfully as if they were building chhundNu (tatoos), similar to those on arms and faces. The tattooed bodies resemble the painted house as if one rubbed off on the other in the density of all objects, which are forced to touch on another.

We put the bike on the side making it thus impossible for a cow to pass, who looks blankly at the bike and simply stands still. Ranjit's sister is not there but a cousin is present. He, like the sister, has a throat problem, even though he is still in his twenties. He shows me a terrible enlargement on his throat. He has not been able to marry and is now being "sidelined," Ranjit tells me in English. Ranjit shows me some papers from the doctor that the cousin cannot read, as they are in English. I see that the doctor already years ago found some unnatural growth in his throat. I tell Ranjit he has to go to the hospital. But he tells me that they cannot do much for him but to affirm that he has cancer. I wonder what makes such a young man have throat cancer in such a young age. I suspect the chemical and textile mill's industry around this ghetto.

Ranjit's cousin agrees to tell us about the riots. He is eager to tell his story, as if he is usually not listened too. He has seen things, which finally make him a little more important in this city that neglects him. He saw many killings, and how limbs were cut off. He makes the typical butcher-type movement with his hands. He explains to Ranjitbhai how he saw one Muslim woman completely pierced through with a talwar (sword). He stands up, and shows where the talwar entered and where it came out of her body. It seems as if he has really seen what he claims. He smiles and is proud and happy of the attention we give him. "It came out her back," he repeats. Because he was just an observer, he does not know, who the people were, that did this. He was just an observer. But there were many people and many killings.

The one-room house of his sister had been broken into. A single cement room with one door and one window, it allows for very little light. In its small space, room has been made for a house temple of the kuldevi (lineage Goddess) Chamunda Mata, a typical “ready made temple” that that you can buy in a store. There is also a shelf on which they can store some suitcases, and it was from these that the money was stolen. Only knowledgeable people could have known where the money was. Why did she keep the money in cash? Why not go to the bank? We discuss the possibility of neighbors being the thief.

I sip very little of my water, afraid of getting sick, but enjoy the tea, which the neighbor woman brings. She is surrounded by many children, too many, I think. We have disturbed her afternoon nap, but Ranjit insists on waiting until she serves us the customary tea. He sits silently and sternly on the bed. We drink the tea and leave. Ranjit has problems driving the bike out, as he had driving it in although spaces are miniscule here.

6.2.3 Visit at Naroda Patia

On April 5, Ranjit and I visit the debris and the Dabhi family around Naroda Patia. The entire neighborhood seems black with coals. The Muslim societies and houses in the entire area are blackened, the doors are broken, and the windows yawn widely into the sun. I wonder how long before the grey of the street dust will cover the black of the charred buildings. Everywhere in this already depressingly bleak city, black holes stare at me. We meet at Lalobhai’s apartment, the son of one of Ranjit’s colleagues, Mr. Dabhi, and are served water and tea. Lalo is willing to show us where just a few days earlier, on February 28, 2002, one of the worst massacres in Ahmedabad took place. In Naroda Patia over 125 people were killed.

His father, Mr. Dabhi, later kindly invites us for dinner. Mr. Dabhi just moved into the area with his wife and son three months ago. He comes from the same village

as Narendra Modi, a fact that he repeats proudly several times. They had thought Naroda was a “good area.” They had been told that there had never been any altercations between Muslims and Hindus in this area, which they still think is true because, “in fact,” says Mr. Dabhi, “all the attackers came from bahar” (outside).

We leave with Lalo for a tour of the entire area. In contradistinction to his father, Lalo is unsure if this is still a “good area,” and he indicates this with a weak smile, a doubtful smile. He was there, after all. He saw it all. He even threw some stones, he says. In the first three weeks of violence many Ahmedabad residents did this, but seldom do they say it with such shyness and in a lowered voice. For many people throwing stones is like saying “I was there.” Is it a proof of loyalty and of behaving properly in the moment when “hindu dharm” needed “rakshaN” (protection) from the raakshas (devils) of Godhra. When Hindu religion was supposedly under attack. Lalo, however, felt uncomfortable about it very early on.

Directly in front of the apartment complex where the Dabhis rent a flat there used to be a series of shops. We see some construction workers rebuilding them. Piles of bricks flank half destroyed brick walls. They used to belong to Muslims and now will be taken over by Hindu families, I am told. The new owners, sitting on a palang (bed) in front of it, greet us when we pass. Leaving the courtyard we enter the road, but Lalo suddenly stops us. He points to an empty space in the dust at the compound wall we just exited. We look at him, puzzled.

He tells us that a Muslim woman with torn clothes had sat on that very spot on the day of the massacre. He points to the other side of the road where the neighborhood of Naroda Patia begins. She fled the killing from there and simply sat down here. The woman was dressed all in black. Her dress was torn. She did not utter a word. She was veiled. During night and day, in the full heat of the sun, she sat

there, right in front of his apartment house, for four full days. She sat in silence, framed by her torn black clothes, her back to the wall, in the dust.

Whenever Lalo went to the hospital, where he works as a doctor's assistant, he passed her sitting there. Whenever he came back home, he passed her again. People complained about her and tried to chase her away, but she did not react to them. Lalo eventually heard the police abuse her with a foul language Lalo does not want to repeat to me. She stayed nonetheless. She neither cried nor moaned. Finally after two days, Lalo could take it no longer and brought her some water. But neighbors got angry at him, so he went at night around 12:30, and brought her some water and biscuits. Finally, someone took her away to some of the refugee camp. He never learned her name. He never asked. He had not even seen her face. Today, Lalo cannot pass the space where she sat without thinking of the Muslim woman.

We reach Naroda road and I see the burned-out Noorani Masjid adjacent to what Ranjit believes were meat shops, which are now gutted and in ruin (see Figure 21). I cannot recognize them as meat shops but he claims he can see remnants of tandoori ovens. The entire area is blackened. Both roadsides of Naroda road had Muslim residences. On February 28, 2002, on the other side of the dusty road where trucks speed by and spread an unbearable sandy dust, the police were positioned. Even today some policemen are sitting on that side of the road, in front of the Municipal Bus Depot. They watch us.

A man guides some people with cameras at the sight. He has a revolver at his side. He wears no uniform but claims to be from the police. To get a clear panorama of the destroyed masjid (mosque) he chases us away, as if we were little kids playing soccer on private property. We observe the scene from a line of burnt roadside shops, and we spot a family, either Vagri or Rabari, sitting on their kaatlo (bed). The man uses his hands and the women cover their faces by pulling their veils down when the

camera of the cameraman points at them. They sit in front of the only shop that was obviously not attacked. Lalo tells me that when the pit (crowd) came they were in safety, not sitting there in front of their shop on Naroda road.



Figure 21. Destroyed Noorani Masjid at Naroda Patia, April 5, 2002.

Uncomfortably sitting on their bed, surrounded by charred ruins of what used to be a neighborhood nez, and viewing us and the other “police crew” (probably journalists) with suspicion, they try to talk to us. There is no one there anymore, one woman says, ignoring our initial question about what happened and what she saw. There is no one there anymore, she repeats. All the attackers came from “outside” (“bahar na loko”). While she talks the loud busses passing us on Naroda road spray us with a fine dust. Lalo asks if they will not be in trouble once the Muslims come back. No, says the man, we all had enough of this trouble. A woman with a blank face nods as she eyes Ranjit and me, indicating that she, for one, is not convinced the Muslims will not take revenge on them.

The man indicates that they no longer want to talk to us. We leave. Lalo is convinced that Muslims will surely target them in the future, because theirs is the only unscathed establishment in the entire neighborhood. Their own former neighbors will target them, he says. Next to a loud and busy road an entire neighborhood lies dark and dead. A sad picture. On the wall of one of the shops someone wrote “Jai Shri Ram” and mounted the picture of a Goddess (see Figure 61).

I use the moment of silence to ask Lalobhai what he has seen. “The police did absolutely nothing,” is the first that Lalo says. He is adamant about this and repeats it many times during the afternoon. Some policemen actually cheered and shouted, “Jai Sitaram,” he tells Ranjit, and he has to laugh as if he still cannot believe them having done so. Spectators that did not throw stones or participated, he says, were called upon by the VHP leaders to take part. You were supposed to do something, like throw a stone or carry kerosene for the others. They commanded spectators to attack and, Lalo recounts, if they refused, the VHP walla went to the near-by standing police and told them, “Get him...He is obstructing.” Spectators who did not want to participate in the attacks were accused of “obstructing” the killing machinery of the VHP.

Lalobhai is an earnest young man, and he shows us around with a certain fearlessness and matter-of-factness. It seems odd that he would be so open about what happened. But such candor was not uncommon in the first few weeks after Godhra. I have the impression that Lalo wishes to revisit his own neighborhood and understand what happened during the hours of mayhem. He seems to want to understand what he was also part of. Lalo points to the side from where a large mob had gathered, and explains how it attacked the Muslim shacks and shops. He shows us an entry into the Muslim neighborhood between the burned shops. At first, the crowd did not enter here because initially, the Muslim were waiting behind the first corner ready to strike and protect their neighborhood with weapons (talwaaro). He remembers being

astonished that a few Muslims could keep so many attackers in check. They were fighting for their lives, he stresses.

That day, at Naroda Patia, he saw more than one local vendor sell tea or hand out water to the mob. The chaiwalla sold nasto, snacks like tea, and they were handing out water for free. The “refreshment areas,” that he points out, were staffed with VHP people, men wearing white kurtas with dupattas and cell phones. They also gave the orders. He also saw policemen arrange for tea to be brought to their corner. The VHP indicated where to go, how to attack, how to provoke reaction. All “refreshments” were free, all paid by the VHP. He again points to where the refreshment stalls were located.

There is a second sight that Lalo wants to single out. He saw a Muslim chokri, a young woman, which he cannot forget. She must have suddenly lost her mind inside the Muslim nez because she simply tried to drive away on a scooter. She looked stern, as if she thought, no one will attack her, and drove right out on the road, right into the gathered crowd. The crowd stopped her, immediately dowsed her with kerosene, and set her on fire. “She was burning,” says Lalo. He cannot forget that she was burned alive. He does not understand why she left the protected space of the Muslim nez. Why did she leave, he asks.

We want to enter deeper into the neighborhood behind the road, but the police, while friendly, tell us sternly, “not today.” They encourage us to return tomorrow or after tomorrow. People are counting houses and doing government investigation work there now. Ranjit, Lalo and I make a huge detour and from another side reach finally the inner, bloody jagia (space) where an even greater mob gathered and so many people were killed. As we walk the detour, we ask many people about the events. Some act as if they do not know what we want. Others tell us freely what was seen. We pass a beautiful, wide road area, with huge, two-story houses, with fences and

servants, nameplates on the mailboxes, and pleasant temples and tasteful religious architecture nearby. Then we pass an open field used for cricket and sport. Two young boys show us the way. Thus we enter from behind, passing what is obviously Hindu neighborhood immediately adjacent to the destroyed Muslim one.

People see and greet us and, in a friendly manner, ask what we want. Ultimately, we find our way to the Muslim nez. The Muslim area begins clearly demarcated, with hygienic precision as we see destruction and only char coaled ruins suddenly appear. Here it is Hindu; there it is Muslim. In one lane all houses were okay, in the next lane houses of the same kind and built are all burnt. This selective burning does not accord with the nature of fire. Fire does not know Hindu or Muslim. It just travels. These fires were well planned and tightly controlled. They tried to destroy only the insides of Muslim homes, and then not completely either. They were left as ruins, as if becoming a signature of destruction. Everywhere are dark shadows of coal and death. Bicycles, cables, vehicles, tires, tables, lie around like skeletons, all bruised and burned. Hundreds of little houses whose guts are spilled out lying in front of them like the Nutan tire shop I saw being gutted in Shahpur (chapter two). All empty, the shattered windows and open doors catch our attention. The sharp edges of the windows serve as a warning. A group of older men suddenly appears and accompany us through the Muslim area.

It is getting dark and we move slowly to leave the nez. One man says that all the residents are in camps now, but not the Hindus, who are with their “relations” (samband). There is some light deep inside the neighborhood. People are there, Ranjit says, eyeing the lights. He means Muslims. We return back to the roadside of Naroda Patia, and try to pass by hiding from the policemen sitting there who had told us not to enter. Lalo has a glass-splinter in his foot. I wonder why the five men had accompanied us.

Lalo tells Ranjit more stories of the riots, of hacking to death and body parts. It seems to fascinate everybody around us. He tells how early on in the violence, two Hindus visited the Muslim nez in order to make peace but were mercilessly hacked to death. First there was a small man, he says, and the Muslim hacked him into pieces. Then a fat, strong, big man went inside. He was also hacked to death. Lalo demonstrates how his arms were severed. And then the mob started, he says. This was the start of the real riot, he explains. This plot is typical for many neighborhoods where atrocities were committed. The Godhra incident is no longer explanation enough for the origin of the targeted violence. Residents have other stories that try to account for the fact that mobs descended on entire areas. I have heard several versions of what Lalo voices above, all similar. There is always some courageous Hindu who enters deep into the Muslim area alone in order to make peace, and who never returns. That then is taken as the immediate “local reason” for the incredible violence against Muslims.

At one point I lose control of my expression, and it obviously shows because Ranjit asks, “You have lost your mood?” He is being polite. I do not want to make a scene. I tell him that I just saw and imagined the desperation of those surrounded and killed. Lalo nods but remains silent while Ranjit tells me, “Do not let it up to that extent.” I am defensive and say that I do not know how to control such a thing. He does not want me to become depressed, however, so he tries to limit my sentiments. This angers me. I think he wants a detachment that I cannot suddenly am unable to provide. I catch myself.

6.3 Conclusion

Although not an ardent agitator against Hindutva, Ranjit has a healthy distance to anything “Hindu” while he himself insists in being one. During the pogrom he is not above making stark ethnic and religious discriminations or voicing absurd rumors

with too much credibility at times. It becomes increasingly clear, however, that he does not inhabit the rhetoric surrounding him, despite the fact that part of his affinals in the city (his sisters' husband's house) are actively and repeatedly involved in violent clashes with Muslim neighbors in tense areas. Ranjit offers the strange observation that involvement in violence does not necessarily mean to be a communal ideologue or to buy into Hindutva ideology. As he might say, once the violence starts it rolls and one has to "face the reality."

Ranjit is never afraid of Muslims, but simply of what might happen if a killing crowd might do to him what killers do to them. When we visit one of his sister's houses in Kalupur in September 2002, I am shown barred windows opening toward Muslim neighbors that are regularly targeted with stones, bottles, and acid bulbs. Members of his sister's family explain to me how, when this area gets tense, they throw objects back and forth, and how they spend the nights in vigil. Shymalbhai's brother in law has not slept in weeks because all male members of this Dalit quarter have to stay awake in case there is an attack. When we leave his sister's house, we pass through a back lane past several Muslim houses. A woman squats at a basin and washes metal dishes from a late lunch. When we pass they greet each other automatically, as if by instinct. Ranjit asks how she is and if her son has finished school.

After we leave, I ask Ranjit who this woman was, and he says he knows her since the many years that his sister has married and moved into this neighborhood. She is a trustworthy neighbor, a good woman and a Muslim. Although Ranjit is intimately implicated in violence by sheer physical proximity, and religious identity, he does not lack distance to its ideology. Despite all the contagion and compulsion of urban violence, he can keep himself apart from it, remain human, and wish for its end.

Chapter 7.0 The Sacrifice of Payal's marriage

Payal is Saraswati Brahmin but her ancestors come from Maharashtra. In 2000, she married another Gujarati-born Maharashtrian Brahmin and lived in one of the newer suburban all-Hindu areas of West Ahmedabad, far away from the inner city, Muslims, and “riots.” Smart and beautiful, Payal is in the habit of talking too fast, even for native speakers. Sejal and I often slow her down when she speaks. Before she got married, during the time she had initiated a search through her professor for a suitable groom, she already decided to get married in a traditional arranged marriage. I had asked her why. She replied Indian arranged marriages are not the way they used to be, one does not marry a complete stranger. The groom will be carefully chosen and she will have many opportunities to meet him before the actual marriage.

In 1999, when Payal was 27, Sejal and Payal take me to Law Garden, called *love-garden* in local parlance, a park in a high-end area of Ahmedabad. Nearby is a series of all-vegetarian street eateries, where people claim romantic couples sometimes meet. Male friends at Gujarat University claim the park was haunted by prostitutes, and stubbornly add, that they have actually seen them from time to time. Whenever I visit the area at night during my field research, I see no prostitutes but mostly crowds of families with children. Eating charcoal-roasted corncobs, Sejal, Payal and I discuss love and relationships. Payal claims there is no such thing as love, but if there is and she ever did fall in love, she would immediately marry for love. Sejal elaborates, in a lecturing tone, that one can love many things, including students, friends, or animals. Why should it have to be a man? Love knows no boundaries and Sejal understands it to be a sort of caring that transcends questions of physical appearance and beauty.

While Sejal talks, Payal and I finish our roasted corncobs. Though they are delicious, I am aware that the corn sticks easily between the teeth. When Payal smiles and starts talking, Sejal tells her that she has some corn between her teeth.

Embarrassed, Payal covers her mouth and extracts what she can, interrupting both her smile and what she was saying. Sejal and Payal then have a short exchange in which Payal makes reference to her own inferiority complex. That moment of corn in the teeth sticks in my mind. It refers to discussions Payal and Sejal must have had before, in my absence, but Payal now refuses to talk further about “it,” meaning about her inferiority complex, and I never get around to ask her about it again.

Payal asks me how to communicate to someone that one needs “more personal advice.” She wants to draw closer to someone. Feeling uncomfortable about the question at the time, I tell her to kick that person quite strongly in the behind and then he’ll probably know. Sejal and Payal laugh heartily and Sejal tells me she likes this way of mine to be direct. But Payal, I immediately realize, is not talking indirectly about me, as I flattered myself, but about her academic advisor, Professor Bhandari, with whom she had a long discussion about “Platonic love.” She told me that he was practical and pragmatic like herself, and he could advise her about the right decisions in life. She wanted to invite him for lunch or for dinner, but, as he was Brahmin, he would not eat outside his home. And since he is her professor, situated hierarchically above, it also would not be appropriate to invite him. When tired of talking of themselves, they insisted that I talk more about *my* experiences with love. Then we take turns singing, and they ask that I sing “something from your country.” Unable to remember any German song at the moment, I sing Donovan’s “Little Tin Soldier”. Payal claims she knows the song.

When I visit Payal’s hostel the same year, my roommate Bharat persists in joining me. For young men like him, girl’s hostels are mysterious places and offer endless possibilities for projection and fantasy. They attract rumors like cars attract wet leaves from trees during the rainy season. Although the women are watched over by female caretakers, a girl living in a hostel too long would be suspicious enough to

be rejected in a marriage proposal. Every evening young, well-groomed men with oiled hair and breaths sweetened by chewing *elaichi* (cardamom), gather with roses and self-written cards in front of the hostel gates guarded by men in uniform. They are, however, never allowed in. While they patiently wait in their clean rubbed shoes, often borrowed for the occasion from a friend, they never sit on any of the steps or benches provided at the gates because of the dust that descends on everything in the city, but stand like little shiny statues in the night, still vulnerable to the city's dirt as its cows and dogs wander by. They show absolutely no interest in each other. In the rare occasion they actually meet the girls they are waiting for, they often just hand over the roses or the card and shyly disappear.

When Payal descends from the tower, she brings along four young women, her circle of friends. All are to marry soon and leave the hostel. The chance to meet a foreigner like me is seen as a preview of the great changes to come. They fetch a guitar and ask me to play for them. Despite their playfulness, there is a certain solemnity and heaviness in the air. For months to come Bharat talks about these few moments as they appear to be firmly lodged in his dreams, which keeps them alive in my mind also. He thinks especially about one of the girls, Rupal, whose name he vows to never forget. He attributes the melancholic atmosphere that evening to our presence, but I disagree. I suspect that the girls were most likely saying goodbye to each other and not at all flirting with us.

Because she felt that her brothers always got preferential treatment at home, Payal enjoyed greatly these long years of freedom as a student living in a hostel with her many girlfriends. Only her academic advisors gave her a modicum of recognition for her intelligence and ability to learn. And, indeed, her English competence far exceeds that of other students whom I met, including professionals teaching the language. Her pleasure in studying in Ahmedabad--far from home—was so great that

she over-extended her years as an unmarried student. Ultimately, Payal's father stopped sending her money, but she survived on her own through tutoring jobs and work at an NGO. It was then that I first met her.

When Payal turned 28, she panicked. All of her girl friends had been married off, disappearing one-by-one, and, she said, "My parents weren't searching for me." They said they did not have enough money to pay for the dowry of a marriage into what she calls a "higher educational position." "My parents couldn't afford that much. I had to get married in the same financial status as my family. And because I am educated, I expected he [the future husband] should be more educated than me." According to local custom, Payal was "over aged" and her relatives started casting doubt on her character, as she was living in a hostel.¹⁰ She began feeling isolated and at times depressed. Her own subsequent marriage has not lessened the loneliness, however, as evidenced by the fact that she calls me more often for a lunch or a coffee break since her marriage than before. Moreover, she does not appear to be comfortable in her new role as daughter-in-law.

Whenever we meet and talk about her domestic life, she waits until we are seated and have placed our orders before breaking into tears. Usually it is just a short outburst, but she does it with such regularity that I have wondered aloud if she should not reconsider her marriage. Payal herself several times hinted at this, ambiguously, to Sejal and me, "I am ready for an extra-marital relationship." Then Sejal, being experienced in marital matters, assumed the role of expert. Her advice is usually the opposite of what mine would be. "Submit and face the facts of marriage," she says, "Get tough. Get tough and tougher." Any equivocation and doubt, she suggests, will only make things more troublesome for her.

¹⁰The hostel life of universities in urban Gujarat is strongly associated with illicit romance, the danger of pre-marital sex, and other social "transgressions." In male hostels there are always rumors of alcohol, prostitution, and secret meat eating behavior.

Sejal intends to be neither quarrelsome nor aggressive. By “tough” she means “detached.” Once Sejal went so far as to advise Payal to tell her husband lies, if necessary, to “spoil him,” make him feel good, make him feel loved, play the “*natak*” (literally a stage play) of marital life. Payal responded that this would make her feel like a pretender (*Dhongi*, hypocritical, false appearance). “So what?” said Sejal.

During the years of my language instruction, every afternoon at 4 o’clock Professor Vyas would meet with a select group of colleagues and students, myself included, to do *nasta*, some light sweets with water (tea is never served).¹¹ One day I was early and utilized the time to discuss matters of religion. Payal enters the office looking for me. At Gujarat University offices are always open and anyone can come, sit, and wait for their turn with their teacher. The fact that few books are ever handled or seen in the linguistic department on desks, in hands, or in front of faces is compensated by the fact that people spend endless amounts of time talking to each other, which I as an ethnographer, of course, cherished a lot. It is not customary to sit outside of an office and wait to be called in. Rather one enters and waits one’s turn, while listening to others and their affairs already present. This social situation always reminded me of similar audience with saints and royalty in India, because it means that the superior authority always talks to all present. The professors as well as the students are aware that the others are listening, too. As devoid as faculty offices are of books they are filled with people, students asking for professor’s advice about how to get a job, to whom to get married, or other worldly matters. The personal relationship with the professor of one’s department, one’s “Guru,” is a carefully crafted

¹¹In this particular group, everyone brings some snacks or light *satvik* food, suitable for Banias and Brahmins. Tea is not considered suitable. As Professor Bhandari tells me, tea is a “vice” brought by the British. The word *nasto* is often translated as “breakfast,” but the English word has to be taken literally as break-fast, breaking the fast. Besides using the word in the morning, Gujaratis will often ask you in the middle of the afternoon if you want some “break-fast,” using the English word with the Gujarati inflection of *nasto*, breaking the fast, that is, eating. A *nasto* is always a small, light meal.

relationship and taken very seriously. As I described in chapter four, it is modeled somehow after the idea of *bhakti*.

While I talk to Professor Vyas, Payal, who had just entered, starts to cry. Despite the fact that Professor Vyas is Sejal's and not Rita's Guru, he enters into a discussion with her and me about her marital problems. He tells her what exactly he had told me about the importance of detachment in life. The role of a wife is "learned by doing." What is pretense (*dhong*) at first, he says in Gujarati, will become real attachment in the future.

After this incident, I asked Payal if I could record an interview with her about the details of her married life. She agrees. The situation at home is always tense, she says. Her husband Hritik opposes any decision she makes from buying clothes for her small daughter to the TV programs she suggests watching. She likes the Discovery Channel; he loves American serials like "Friends" or watching sports like cricket.¹² She rationalizes that fact, "We don't share. We have a very different wavelength. ... He doesn't want to be close to me." Her mother-in-law demands of her that she organize the household and her father-in-law has knack for demanding that she make tea or prepare food for him whenever she is most busy. At times she feels literally torn apart by three adults simultaneously ordering her around. This is all not to speak of the needs of her small daughter.

Hritik and Payal do not sleep together in the same room, she says because the house is too small. Payal sleeps alone in one room with Shreya, her small daughter, and Hritik still shares a bed with his parents in the only other room in the house. I inquire about their sexual life. Payal tells me that her experience is the opposite of Sejal's: her husband has "no desire." The few times they have slept together, was on

¹²The American soap opera "Friends" has become immensely popular among middle class Gujaratis. Often when I talk about friendship, young middle class Gujaratis will bring up the series.

her initiative, she claims. She suspects that the reason is because her husband does not find her attractive.

I ask her what she does to communicate her frustration and anger to her husband and in-laws about the unrelenting tension at home. Payal says, “You see, if it is one day or two days, then this thing (...) hurts you or disturbs you. (...). It makes you angry. But if it is every day...then it doesn’t affect you.” To my disbelief, she insists, “*ha*, it doesn’t affect you.¹³ Let them do whatever. I don’t get angry. I don’t get tensed. I don’t get...hurt. (...). In the beginning it was [affecting me].” I ask, “So what did you do in the beginning?” “In the beginning, I used to fight,” she says. But after she got beaten twice, she stopped complaining and opposing her husband in everyday matters, but she still does not really submit to his whims either. Her strategy is to keep aloof and to heed the advice to become “indifferent.” Nonetheless, she has the sense that Hritik is more and more taking on the strict behaviors of his father.

To date, Hritik rarely orders Payal to cook like her father-in-law does. It is one of the few things she finds positive about his behavior, she tells me. If she does not feel like cooking, he takes her out. “One day he was doing this, this year only. ‘I want to eat,’ he told me. He wanted to eat like a small child.” Payal explains, a “child wants attention, throws things, draws attention. That way he was. He became very disturbed of my indifference. So he told me ‘I want to eat’, although he knows I would not respond.” When Payal does not respond Hritik turns to his parents and says, “See, I am talking to her and still she’s not paying attention.” Payal, ignoring her in-laws, addresses her husband and says, “If it is an order, I am not [paying attention]. If it is a request, then I’ll make, because I am too busy.” Hritik accepted that, Payal says, proud of her pedagogic success.

¹³The “*ha*” is affirmative, it means ‘yes.’

But Rita also has many stories where she is less successful with her husband. She is particularly wary of his forgetfulness. She has the impression one has to watch out for him. He forgets taking the change from clerks when he buys things, she claims, and he will eat all the chapattis of the casserole knowing that she and her mother-in-law still have not yet eaten, so that Payal has to go back in the kitchen and cook again. “Hritik is, I don’t know where his mind is. Always he does that.”

Payal has problems with her mother-in-law, too. She is on the lookout for a job in order to escape her new home, but her in-laws want her to stay home all day and care for her child. Yet at home her mother-in-law competes with her for the child’s attention, making her feel redundant. On the one hand, her mother-in-law has little to do and does not know how to occupy herself the entire day. The old woman, Payal explains, wanders around the house and starts to do silly things, like washing the dishes an hour before the servant, who is actually paid to wash the dishes, arrives. Upon his arrival, her mother-in-law will scold him for being late, to which the servant replies that he always comes at the exact same time every day. On the other hand, her mother-in-law complains bitterly that as an old woman she should not have to do any housework anymore.

Payal considers this conflict typical in Indian households, “They want that their daughter-in-law should help them out, should take the responsibility of certain things in household work. But then, they feel how can someone encroach into my territory? It’s my territory. It’s my kitchen. They are possessive. They don’t want to give. They will dictate you by their terms and conditions. So if I have to work or make tea, by her terms and conditions only I have to make.” Whatever Payal does in the house seems insufficient. When Payal’s mother-in-law complains about Payal, “she’ll not mention my name. She’ll not say ‘she’.” The mother in law will simply refer to “people” (*e loko*). “This people they enjoy. This people don’t understand.

This people are this and that,” Payal mimics her mother-in-law in tone. But her mother-in-law is not only possessive of Payal’s young daughter, the kitchen, and household work, but also over the attention of her son, Hritik.

Realizing that her husband does not support her at home in arguments with his parents, Payal tries to persuade her husband to move to Bombay, where opportunities for jobs would be better, but unsuccessfully. Hritik refuses to discuss his work with her, or to inform her of the amount he earns. These are things he shares only with his mother. For several months Payal was kept in the dark about what and where he was working. She insists, however, that she usually finds out everything nonetheless, “I will dominate him one day.” (...). She says, “Once this mother-in-law is gone, I will dominate him.”

When Payal’s younger brother’s marriage approaches, she sees a potentially delicate problem emerging. Payal’s family is financially not better off than Hritik’s, but traditionally money at such a wedding has to be given as *aher* (an affinal gift) to her brother, mother, and father by her husband and in-laws. She knows that Hritik is not very thoughtful about these things and does not earn enough money to pay for the gifts. His income is only 3000 Rupees a month at the time, which is as much as Payal herself had earned. Out of this, he has to pay a monthly installment for his expensive Hero-Honda motorbike, plus his petrol, and he must help out his parents with household necessities. Worried that Hritik, pressed for money, might simply choose not to give anything at all, and to avoid a possible embarrassing scene, Payal discusses the matter privately her mother-in-law. They agree that it is a tricky situation. Payal suggests that she contribute a substantial part from her own earned money of what her husband should actually provide. “It’s Hritik and me, it’s one and the same,” she tells her mother-in-law.

I ask Payal why she wanted to do this for her husband. She thinks he would have lost what she calls “impression” (*chhaap paadvi*, to make an impression, reputation). “It is Hritik’s impression. They [her own natal family] don’t know that Hritik doesn’t have any position [status] in the house. They will see Hritik is the ‘whole and soul.’ He is man. This man is looking out for their daughter. So he is responsible. And I know that he *to* doesn’t have brain.¹⁴ He doesn’t understand...(…). He has never paid attention, you know, he is still that child. So he doesn’t. So I have to.”

The gifts amount to a weighty 5000-6000 Rupees and have to be given to Payal’s brother by her in-laws: husband, husband’s parents, and husband’s sister. Her mother-in-law accepts willingly, realizing, says Payal, quite rightly that her son was incapable of handling these sorts of matters. Subsequently, however, she never discusses with her son his shortcomings. Payal had thought the mother would show her son what is to be done, for the future, but she avoids this instruction and Hritik remains blissfully unaware that his wife and mother managed the entire affair. The more Payal reflects on this, the angrier she becomes. “Actually *he* should have that responsibility. *He* should give that money. His sister was giving, [although] his sister was not earning.”

“His parents are not going to tell him all those things. So he won’t realize in future. I wanted to tell him, so that he’ll pay attention in future. (...). I wanted to make him realize it’s me who has given, which is *his* responsibility. So one day we were sitting and I told him, see Hritik (...) I am not after money. I am just telling you these things. Since it is *your* responsibility. If something I have to purchase for my daughter, I will purchase. Whereas this, this is *your* responsibility.”

¹⁴The Gujarati word *to* means ‘still,’ ‘yet,’ or ‘however.’ It also provides emphasis in a sentence. Gujaratis speaking English often use the Gujarati *to* in an English sentence to put an emphasis on what is said.

Slowly Payal convinced herself that she would be able to broach the subject with Hritik, and she decides to do so indirectly. But rather than begin with praise and soften the criticism, she recites all of the things she thinks he is doing wrong. As she re-narrates this story to me, repeating precisely what she told him, she is again overwhelmed by her own marital history. Her voice tumbles over so many instances of disappointment and frustration that she loses control over her own words. Payal admits having a temper, and in this discussion with her husband it was fuelled by the daily humiliations she had experienced since the beginning of her marriage. Her repressed anger formed words and sentences that became arrows to her husband's ego. What began merely as a careful admonition of his failed responsibility to provide affinal gifts for her brother's wedding ends in a claim that his own parents do not respect him and a direct complaint of his inadequacy as husband. Payal makes the terrible mistake by speaking the truth, what her friend Sejal had warned her never to do.

Payal recounted, "(...) That is the reason your parents do not give you respect. You don't have any position. In future, I can also dominate you. I can also tell you this. (...). You expect respect from me? With what? Why should I give you respect, if I am managing everything. I am the 'whole and soul.' I am giving money to your parents also. (...). I am doing everything. (...). Then why do I need him? No one needs you. I don't need you. My daughter doesn't need you. Even your parents, I am a son for them."

Hritik's reaction takes Payal aback. Once she realizes that she had gone too far, she expected him to hit her again, as he had done twice before in situations where he felt cornered. Hritik instead walks to the door, and even though it is in the middle of the night, calls out for his parents. His mother enters and Payal remembers her

asking, “What is wrong my dear child?” Hritik shouts, “You people don’t give me respect that is why she does not give me respect.”

The scene lasted until 3:30 am the next morning. A short exchange of accusations between the son against his parents about them not giving him enough respect turns the tide. After father and mother flood their son with assurances of love, they turn to Payal and put her in her place. Their daughter-in-law, they say, is attempting to drive a wedge between members of the family. “She is an outsider,” they assure Hritik. “You know us better. You are the everything for us.” Hritik then orders his mother, “You teach me cooking!” to which the mother responds, “Don’t worry child, I’ll teach you cooking. If she will leave you in the future then you should know cooking.”

Payal is humiliated and made to repeat in front of her husband’s parents every word she had told him, including that they did not respect their own son. She is accused of being after money, of caring only for her daughter, of wanting to leave her husband. They warn her that no lawyer would help her, that if she divorces she will get no money, that the house and all possessions are under Hritik’s name only. They assert that they have connections with all of the marital lawyers in the city. Payal dares only once open her mouth, when Hritik approaches her threatening. She says, “Hritik, don’t touch me, don’t be violent.” Twice in the past Hritik had hit Payal, both times, as she realized, in full view of his mother.

After Payal tells husband not to touch her, the father-in-law reacts to her statement and shouts at her too, who she thinks she was to tell her own husband not to touch her, and that she was a “*bitch*” (in English). Payal tries to tell Hritik’s father that his son had indeed struck her twice before, but Hritik and his mother deny this. All of the negative stigmas and statements that had been discussed and were circulated during the pre-marriage deliberations had not been forgotten. They now resurface:

that Payal wanted to be a copy of her friend Sejal in income and knowledge (a woman considered a “marriage failure”), that Payal was too ambitious and proud, that she acted “smart,” that she had lived too long in a girl’s hostel (and thus had a loose character), and finally, that she was ugly.

Confused, I ask Payal what her husband and in-laws meant by “ugly.” She tells me that one of the complaints before her marriage by her in-laws had been the fact that she was an “ugly woman” compared to their handsome son. Even her professor had used this as a reason why the boy chosen for her to marry was adequate. He was a good choice because he did not mind “Payal’s ugliness.” After her marriage her professor told her she should feel fortunate that such a handsome man as Hritik had married her despite her looks. When Payal tells me that, I remember her mother-in-law referring to the “beauty in my Goanese family” when speaking of her son. Hritik is, indeed, handsome by local standards, but few would call Payal ugly and I for my part found her rather pretty.

This accusation was telling for Payal because she had felt to be ugly since her childhood. Previously Payal had told me she was too thin and too dark, but I never made much of these statements. The accusation of ugliness is, of course, connected to these particular characteristics--too thin and too dark--which, in turn, are *halku*, (thin, low, light, inferior), traits associated with low-caste or “tribal” peoples by middle-class Gujaratis. Even before she came to Ahmedabad, Payal had accepted this negative ascription, and it was the basis for what she previously referred to as her “inferiority-complex.” Following Payal’s marriage, her supposed “ugliness” becomes a sign of graciousness on the part of her husband through the net of social relations she is placed into as a daughter-in-law.

The traumatic night passes. Payal, her husband, and her in-laws eventually return to their normal everyday routines. On Payal’s behalf, I try several times to talk

to Hritik about his marriage, careful not to invoke suspicion or anger. She tells me I should make him my friend in order to change him. In this, I fear, I was unsuccessful, and perhaps betraying Payal as a friend. Hritik is always pleasant and eager to meet me, but I have found it confusing to talk with him. He had only little interesting things to say to me. Whenever I brought up the topic of problems in his marriage, he simply denied there were any. He often slept with his wife, he confided in me, and their sex life was really good.

Payal concludes our taped discussion, “This is not a marriage.” But then goes on to praise her family, “But when I see the outside world, I feel better. These typical Gujaratis, they are worse. The daughter-in-law has to do this and that. Here, my father-in-law fills me my lunch box. Even sometimes he cooks. Everyday he cooks. Especially for me he cooks. Not like Gujarati. They literally humiliate. That’s humiliation.”

7.1 Caste off husband

Hritik, Payal’s husband, is also Brahmin, but from a different Marathi sub-caste (*saraswat*) than her family’s (*deshasth*). Gujaratis as well as other Marathi Brahmins tend to look down upon his sub-caste. They are said to “take it” (*e loko le chhe*). “It,” here, means meat, usually chicken and fish only. Eating “meat” in middle-class and upper-caste Gujarat strongly connotes moral degradation in a way similar to alcohol consumption. Hritik’s family happily invites me many times for incredible fish and chicken dishes. And they complain about their Gujarati neighbor’s rigidity and the clandestine discriminations they have to endure for being “cosmopolitan” at home. By cosmopolitan, they mean above all that they enjoy non-vegetarian food.¹⁵

¹⁵The direct opposite term for *shakahari* (vegetarian) would be *maasahaari* (flesh-eater) a term which if used could be understood as an insult, especially for middle class Gujaratis. Thus irrespective of whether meat is in fact eaten, and irrespective of the fact that the term *shakahari* is used abundantly, the

Before her marriage, Payal had not objected to the fact that her husband would be a non-vegetarian, as he had also not objected to the fact that his bride was supposedly “ugly.” Once, before her marriage, Payal took me to Bhatiyar Gali at Tran Darwaja in the center of the old city. She showed me the line of Muslim *laaris* (lorries), street vendors where rare meat *samosas* are sold. When I bought some, she proudly ate one too. The Muslim vendor watched us and smiled knowingly. “We are not so strict,” she had told me back then, making a distinction between the strict *Weltanschauung* of Gujaratis and what she considered the more open cosmopolitan one of Maharashtrians. She also offered to accompany me to a non-vegetarian restaurant, where she would eat a vegetable dish and permit me to eat meat. I appreciated her offer but politely declined, sensing that Payal would in fact feel uncomfortable there. Payal always thought it was an individual choice of her husband’s family to be non-vegetarian. Her father-in-law had traveled widely around the world and her mother-in-law was from Goa, a former Portuguese colony. Only after her marriage, however, did she realize that both parents are thought of as “meat-eaters” (*maasahaari*).

That insight came at an uncomfortable moment during a social function when an older woman asked her for her “good name.” Payal said that her name was Payal Kenkarre. The woman said: “Kenkarre... that means Marathas”.¹⁶ Payal said that she immediately “reacted.” She was annoyed. She felt compelled not merely to respond but to react and correct the assumption made by the woman. “No, I am not Maratha, I

term *maasahaari* is avoided and often replaced by “cosmopolitan.” In n Baroda’s Fatehgunj area a popular Muslim non-vegetarian restaurant is explicitly called *Cosmopolitan*, or simply *Cosmo*. The entire Fatehgunj area is often referred to as “cosmopolitan area” because local versions of fast food restaurants abound and the public includes Indians of all states and many foreigners too (Arabs, Africans, Westerners). Other Muslim restaurants sometimes add an “International” to their names to indicate that non-veg food is “cosmopolitan” and not Gujarati, which has to be *shuddh* (pure, clean, holy, unadulterated).

¹⁶Not to be confused with the designation Marathi, “Maratha” refers to a non-Brahmin caste in Maharashtra.

am Brahmin. I am *saraswat* Brahmin,” Payal replied. The woman raised her eyebrows and then said, “Oh, *saraswat* Brahmin?”

Payal explains to me, “Someone who eats non-veg, that is not Brahmin. They are not Brahmins. They are *saraswat*.” The woman thought that *saraswat* are not really Brahmins because they eat non-vegetarian food, but she was too polite to say so. The other women at the gathering fell silent. Payal, however, felt this silence unbearable. “Actually, I am *deshastha* Brahmin, “ Payal finally explained.

Payal describes, “Then immediately her behavior changed. She changed her behavior towards me. She behaved very nicely with me then. There was respect in her eyes for me.” The woman said, “Oh, so you made a love-marriage?” Payal declined and said that it was an “arranged marriage.” The woman was amazed again. Payal’s husband’s sub-caste is known to be a meat-eating Brahman caste. How can it be an arranged marriage, then? In other words, who would ever “arrange” such a marriage? But the elderly woman fortunately refrained asking that. Indeed, sometimes *saraswat* Brahmins are considered “low” Brahmins, but differentiated from the Marathas. Payal suspects that for this woman Payal’s in-laws were no Brahmins at all.

Payal reflects self-critically on her emotions revealed in the scene, “I also in my subconscious, I also believe in castism.” She also, in other words, thinks in caste-terms and caste hierarchies. “I feel, yes, I am from a higher class, you know...”

Surnames in Gujarat and Maharashtra are often indexical of caste and the interplay between exogamy and endogamy. Payal calls her marriage an “arranged marriage,” as it was “arranged” by her Professor, a Marathi and *karade* Brahmin (vegetarian). But on one level it seems more plausible as a “love-marriage” (as the older woman stressed at the social function), since Payal comes from a vegetarian sub-caste (*deshastha*) that usually does not marry the non-vegetarian sub-caste of Hritik’s

family (*saraswat*). This marriage implies that she has to cook for a non-vegetarian family of in-laws. Interesting here is to see that the basis for transgression is not caste endogamy as such, but false sub-caste exogamy. Caste endogamy is not broken unless one agrees with the women's insinuation that *saraswat* are not Marathi Brahmins after all but really part of Marathas (a non-Brahmin Marathi caste).

Payal cynically laughs at the fact that members of her "society," by which she means the Marathi Brahmin community in Ahmedabad, frown upon her marital arrangements as a "love-marriage." Payal thought she had engaged in an orthodox marriage but now others see it as a love marriage. Marriage bridging the prescriptive preferential marriage code is frequently referred to in such terms, but in her case nothing could be further from the truth. Once the marriage turned out to be problematic, her professor, whom for many years she so admired, distanced himself from her. She is disappointed in him, I suspect because in her opinion he should have protected her from such humiliating experiences or at least help her now to deal with them.

The professor is in a difficult position, however, as his family, has been friendly with Payal's in-laws for over thirty years. After the initial disagreements between Payal, her husband, and her in-laws did not get resolved, and the marriage turned out to be permanently conflictual, he chose to remain aloof. "This was my biggest mistake in my life," she tells me, "to trust my professor's words. The professor said that is very nice family. He [her husband] is very nice, he is very much sharp." Payal remarks wistfully, "I had this ...[belief] that it doesn't matter if parents are not there. God is with you. God shows you good thing. If you deserve good thing, you get good thing. I had best of friends in life when no one was there. Even my father stopped sending money. I was surviving by my own...this thing [doing jobs]."

7.1.1 Nutshell Gujarat: in the classroom

Payal is ambivalent about the meaning and significance of caste and usually she does not talk much about it. But in October 2002, in another long discussion that she permitted me to tape, she describes to me unexpected problems she encounters with Muslims, and particularly with members of the lower castes, in the college where she works.

Shortly before this discussion, she procured a very well paid job there teaching an English class (BSE) to students from different communities. Payal called me on my cell phone and asked for urgent advice. I would know about these things, she thought. Her students make problems because they do not show her enough respect. They do not accept her “authority being a woman.” When we meet at an air-conditioned café later, however, she tells me, “Its actually because I’m Brahmin.”

Two young Muslim students Yusuf and Ahmad who had always been very polite in class (she says, “gave me much respect”) suddenly challenged Payal for comments she made during a discussion that broke out on the recent Gujarat violence. Yusuf, whom she liked, and Ahmad, whom she had found arrogant beneath his polite demeanor, apparently had personal experiences of the violence. Yusuf had made cynical and ironic remarks and Ahmed had smiled in reaction to her explanation that, “We Hindus do not know about these [sort of] things.”

It appears that the two Muslim boys were unable to accept the feigned ignorance of many middle-class Gujaratis about the recent one-sided slaughter and rape. The two Muslim boys had referred to all members of lower castes in the class as “Hindu” (be they Christian or not), and thus did not participate in the latter discussion. While describing to me this incident with her two Muslim students, Payal reveals another schism in her class, one that had unsettled her even more, making returning to her class uncomfortable. In recent weeks, she confesses, there had been a problem in

class with the non-Muslim members of lower caste groups, some of who are Christians, and some non-Christians. They repeatedly attacked Payal for using Sanskrit terms of grammar and referring to India as the “land of the Arya” in explicating a well-known Gujarati poem.

Payal tried to affirm her authority as a teacher. She told her students that these were the proper terms, but the students, while remaining polite, called her a “Brahmin.”¹⁷ They obviously did not mean that as a compliment. Payal enjoys teaching and she has always been proud to be considered a good teacher. Now she felt the only secure bastion in her life was threatened by, “These minority students.” She confides to me that she has no idea how to deal with this conflict and that she never thought that would ever happen to her.

I reminded her of her uncomfortable encounter with the elderly women at the social function. Misunderstanding my intention and as if in defense of her husband’s (now her own) caste, Payal then tries to explain what *saraswat* Brahmins are. She wants to set right that woman’s perspective, the record straight. “In Rigved only certain Brahmins have the right to read Vedas. Not all. But *saraswat*, they have the right of reading Veda although they eat non-veg. So that way, they are upper.” (...). *Saraswat* financially they are very strong. They are good-looking. They are very very mild, soft-spoken people. They’ll... They are very cooperative [sic!]. They are very adjustable. They are very simple people. Nice people they are. They will not fight with anyone. *Saraswat* Brahmins are very good. If you have to decide of having friendship with a *goknastha* Brahmin and a *saraswat*, you should always be for *saraswat*. Because *goknastha* Brahmin, although they are considered upper caste [superior], they are considered to be very *luchcha*, cunning, smart, that sort of people” (*luchcha*, literally cunning, roguish, clever).

¹⁷I deeply regret not having witnessed this entire scene in person. The exchange bordering on the hilarious epitomizes developments, tensions, and contradictions that await Gujarat in the years to come.

I ask, “But now you are again thinking in caste-terms. Do you think this is factual? Would I, too, experience *goknastha* as *luchcha*, (cunning) and *saraswat* as *naram* (compassionate)? Payal answers, “This is what people believe. I don’t believe in that. I believe in individual personality. But basically one thing, I *do* believe (...). I won’t marry a *Bhangi* (sweeper), Harijan, because that ‘basic nature’ will come out. I believe in that. Somewhere it’s true.”

“Have you ever experienced that?” I ask. Payal says, “Yes. I experience that in my husband. Because basically he is... I don’t say that because he comes from lower caste. And he is [he does]. Because I don’t know, I have no experience of other *saraswati*, so I can’t compare. But I feel that he is...His thoughts are not that... rich. His thoughts are not that cultured. You know. [He will say], ‘You have beaten me, so I’ll beat you. You abused me, so I’ll abuse you.’ You know, [he gives me] ill-treatment. He will not consider that [he is not considerate]. He doesn’t have humanity.”

I ask, “But don’t you think, you can have that problem with someone from a *deshasth* background, too?” Payal answers, “Ya. Possible. I don’t know. For Hritik I feel...not caste but maybe he is brought up like that. He had a servant, no? She was from lower caste. She took care of him.”

Payal’s comments express an ambiguity about caste characteristics and in this it is representative of the way in which many others explained the salience of caste in communal identifications today. Caste is first disavowed but then reenters through the backdoor. In Payal’s case, it reenters when she thinks of her husband and in-laws, members of a lower sub-caste. Even while she disavows “castist” notions proper, as she puts it, she then turns to caste to explain the influence of the nanny, a member of a lower caste, who helped raise her husband. Without realizing it, Payal comes very close to a classic Gujarati middle-class position on caste and the dangers of contagion

with members of lower-castes. What is new in her explication is the claim that she does not *believe* in caste.

In discussions with me, many other Gujaratis employed “caste” and “individual personality” as two alternative explanations. For Payal, even if the reasons for her husband’s behavior are not rooted in his lower sub-caste, that behavior still reminds her of what she considers lower caste. Payal argues that there is the danger of some form of “basic nature” returning in someone, and this nature derives from one’s relation to an originary social group, or perhaps contagion by the lower-caste nanny. She does not “believe” in caste as, say, an ideology to openly propagate or defend. For her, belief in caste means to openly ask and behave according to caste limits, to avoid certain interactions. The fact that she does not believe in caste as ideology, however, does not eliminate the danger for “caste” to return for, as she says, there is a basic “nature” (*svabhav*) that threatens with return.

Payal says she is not a “castist,” and we should take her at her word. She believes in “personal individuality.” Nonetheless, she would not marry someone of lower caste background like a *bhangi* (a sweeper) or a *harijan* (from an “untouchable” caste)—a list to which she at other times explicitly adds “Muslim.” She does not “believe” that caste structures individual personality, though it might. Her own marriage with a *saraswat* Brahmin, a meat eating Brahmin, which went wrong, is evidence that there is “something to it.” She explicitly explains the failure of her marriage by referring to Hritik’s “thoughts” as “uncultured,” “revengeful,” and “not rich.” It lacks “humanity,” a term often used with the inflection of *daya* (merci) and *jivdayaa* “compassion for all life.”¹⁸ She makes this reference after she has just claimed that *saraswat* are actually “very good” (*naram*), and she would prefer them to

¹⁸One of the entries for *jivdayaa* in the TMGED is indeed “humanitarianism.” That is interesting because *jivdayaa* is the rationale for vegetarianisms. In Gujarat, becoming more human means to become less non-vegetarian, less careless of life in general, a notion perhaps resembling Rousseau’s concept of compassion with animals and beasts

goknatha Brahmins, despite their dietary habits, because *goknatha* are *luchcha* (cunning).

This is the structure of *Aberglaube* (a “but-belief,” a belief on the basis of a continuing “but,” a “yes but...,” a stern “maybe”). It is superstition. Caste functions like superstition. The very fact that a Brahmin is her husband and her marriage is a failure suggests that there is something to the fact that lower castes or groups in general (inclusive of many Muslim status groups) are different in a way that makes an intimate association with them a problem.

7.1.2 A Runaway Priest: a very short friendship

Her relationship with her former professor now spoiled, Payal became acquainted with a Christian father, Father Vincent. Payal has no interest in Christianity as a religion. She does not even understand the differences between Catholics and Protestants. But she liked the priest’s good humor and pragmatic outlook on life. Father Vincent became a friend. But after she tells him, “I’m ready for extra-marital relationship,” his humor vanished and he distanced himself from her.

Payal was very disappointed. I tried to explain to her that not only celibacy, but rather the dangers of the situation for a Christian priest to be suspected of having an affair with a Brahmin woman given the contemporary hysteria and vigilance of the *Sangh Parivar*. They would immediately latch onto such a story, promising all the elements of phantasm employed with so much insistence regularly, that is, sexual and emotional enticement combined with conversion. But Payal remains un-consolable. She does not understand why she lost him as a friend.

7.1.3 Prenuptial chicken and the smell of fish

In the four years I knew Payal, she courageously broke many rules, including overextending her student years, and sacrificing the good will of her parents. She

wanted at least to have an “orthodox marriage,” and she made this decision after much thought. In order not to push her luck, and perhaps in the absence of anyone marriageable, whom she loved, she opted for an “arranged marriage.” But now even members of her own “society,” as she calls them, understand her decision for an arranged marriage to be instead a choice for a “love-marriage.” A love-marriage implies that all the problems she might encounter within the marriage can be attributed to her own decision to risk such a transgression. It is only herself who is accountable for her own “choice.” In other words, she is again alone.

Part of the prenuptial understanding was that Payal would begin preparing chicken for Hritik’s family, but they would agree to respect her vegetarian food habits during the marriage. As in many families throughout India, the wife would remain vegetarian but cook meat for her husband. One time she invited me over, proud to prove her ability to adjust. Though she does not eat the chicken she prepares (her in-laws claimed she does), the rest of us enjoy the chicken dinner. With the experience of her mother in law she cooks chicken *tandoori*, difficult to prepare in a Gujarati home. But at other times, Payal indicated she had not fully made the adjustment. I still remember the first time she talked of the putrid smell of fish. Thus when relatives of her in-laws organized a feast for her young daughter’s birthday, her mother-in-law insists that Payal cook fish for all the Maharashtrian guests. Payal is horrified at the thought that she and her own parents will be confronted with fish at a family’s function! She is disgusted by fish-smell, and her in-laws are aware of this. She believes her mother-in-law conspired behind her back to force her to cook fish and not her husband.

7.1.4 Muslims have no limitation

In January 2002, during the popular Uttarayan festival, I spend an entire day with Payal, Hritik, and his parents. Hritik picks me up, and we drive through the city

on a two-wheeler. Driving in the streets of Ahmedabad during Uttarayan is dangerous; we might get cut by the strings of a kite. Everywhere children, adults, and entire families stand on top of apartment houses and on street corners flying their kites with an astounding ability. It is not the kites themselves that are dangerous but their invisible strings (*dori*). Most kite strings are laced with glass-powder in order to make them as sharp as possible facilitating to cut the strings of competing kites. This is in fact a competition between adjacent apartment houses for space in the sky. If one's string gets entangled with another kite's, the battle begins. People maneuver their kites to make abrupt movements more likely to slash another kite's strings while skillfully keeping one's own kite afloat. When one of the kite-fliers on one apartment has successfully cut the neighbor's kite strings, the entire society will shout loudly in triumph, as the unleashed kite disappears in the sky. In the old city where so-called "Hindu" and "Muslim" neighborhoods are adjacent to each other, the festival can carry communal undertones. After Uttarayan, the few trees in Ahmedabad are colorfully decorated with myriad kites cut loose.

There is a bloody undertone to this harmless-sounding festival. Every year during Uttarayan hundreds of birds get entangled in the sharp string and are killed. Not infrequently, street animals and several people die, too. The deadly strings accidentally stretch over streets and injure careless spectators. It is especially dangerous for persons in vehicles who are unlucky enough to get entangled while driving at full speed. In 2001, one driver was even beheaded. Newspaper report of these rather macabre accidents abound, but the several years I visited the Uttarayan festival, I found most Gujaratis rather nonchalant about the predictable deaths.¹⁹

¹⁹Times of India, January 16, 2002, p. 1, "Birds fall victim to killer kites in sky." Rahul Sehgal, an animal rights activist of the Animal Help Foundation in Ahmedabad comments that once they have been injured by the kites many carnivorous birds like vultures simply die of hunger because people refuse to give them flesh food and "try to feed them bajra or gram pulses," instead of some form of meat. In 2004 six people were killed, "Uttarayan cuts short six lives," Times News Network, January 16, 2004.

I arrive with the Payal and her in-laws, and we are taken to a neighbor's house. Only later do we go outside and join the children who are flying their dangerous kites. First, we adults eat delicious self-made *Undhiu*, a vegetarian specialty originally from Surat, eaten traditionally on this day at a feast in a neighbor's house. *Undhiu* is a true concert of vegetables, a mix of fresh yams, brinjals, sweet potatoes, bananas and Papadi beans carefully cut into small cubes and pieces. The vegetables are stuffed and coated with a thick paste of fenugreek leaves, coriander, fresh coconut, lime, sugar, garlic, chilies, and asafoetida, which was first fried as dumplings in oil. After several complicated intervals of cooking the mix with water and oil a formidable dish is created. Served with chapattis (*rotli*, bread) the result is simply irresistible. It never tastes the same in two households.

While sitting on a large table in a room filled with neighbors, one of the women asks me if something like this *undhiu* exists in my home, Germany. I say that nothing in taste as complex as this is available in my home country. Germans usually overcook their vegetables in salt water, making them soft and mushy, and they often add no other spices to them.

One neighbor of Hritik's family, a middle-aged man with large glasses and a high pitched voice, is curious about German food and asks me to make a list of some dishes. I tell him that he probably would not like to really hear a detailed description for obvious reasons. But he insists. I ponder a moment how to remain tactful to all the vegetarians present and still give a satisfactory answer, since most good German cuisine I know comes from my German grandmother and has a meat base. But I can think of *Linsensuppe* (pea soup), which is like a *dal*, and *Kartoffelsalat* (potato salad), as I know the Gujarati terms for potato (*bataka*) and onion (*kanda*). Both are eaten traditionally with *Würstchen* (sausages) but they also could be eaten without.

But the man precisely wants to hear what I omit. He asks for more dishes. I tell him that I do not even know the Gujarati words for *Knödel* (German dumplings) or *Blumenkohl* (cauliflower). He tells me to speak in English to avoid the translation problem. Dissatisfied, he asks me what I find “distinctive” about German food as compared to “Gujarati food.” It is then that I understand what he wants to hear, and what he thinks is my evasiveness. I realize that he does not simply want to ask me directly if and what non-vegetarian food Germans eat, a question so direct that it might reflect back on him as being impolite. How could a true vegetarian while eating anyway ask for the description of a German non-vegetarian dish?

I become impatient at his insistence that I say something scandalous by myself and relent, telling him what he wants to hear. But I am more specific than he probably wants me to be. I tell him that Germans do not use the term “non-veg” for non-vegetarian food, but they do use the name of the actual animal’s meat like beef, pork, chicken, fish, deer, as well as lamb. One item my grandmother’s cherished particularly was *Blutwurst mit scharfem Senf* (literally, blood sausage with spicy mustard), something I never really ate much but always identified somehow as being typically *Deutsch*. I add that I have never had goat meat in Germany, which they serve in India as “mutton,” and that Germans traditionally use no garlic when preparing meat. Germans are known for their *Würstchen* (sausages) as well as their large breakfasts with deep dark bread, butter, and delicious cold cuts. Yes, traditional Germans eat meat for breakfast. After I say this, he and his neighbor nod knowingly as if they had known everything all along. We fall into an uncomfortable silence.

Back in their house, Hritik and his father politely try to take the blame for the scene telling me apologetically, as if the scene needed any explanation, that sometimes there is a form of rejection and discrimination from their neighbors because of the meat-eating habits they adhere to. Me, too I was being identified with them as I ate in

their house several times and was a foreigner. And “habits die hard,” Hritik’s father says, as if eating meat was a drug he picked up in the West.

They begin to explain the issue. Since 1992/93 riots, says Hritik’s mother, there is a definite change toward vegetarianism in the city. The BJP only took over in 1994/95, says Hritik, but after 1992 he remembers becoming vegetarian for an entire year. There is an entire group of restaurants that used to be non-vegetarian, which have now become *shuddh shakahari* like *Patang* (which accidentally means ‘kite’). These include the revolving restaurant at Gandhi Bridge, *Decent*, *Topaz*, and *College Inn*. Hritik’s father tells me they usually do not eat *mutton* (goat meat) because of cholesterol, but he actually loves it. He loves it more than *gheta* (lamb), as lamb has little taste he claims. Hritik’s mother, as a native of Goa, enjoys Goanese cuisine food, which includes many pork dishes.

She tells me about a humiliating experience when they first moved to Ahmedabad. Their Gujarati neighbors shunned them as they thought they were Christians. “They drank even no water in our house,” Payal’s mother in law tells me. “We had been open about our dietary habits,” explains Hritik’s father, which perhaps was a mistake. Then one day a woman “saw our God,” says the mother, pointing to the *ghar ka mandir* (house temple), and thus realized that “we were Hindu.” Nonetheless, it still took some time to befriend the neighbors. There is another family nearby that “takes daily non-veg,” whereas they would only take it a few days in the week, and usually only *majli* (fish) and chicken.

It is common in Ahmedabad to explain one’s own non-vegetarian habits with reference to someone else’s habits. There is always someone else who is even worse, eats even more, eats with even less hesitation. A meat eating family in a colony of vegetarians will always have the story of the other meat eating family in the colony, which displays even less inhibitions. It is this same logic that Payal follows in

claiming that Gujarati marriages are even worse than her own, after she just described her misery in so many words.

Underlying this story is an assumption of an hierarchical continuum at whose bottom are the real meat eaters, those believed to eat the most and are the least inhibited: the Muslims. Muslims, of whom many are too poor to afford meat even thrice a week, ironically become the bearers of excess and expenditure, in a similar way Payal absolves her own community practices by reference to “Gujaratis” in marriage (marriage, which of course itself is all about expenditure and sacrifice).

Muslims becomes the bearer of excess because they not only eat meat, but do it openly, as well as eat beef, which few Hindus like to admit to openly, unless those that are in danger of being excluded for being Hindu in the first place. “Muslims have no limitation,” Gujaratis often say, meaning not only their dietary practices but that they supposedly marry several wives, have too many children, eat not only meat but also beef, and abduct Hindu girls. Because Muslims know no limitation they become the limitation, that is, they become *maryaadaa* (limitation). My roommate Bharat, in fact, claimed that Muslims are his “*maryaadaa*.” There is a tendency to make the other community into the function of one’s own, which softens the sins of one’s own community, displacing sin into the other’s practices, externalizing the other of oneself. It is the same act that characterizes the small exorcisms, where the magical remains of misfortune and disease are placed in such a way, that a neighbor--or a person walking by--might be assumed by them.

Muslims in Ahmedabad in general lack the ascetic tradition that underwrites many of the Hindu communities, a fact, which can be rather different in rural Gujarat.²⁰ The continuum of oral inhibition is carried over amongst Muslims, in a

²⁰For example, at Mahabali Dargah, a Muslim shrine near Radhanpur in North Gujarat, two of the three local Muslim Pir were vegetarian, and all of them *brahmacharya* (celibate). Many local Hindus frequent the shrine, which specializes in spirit exorcisms. In other words, traditional conceptions of

similar way that caste does, again elucidating how much Muslims in Gujarat are really Gujarati as much as they might wish to claim the opposite. In 2001, my acquaintance Arif, a resident of Baroda in his late twenties, had recently become a “true Muslim” by visiting the Islamic Research Foundation, a private Arabic teaching institution near Fatehgunj.

During my language study and field research, Arif changed his facial hair thrice. First, in 2001, he started sporting a goat-beard, which looked rather silly as his hair growth was simply too weak yet for any beard (if it ever would be...). Then he cuts the beard off and shows himself clean-shaven during and after the Gujarat pogroms in 2002 for obvious reasons. Finally he returns to his old new self, the goat beard, when I see him briefly in 2003, but now inflected with a little of Amir Khan below the mouth on the upper chin. Amir Khan is a famous Bollywood actor, born into the Muslim community, who is responsible for a new facial hairstyle since he sported in the blockbuster “Dil Chahta Hai” a skillful blot of hair under the mouth. As if to answer to the boring obligatory middle class moustache above it, Amir Khan lowered the moustache onto the upper chin. Changes in an actor’s attire or style are endlessly important for a Bollywood audience. Within days of the movie’s release, many young men, Hindus as well as Muslim, imitated Amir’s “*naya style*” (new style), shaving the upper lip naked and leaving the upper chin hairy in a sort of half-moon turned on its side like a crescent laying on its back. Arif combines both, a typical “Muslim goaty” with Amir’s new style, a rather distasteful aesthetic combination in my opinion.

Arif’s brother (cousin) runs a non-vegetarian eating club for Arab students, mostly Sudanese, Jordanian Palestinians, and Jordanians that I frequent for a while. They want to eat non-vegetarian food that is *halal* and cheap. But the students, all

magical power and authority can crosscut religious divisions. Religion here is still organized around an actual sacred, not its surrogate in communitarian identity and nation.

called “Arabi,” are never satisfied with the food that Gujarati Muslims cook for them. Many Sudanese found an own eating group by taking turns cooking themselves.

In 2001, Arif described to me how he used to only chicken until recently. He labored hard to be able to stomach goat meat (he mentions especially leg), liver (*kaaLju*) and brain, which some of his cousins started eating. In his childhood he ate chicken only twice a week. Eating the “inside of animals,” is a typically Muslim behavior, he has it. He tells me he felt he was not able to stomach it, initially, although he had never been a vegetarian his entire life. Even when he tells me this, he still seems a little shaken by the thought. But for him brains and liver and all that had become the sign of real “Muslim-ness.”

He also explained to me how much Pakistanis would eat fruits before any meal. “Gujaratis don’t eat much fruit,” he said, which is also my observation. Fruits are expensive and are not considered staple diet like bread, ghee, and vegetables (which is not to say there are not wonderful fruit available in Gujarat). “Any meal in Pakistan is started with a banana or an apple,” Arif told me. The Pakistanis eat so much more meat. Gujarati Muslims eat less meat than any other Muslim in the world, he says. Gujaratis eat very little fruit, no meat, vegetables, rice, and bread. They are soft and too “Hindu-like” (which for him implies to mean “feminine”). Amongst Muslims the Pakistanis are believed to eat most meat, he insisted.

7.1.5 Bad name for Hinduism

When I call Payal, her husband usually answers and then talks with me for a long time before handing the phone over to Payal. When I met Hritik he was working in odd jobs, but shortly before I left in the spring of 2003 he landed a decent job at an American company that outsourced medical transcripts from the United States. He has learned all the U.S. racial categories—words like “Caucasian,” “African-American,” “Native Indian,” “Asian”-- and uses them competently. To some degree

they fascinate him, as they would anyone not raised with this way of dividing up the world's people. Perhaps they also remind him of caste stigmas in Gujarat. Once he surprised me with the question: "Why do Caucasian Americans have so many psychological problems?" Another time, "Is it true that African Americans are so fat?" I was puzzled at the time as to where these questions came from. He later told me about his job.

Hritik considers himself an "educated person" and his family very "modern." He went to an English secondary school, and thus speaks English as well as his wife. He has a penchant for *Besserwissertum* (a know-it-all). I used to visit the family to speak to Payal, but since her marriage I have little opportunity to speak with her in person. Now to visit Payal means to speak with Hritik and his father, with the distractions of a television in the background. While Payal is doing housework, including serving us, Hritik often lectures me about something, his favorite topic being some "scientific" facts, and his father tends to address me at the same time. The two men appear to compete over me, while avoiding directly addressing each other. I, the foreign guest, serve as the conduit between them.

Hritik does not think of himself as anti-Muslim. He often mentions his interest in "Sufism" and "Sufi-Islam" but most of his knowledge comes from the Internet. That interest does not extend, however, to visit any of the hundreds of local *dargah* (Muslim shrines) in the city. When I ask him to join me for a visit to some Muslim historical structures, he declines. When I ask him to drive with me to Mira Datar Dargah in the north of Gujarat, a Muslim shrine specialized on spirit exorcism visited by many Hindus and Jains from Rajasthan, he again declines. He does not want to enter into "Muslim areas," he tells me, pointing to his daughter, Shreya, as the reason. He is a father now and he has to take care of her, he says. Yet both Hritik and his

father insist that they are not like these Gujaratis, who are so “traditional.” They consider themselves “cosmopolitan” and well informed.

In the first week of violence, Hritik explains to me the difference between the “Hindu” and the “Muslim” way of killing. Hindus “burn” and the Muslims “stab.” The Muslim stabs, he explains, because they are used to handling knives and able to take the smell and the sight of blood.²¹ This stereotype no doubt comes from the fact that some Muslim communities traditionally used to work as *khaatki* (butchers). But unlike many others who make this association of Muslims with butchers, such as Sejal, he does not think that Muslims are necessarily more aggressive. It is just a difference in the type of violent behavior: Muslims stab, Hindus burn. Hritik does not mean to say this in any derogatory or communal way. It is for him a “fact,” “scientific,” like it is a fact that U.S. Americans have many psychological problems. It has to do with “culture” and certain “tendencies” within it, something I as an anthropologist should understand. Once the first reports on the Gujarati pogroms appear on Star News and BBC, channels that he prefers as he identifies them strongly with “Western education,” he became agitated. “Hinduism will get a bad name now,” he tells me, and admonishes me not to support this trend as a scholar.

7.1.6 The disappearance of Yusuf

When Payal, shortly before my departure in 2003, gets job at BSE, she is very excited. One day, Yusuf, the student who had challenged her about comments she made during the pogrom, does not appear in class. He is charged with the murder of Hindus during the riots. Payal cannot imagine this to be true. Pondering about her

²¹In all communal riots in Ahmedabad, incidences of deadly stabbings occur, some even after major violence has subsided. Usually a group of at least two attackers descend upon a victim somewhere in the old city. Often the victim seems pre-selected. Some people tell me that this method is used merely to “balance” the number of victims between “Hindus” and “Muslims.” Many stabbings are committed from moving vehicles, like scooters and motorbikes. For this reason, police often interdict “pillion-riding” during “tensions” and “curfew.” To my knowledge there is no empirical evidence for Hritik’s opinion that Muslims “stab” and Hindus “burn.” This is purely imaginary.

student, she says, “I don’t believe that. I simply can’t believe that.” I convince her to visit the court where Yusuf is to be tried. There we meet his family but are unable to see him. After a quick exchange, and initial astonishment that a (Hindu) teacher from school did actually venture to care for her Muslim student, the family concludes that Payal understands little of what is going on and largely ignores her from then on. The charges against their son are wrong, they repeat. When I left Gujarat, Yusuf was still in prison. This was the very first time I saw Payal seriously contemplate the sources of violence in the world she lives in. Later, she confided in me that she really did not understand, after all, the severity of “what had happened around us.”

Chapter 8.0. The Lack of Muslim Vulnerability

8.1. Something in our heart

“They finally learned what it is to get hurt, what it feels to get *tensed*. To have fear, they have finally learned vulnerability,” Sejal, one of my initial Gujarati language teachers, tells me after we have finished eating lunch. It is March 13, 2002, two weeks into the Gujarat pogroms. At first, Sejal had remained silent when I started talking about the violence that engulfed the city for nearly two weeks. Putting one hand on her stomach she started whining and complaining about the food. She checked with the waiter that there was no garlic or onion in the dish she ordered. He seemed habituated to this sort of behavior and politely and patiently repeated the ingredients of the food we ordered. Payal, one of Sejal’s former students, doesn’t mind the onions, she says, but as for what is happening around us, “I do not want to talk about it,” she repeats three times after I keep bringing up the topic. “It is not that I really think about any of *this*,” she says. “This.”

Usually when we meet, Payal and Sejal discuss men and the trials of marriage. Since I first met them in 1999, we have become good friends. Payal married only recently --“purely for financial reasons” she always stressed to me. Sejal, too, is planning to get married, a second time, after years of successful circumvention. I am astonished about Payal’s reticence to address the present conditions in the city. We have talked about Hindu-Muslim violence before and Payal is seldom defensive. I believe she is tense because she is caught between two friends with very opposed views on matters of communalism and both are dear to her. Perhaps she fears a serious fall-out.

We meet at a Panjabi vegetarian restaurant called *Mehfil* near Sejal’s home. It has an acceptable assortment of dishes that Sejal is able to eat. Our favorite place used to be *Abhilasha*, a fancy restaurant with several buzzing air conditioners in a posh area

of the city close to the University. But that restaurant burned down in the first week of violence. All restaurants owned by Muslims in the new city have been surgically removed, nearly over night, leaving behind charcoaled ruins in a line of unspoiled shops uncannily beckoning to someone passing by (Figure 22 and Figure 23). Muslim establishments all over the city have been targeted (Figure 24, Figure 25 and Figure 26). In the area around Gujarat University at L.D. Engineering College and a little further down the road an entire series of former restaurants spook the viewer in their blackness. Students gather at several roadside teashops, sitting on tin drums, discussing how come no one ever knew that those restaurants were actually “Muslim.”

Abhilasha was located just opposite of the Panjarapole animal shelter where *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *jivdayaa* (compassion for all life) is put into the concrete practice of animal care, especially care for old cattle. The shelter is financed mostly by the Jain community, but not exclusively. A large shopping complex adjacent to the animal shelter is called Kamdhenu Complex, *kamdhenu* being the mythical cow of plenty. It seems to be deserted most of the times.



Figure 22. Destroyed vegetarian restaurant at Vijay char rasta.



Figure 23. Burnt vegetarian Tulsi restaurant at Gulbai Tekra.

I tell Payal and Sejal that I talked to the owner of *Abhilasha* and that he was a Memon, a member of a Gujarati Muslim community known for their business acumen. Payal, too, says that she did not understand the place to be a Muslim restaurant. The restaurant served mainly Gujarati, Panjabi as well as what goes by the name of “Italian,” and, yes, also Mughlai cuisine. It was *shudh shakahari* (pure vegetarian), like all other Muslim-owned restaurants in this part of the city. Neither its cuisine nor its name suggested it was an exclusively Muslim restaurant. In this middle class area of the city, only Sikhs (“Panjabi”) and Hindus own and run non-vegetarian restaurants with names such as “Upper Crust Cafe,” “Tasty Foods,” “The Ranch Restaurant,” and “Neelam’s Lutf,” and then there are Nepali street-vendors who sell “Chinese chicken” in front of the Indian Institute of Management.

Most of these names, of course, indicate what is locally called “*kosmopolitan food*.” “Cosmopolitan” is always spoken in English only. It is an ambivalent term because, on the one hand, it can indicate any food that is not considered local, and on the other, it is used as a euphemism for non-vegetarian food. Panjabi, Chinese, South Indian, Italian, and American fast food, for example, are all cosmopolitan. They can

but very often do not include non-vegetarian items. Alternately, cosmopolitanism serves as a deceptive gloss for those who eat it but are not completely comfortable being associated with the activity in a given situation.



Figure 24. Charred jewelry shop becoming a spectacle on CG Road.

Food eaten by Muslims is either “Mughlai,” “Muslim” or “cosmopolitan” but, most significantly, is never called “Gujarati,” not even by Muslims themselves. Culinarily, the term Gujarati is completely exclusive of the term Muslim. All of this is strictly reinforced in everyday discourse: Many Muslims will say they eat “Gujarati *khora*k” (food) daily, but it would be hard to find a middle-class Hindu to say openly to his wife, family, or neighbors, that he eats “Muslim food,” or “meat.” Instead, such a Hindu would use the more ambivalent “*kosmopolitan*” or “Mughlai,” both which can but do not necessarily have to be non-vegetarian.



Figure 25. Destroyed Mosque, surviving shack.



Figure 26. Surgical strikes. A pharmacy opposite VS hospital (Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital).

It is the first time since the violence began that I am able to see Sejal and Payal in person. We had only phone contact in the last two weeks. Both had warned me not to leave my apartment because of the “riots.” Both had also told me that it would be better not to utter my name in public as long as the situation is “like this.” People have been stopped on the road and killed just because they were identified as

belonging to the minority Muslim community. If I have to introduce myself, Sejal told me, I should call myself “Peter”—a good German name. Some days earlier my two Hindu roommates, Bharat and Pratab, made a similar suggestion. Bharat suggested “Michael.” Over the phone an academic friend from Baroda suggested “John”. In Gujarat, these names connote more than “Western.” They unambiguously reference the Christian Testaments. I was wary of these references, as a few years earlier in the Gujarati tribal belts, Christians had also been the target of attacks. I therefore for the most part employed other strategies.¹

My attempts to no avail, I stop my questioning about the violence and we eat in an uncomfortable silence. Sejal tells me that people like her do feel some *dayaa* (compassion, mercy) for Muslim victims.² But she wants to be transparent to me, she says, “Somewhere in our heart, there is a spot, a corner. That spot says ‘yes.’ That was good.” She pauses and then continues, “They finally learned what it is to get hurt, what it feels to get *tensed*. To have fear.” Sejal turns the noun “tension,” which might describe a state of being, into a state of being acted upon—“*to get tensed*.” Everyone knows the meaning of “tension” in Ahmedabad.

As is the case with a large number of English words in Gujarati, “tension” is used with an easiness and naturalness as if it is an indigenous word. In a private conversation, Bharat Mehta, a professor of linguistics with Marxist leanings at M.S. Baroda University, termed this “Gujarezi,” a wild mix of English (*angrezi*) and Gujarati. Gujarezi is a “*kitchedi bhasha*” (a hotchpotch language). The word “tension” is frequently used to identify communal, social, or individual conflict. In Ahmedabad, a city widely associated with “riots,” the term is often used to

¹Many Gujaratis identify me as Parsi, Muslim, or some sort of NRI (Non-Resident-Indian) respectively. I am usually not mistaken as a Gujarati with a few exceptions. The identification with Parsi is most common because that community speaks Gujarati and many of its members have relatively light skin.

²The term *dayaa* besides compassion, pity, and mercy also means “tenderness of the heart,” and *nirdayaa* is meaning mercilessness and cruelty (GED, TMGED).

characterize an area of the city where violence might erupt any moment or has erupted a short while ago. That an area of the city is “tense” means that there is social stress or some kind of social eruption. I found that even farmers in faraway Banaskantha, who speak no more than a few English words, will use “tension” (pronounced *tenshun*) in Gujarati constructions, such as “*mane tenshun ave chhe*” (literally, tension is coming to me), often not even aware of its English origins. It is significant that the expression *tensions ave chhe* not only denotes possible urban violence, but also expresses marital problems, family conflicts, and sexual anxiety.

Sejal is unapologetically telling me that Muslims have finally learned vulnerability. I tell her that I appreciate her honesty. Payal is amazed and somewhat discomforted by Sejal’s honesty. “We have always been the victims,” Sejal says. “Always, we have taken their aggressions. Muslims always start.” She adds a jarring detail, “This is the first time that Hindus have fought back.” It is significant in which precise way Sejal is interpellated by the category “Hindu.” She was not born into a “Hindu family” and she does not usually visit Hindu temples or worship Hindu Gods. In fact, she is member of the local Jain community and, at times, she has stressed her Jain identity and distanced herself sharply from “Hindus,” such as my roommates, whom she considers “rough.”

In 1999, Sejal spoke very little English and language study with her was sometimes difficult. She had this penchant to use the words “rough” and “tough” interchangeably, though at times using the latter as an answer to the former. When Payal talks about her marriage, often in tears, Sejal always told her to get “tough,” using the English word in a Gujarati sentence (“*tough banaavavu joie, tough hovu joie j*”). I believe it is the sound of these English words that she likes. She always overemphasizes and rolls the “r” in rough and the retroflex “t” in tough making both words sound like original Gujarati words. To be “rough” means to be “coarse” and

prone to revert to “bad practices.” In this sense, Sejal often uses “rough” to refer to communities considered “backward” and “uneducated,” *halka loko* (lower category people).

Jains in Ahmedabad, like Sejal, are *Bania*, merchant groups, and belong to the well-respected segments of society. The term *Bania*, (or *vaniya*), however, also refers to many traditional mercantile communities in Gujarat including Hindu Vaishnavas and Muslim merchant groups like Memon, Khoja, and Vohra.³ Muslim merchant communities are certainly not considered *halka loko* (lower category people), neither do they identify freely with other Muslim groups. In fact, before the Gujarat pogroms, people would at times emphasize the differences between Muslim communities as much as the differences between Hindus. At the same time there was always a palpable tendency to more readily universalize the category “Muslim” than “Hindu.”

Thus there are two universalisms here, two competing unities. But one is treated as illegitimate because it only directs the unified minority into the direction of the enemy country Pakistan. Thus, when Sejal uses “we” to refer to “Hindu” in the above, she is not simply speaking as a Jain, nor merely as a *Bania* (*vaNiya*), which would suggest some ambiguity in her speech, but she is being honest, “transparent,” as she says to me, in referring to a less internally differentiated Hindu community.

Sejal works as a teacher in a Muslim girl’s college in the all-Muslim area of Jamalpur of the old city and thus has many years of experience with Muslims. As a Jain, she is one of only two non-Muslim faculty members. She tells us that forty-percent of the Muslim students in her school do not show up for class these days and that some Muslim families who can afford it even have left Gujarat for good. The parents are terrified of letting their daughters leave their homes. I ask if, given the situation in the city, she was ever threatened in the college. No, she says, her Muslim

³On Muslim communities in Gujarat see Misra (1985) and Engineer (1989b). Trading groups such as *Bania* or *Vaniya* are sometimes inclusive of Muslims (Shah 1955:87).

colleagues are very protective of her and worry for her safety. Sejal does not seem to find it strange that she can drive daily from West Ahmedabad to an all Muslim area without risk of harm, but her own Muslim students do not dare to leave their home to come to class.

Her principal is tense and has many problems on his mind now, she says. Too few students are coming. Sejal never particularly liked the principal, but she likes one of the peons in the school with whom she often jokes. A “peon” is the colloquial expression for a subordinate, a sort of attendant for small jobs.⁴ All offices, schools, colleges, and insurance companies in Ahmedabad are swarming with peons doing subordinate work and, in my observation, keeping the spirits up. Sejal tells me that Muslims are naturally “tough” and that usually “we feared them.” But now, finally, “they got it once.” I ask Sejal to explain this Muslim nature, so “tough” and threatening. I ask, “Why are Muslims like this?” She tells me that they see “the blood” when they butcher and slaughter. They are used to it. “They do not see what is right, what is wrong. They see the blood. If they can kill animals without a thought,” she proceeds logically, “how can they have problems killing humans?” I frown, but Sejal is unshaken in this conviction.

Payal relates an anecdote about a female Muslim roommate she had in college. The roommate had been her friend until they had a disagreement that ended in a serious quarrel. Her friend had such an angry demeanor, Payal explains, and such angry eyes that she was scared of her. Payal has a thin frame and appears very fragile. I ask Payal if they ever fought. No, she says, but nonetheless she felt physically intimidated when her roommate got angry. “There was this thing in her eyes,” she adds (*maajli aakh*). This roommate has been her only close Muslim friend.⁵ “They

⁴*Peon* is an English word with an interesting array of meanings. In Gujarat it is often used for “office attendant or messenger,” a subordinate worker of low status and education. Cf. WTNID

⁵I come to realize many months later, when we talk about race, that her Muslim friend was black.

are very honest,” Sejal continues, purposefully changing the tone in her voice, as if to say something good about Muslims. They are “a hardworking people,” and “sober,” like the subordinate peon in the school whom she likes. But “they are not like us,” she says, as “They do this butchering business.”

Payal continues that the problems between Muslims and Hindus have been going on since Partition. Sejal intervenes and takes back the initiative, “They do not speak our mother-tongue. Our mother tongue is Gujarati, not Urdu.” She is adamant about communicating something essential to me. “They will ask me, ‘*Tame Gujarati?*’ (“Are you Gujarati?”), as if they were not from here.” This all has been going on since Partition affirming the point that Payal just made. Sejal’s experience rings true. If one were to walk into neighborhoods of Ahmedabad today and unguardedly ask any Gujarati Muslim, “Tame Gujarati?” most will respond, “No, I am Muslim.”

Payal is unaware of what Sejal has revealed in her example. Payal is a Maharashtrian and her mother tongue is Marathi, although she was born and raised in Gujarat. If someone were to ask her if she is a Gujarati, she too would decline and say that she is “Marathi,” as I have witnessed many times. Payal speaks not Gujarati but Marathi and English at home as well as in her new in-laws home. The familial customs and festivals she follows are self-consciously Marathi, not Gujarati, and she often places emphasis on this distinction, firmly drawing the line between “those Gujaratis” and “us Marathis” in the same way that Sejal does between “those Hindus” and “us Jains.”⁶ Indeed, most Gujarati Brahmins generally emphasize regional distinctions and the difference between a Marathi and a Gujarati Brahmin. Being a Brahmin, however, Payal feels no ambiguity about whether she is “Hindu” or not.

⁶In order to lessen the terminological confusion when speaking of caste and ethnic belonging, Payal is a Marathi Brahmin, an *ethnic* Marathi who lives in Gujarat, *not* a member of the Marathi caste in Maharashtra..

This was not the first time that I had heard complaints that being “Muslim” and “Gujarati” were exclusive. The first time was with a Muslim friend, a professor for English literature, who described how as a young man from Saurashtra, he had attempted to join a cultural student organization at MS Baroda University. His peers sent him away claiming that as a “Muslim” he was not “Gujarati.” He insisted that he was a “*Gujarati* Muslim” but to no avail. His subsequent claim to then at least be considered a “Saurashtrian Muslim,” and thus also somewhat a Gujarati, was equally denied by telling him that there was no such thing as a “Gujarati Muslim.” Contrary to her interpretation, this experience of Muslim exclusion is not based on unwillingness to be Gujarati but on practices of exclusion from those groups who successfully have come to occupy the term.

In short, the term “Muslim” and “Gujarati” tend to exclude each other, in the contexts of both food and language. The experiences of Sejal and Payal reveal not only the relation of Gujarati to Muslim, but also how other differences, such as the Marathi, are brought into play. Even where the argument about being Gujarati is baldly inconsistent--Payal claiming Gujarati but herself being self-consciously external to Gujarat—most people do not perceive the differential treatment of Muslims. The two forms of externality to Gujarat, the “Muslim” and the “Maharashtrian,” are asymmetrical and not substitutable. The relation of difference of a Maharashtrian to Gujarat is not homologous to the relation of difference to a (Gujarati) Muslim to Gujarat. A Maharashtrian Brahman does not relate to Gujarat in the same way as a (Gujarati) Muslim does. Why?

In 1999, twice I spent whole days with one of Sejal’s classes at her college and discussed love and inter-confessional marriages with the young Muslim female students between the ages of fifteen and sixteen. They impressed me as not only intelligent and curious but also chillingly realistic about the consequences of romantic

love across religious boundaries. They giggled about my accent and mistakes in spoken Gujarati, always casting a careful gaze on their teacher. With a certain sobriety that did not bespeak their usual behavior and age, they explained to me that one should never confuse “dreaming” with “reality.” When some fell into Urdu or Hindi, Sejal, clearly annoyed, corrected the students firmly insisting that they repeat everything in proper (*shuddh*) Gujarati.

From my visits, I got the impression that the relationship between Sejal and her Muslim colleagues was cordial and respectful, though they obviously tried to avoid talking to me when Sejal was around. In her absence they were more relaxed but also careful never to utter a critical word about her. Hence I sensed a certain tension between them, not due to the fact that Sejal was a Jain but to her own way of relating to them. No Muslim could ever behave or talk the way Sejal did if they were at Gujarat University or in an all-Hindu area, surrounded by peers and authorities of the other religion. I believe Sejal’s behavior was lacking what we refer to as tact. Back then, I had asked her if there was anything awkward about being a Jain in a Muslim college full of Muslim teachers and students in an all-Muslim area in a highly communal city like Ahmedabad. She said no, notwithstanding her “strong feelings” (which I understand to mean ‘negative’) about Islam. She never complained to me about her situation and her work deeply satisfied her.

In many ways Sejal understood herself to follow in the footsteps of her academic advisor and guru, a Brahmin and self-professed Gandhian, who had also for many years taught Muslims and engaged in this as a sort of charitable mission project. Her professor had made a conscious decision to teach in a Muslim college, and Sejal seemed to follow him. She confided in me her emotional attachment to some of the young Muslim girls. She identified her suffering as a woman and her traumatic marital experience with what she thought many Muslim girls went through.

In our more intimate discussions Sejal had even seemed to me like a woman on the verge of discovering foreclosed homoerotic possibilities. She often expressed her complete indifference to men, marital life, and especially sexuality, while talking with incredible tenderness about her female students. The few times we touched upon the issue of her experiences with sexuality, a dark picture emerged of daily nocturnal abuses as well as what she understood to be bizarre demands by her former husband. For example, he wanted to include another woman in their sexual activity. Sejal only briefly hinted at these issues, always displaying a certain degree of disgust before digressing into more general questions about marriage. To make matters worse, she said, during her divorce proceedings in 1997, her lawyer, too, demanded sexual favors in exchange for good legal work. Sejal therefore dropped the lawyer and subsequently never received any marital compensation from her husband.

Fortunately, and in contradistinction to Payal, Sejal has a good paying job and can support herself well if she continues to live with her parents. Divorced and therefore considered by many a failure as a woman, she is nonetheless self-composed and authoritative. The few times I visited her at her home, her mother insulted the usually so composed Sejal, for petty reasons such as scalding milk for tea. Much of that may also have to do with Sejal's childlessness, which is all the more apparent when compared with her younger sister. Often Sejal's brother-in-law, a successful businessman, drops off his wife, Sejal's sister, along with their two children, for entire afternoons--and Sejal would be asked to serve them. Sometimes Sejal's parents call her "son," because their only son has left to work in Bangalore, and Sejal is in fact now taking care of her parents. But she tells me she does not like that either because, after all, she is a daughter, a person, not a role.

After her divorce, Sejal successfully immersed herself in a job as teacher and PhD researcher, supported by the professor at Gujarat University whom she holds in

the highest possible esteem. She told me repeatedly that she needs no man, only her academic colleagues. Once she even asked me to explain to her mother how many academic women in Germany were unmarried or divorced like her. About six months after the divorce, however, the cherished advisor suddenly recommended that she should get remarried. People at the institute had “started to talk” about them, and he is a married man of some repute. She agreed to his request on the condition that he find her a suitable husband.⁷

Months later, she told me that she would not be marrying a man, but she instead would “marry a daughter.” She means that she is marrying to help the daughter of a Brahmin widower who was found for her by her advisor. His wife had recently died, leaving the daughter motherless. Sejal spent considerable time with the daughter before the wedding in order to accustom her slowly to a “new mother.” Several times Payal and I met Sejal together with her prospective daughter. I remember these encounters as being rather awkward and stiff. What of the fact that Sejal insists the marriage is to “a daughter” and not “a man?” Payal confessed to me her worries that whatever deal was struck between Sejal and her future husband, and some “deal” would always be struck., she does not believe that Sejal will get away with playing only the mother. She will also have to play the wife. Payal specifically

⁷I have witnessed several cases of female students strongly attached to their male professors. Usually these attachments are carefully expressed in Platonic form, and become a source of turmoil only when the student is not “married off” in time. Stories of scandalous affairs between professors and their female students are exchanged between young men at teashops around Gujarat University. University professors often take a leading or advisory role in finding a suitable marriage partner for students. In one case with which I am familiar, the libidinal attachment between professor and student ended so abruptly that a strong feeling of loss and disappointment resulted. The professor was blamed for a mistaken marriage as the student thought that *he* --of all people-- should have known what *she* needed. In my opinion, the substitution of professor with husband failed not so much because the student “loved” only her professor, but rather, because attachment to the professor does not result in the same loss of freedom and recognition that accompanies marriage. It is unlikely that women’s education alone will be sufficient to combat gender discrimination as long as there is no alternative to the compulsory institution of marriage. The “educated daughter” experiences just another round of disappointment than her illiterate or non-university educated sister. The daughter not only feels abandoned by her parents after marriage but also by her academic advisor and “friend,” the one person she trusts most and to whom she is allowed to relate openly.

referred to the inevitable sexual demands of the husband. It was as if Sejal feels she is replacing the Muslim girls of her college with the new motherless daughter of her future Brahmin husband.

In April 2002 Sejal married and assumed a “Hindu identity,” which poses no problem for her as a Jain. Her new husband, Yagnesh, is a translator, and thus far, Sejal tells me, he is kind and intelligent and happy to have found such a devoted mother as her. Despite initial problem with her in-laws behavior at home, for all I know, the marriage is successful. Sejal last told me that she was “happy.”

8.2 The auto-biography of a goat: pain beyond death

In Ahmedabad’s inner city, in the lanes around Manek Chowk not far from Pustak Bazaar off Gandhi road, I am in search for answers. I want to understand if there is anything else but tradition that accounts for the “vegetarian ideology of Gujaratis,” as one of my language professors, himself very strict vegetarian, insisted. I ask a bookseller, who has an interesting assortment of books on local mother Goddesses in “plain Gujarati” (*shudh Gujarati*), if he also has works that locals read on *shudh shakahari* (“pure vegetarian”). Having identified me as a foreigner, perhaps an NRI (Non-Resident Indian), he is curious and asks me about my food habits. I confess the meat eating practices of my family and home country Germany. I even admit to him that I sometime eat “vegetarian eggs” at night on Ashram road close to the Gujarat Vidhyapit, as many male Gujaratis do out of sight of their wives and neighbors.⁸ He smiles appreciating my honesty and tells me there is no such thing as a “vegetarian egg” and gets me the immensely popular booklet “Inda Zahar.”⁹ “Don’t

⁸Some egg lorries advertise that their eggs are “vegetarian eggs,” that is, eggs that are not fertilized and thus entail no complicity in killing when consumed. Some Jain and Hindu egg-eaters excuse their dietary transgression through his fact, although most people I know feel this excuse to be a tasteless hoax.

⁹English translation: “Poison in Eggs and Meat,” by Acharya Dr. Shri Ram Arya, n.d. Gaziabad: Amar Swami Parakashan.

listen to them,” meaning the *laariwalas* (lories) selling eggs at night, “they are cheaters.” Vegetarian eggs are aborted eggs. “They have made abortion,” he says.¹⁰ I pay for the little pamphlet on eggs.

But before I can leave, he remembers another book that I should read. His entire family has read it and it had a great influence on them all, he claims. His father has read it, his mother and younger sister, his older married brother and his sister in law. I know the name of the book already. It is Gopinath Aggarwal’s “Vegetarian or Non-Vegetarian. Choose yourself,” a little booklet in its 5th edition.¹¹ I heard about the book many times before I finally hold it in my hands and read it. I saw it commented upon by angered Muslim housewives in a public debate called, “Is non-vegetarian Food permitted or prohibited for a Human Being?” The contentious debate was held between Dr. Zakir Naik, President of the Islamic Research Foundation and Rashmibhai Zaveri of the Indian Vegetarian Congress. It was recorded on video in Bombay sold by the Islamic Research Foundation in Ahmedabad and Baroda, where I got hold of it in 2000. The debate is worth a description in its own right, which I will not give here. My Patel neighbors in Narangpura, members of the strictly vegetarian Swaminarayan *sampradaya*, too, had recommended to me Gopinath Aggarwal’s work.

But what was described to me as a book, is really just a booklet, almost just a little leaflet (43 pages long), un-assuming and almost humble looking given its

¹⁰ “Poison in Eggs and Meat” (n.d.: 47) argues: “It is propagated by vested interests that eggs are vegetarian. It is not scientific because eggs cannot be obtained from plants. Their only source is from Animal-birds. Infact, still born or aborted eggs. ‘Unfertilized Eggs’ cannot be accepted as vegetarian on the scientific basis, as these are, on maturity, capable of getting fertilized.” A little later it says, “unfertilized eggs cannot be considered lifeless because, “electrical activity can be recorded from the surface of unfertilized eggs.” There are many such interesting obscure booklets with more or less the same content. They are usually attributed to a religious precept (“acharya”) who explains the serious matter. This literature is characterized by references to modern technology and Western science, religious traditions, as well as Vedic authority (the later in general encompassing the former). One such booklet written in a Hindi’ized Gujarati has the exclamatory title, “Inda! Inda! Inda!; Jher! Jher, Jher!” (Eggs! Eggs! Eggs!: Poison! Poison! Poison!)” by Archarya Bhagvat Sri Vijaysuryod Ishvarji Maharaj. Ahmedabad, 1989. It is a version of the “Inda Zahar,” mentioned above. I found this literature interesting for its always astonishingly imagery, the expression of fear and disgust, which haunts the pages.

¹¹Gopinath Aggarwal (1991).

popularity amongst certain people. All the contributions in the book deal with questions of vegetarianism and meat eating. The book is written in a familiar style. Self-help books with pragmatic recommendations on what to do, how to do it, and how to think about what one should do inundate the Gujarati book market. The book in question reminds me of many similar examples of this sort of self-help literature in Gujarat that I developed an--admittedly perverse--taste in viewing and reading. There are books on how to be a Hindu, how to remain celibate (*brahmacharya*) despite marriage, or how to develop a powerful personality. Alternately, one can find books explicating how to do *namaz* (prayer) and be a good Muslim, or financially and socially successful, etc. All these books always made the impression on me of a deep identity crisis and a sort of confusion about who one is and how one might improve one's life. It is important to note that this literature encompasses religious and social divisions including all communities respectively. It is not uncommon to find a Muslim who recommends you a book on Ayurveda or Vedic astrology, or a Christian who reads a Swami's life wisdoms. This grey literature is normative to the core; it is all about the "should," which dominates in tonality its entire spectrum.¹²

Through constant repetitions the hybrid style of this literature always oscillates between pragmatic everyday solutions to everyday problems, timeless Vedic wisdom (or Islamic), modern scientific proof, and encouragement from countless Indian Saints (of all religions) as well as selective citations of Western thinkers and philosophers.

Finally there are often practical suggestions at the end what to do and how to counter if one meets someone who is opposed to what the book is endorsing as if the reader still needs more support after an amazing amassing of facts and statistics and so

¹²It usually follows a market logic trying to address as many different individuals as possible, not only one specific group or caste, even if its dietary suggestions seem obviously biased and derived from one particular tradition. Its universalizing appeal parallels the universalizing claim of *ahimsa*, which, according to Schmidt (1968), always had a universalistic *Anspruch* (claim), which was not necessarily accepted, nor practiced.

on. For me this style always invokes the impression that the author still does not entirely trust the effects of his own book, his own thoughts, his own self-proclaimed “crusade.” It always has a missionary character, as it offers solutions to the problem of conviction, that is, that someone else thinks differently about the same issues.

In 17 short chapters, Aggarwal’s booklet ranges from a description of physical attributes of non-meat eating animals to those of carnivores, nutritional analyses of non-vegetarian to a vegetarian diets, financial analyses of diets, a list of the diseases and health risks of a non-vegetarian diet, religious bans on flesh-foods (including Islamic Sufi teachings), to the moral and spiritual degradation caused by meat eating. Its style is familiar in its insistence on accumulation of facts, examples, and authoritative utterances. All in all a clear picture emerges that vegetarianism is the true nature of the human being. Like other such publications, the overall rhetoric is one of “science” while citing classic Indian scriptures. Because the book deals with dietary questions the references to Western doctors, scientists, surveys and studies are particularly numerous besides the usual citations from scriptures, Rushis, and Gurus. By claiming identity with herbivores and herbivore animals, renunciation is everywhere coupled with care, a care for the world and the lives in it. Most significantly a certain contradictory tension between cathecting the world (love) and de-cathecting it (asceticism) is palpable throughout which seems never to be resolved.

The following text stands somewhat obliquely to the other short articles in the booklet without any explicit commentary or explanation. But it is the most interesting and unique in the volume. Although the piece is probably written by Aggarwal it inhabits a goat in the first person singular. “Auto-biography of a goat” holds more than the word “auto-biography” initially promises. The biography starts with reminiscences *before* actual birth and ends in a restaurant long *after* the narrator, a slaughtered goat, is already dead.

The “Auto-biography” of a Goat

“Like all other animals, after traversing through many rebirths, when I entered into my mother goat’s womb, and suffered the ignominy [sic!] of being encaged there for five months and took birth, I found this world a nice and pleasant place to live in. Man and his little children treated me with affection, held me in their laps and gave me tender green leaves to eat. Drinking my goat-mother’s milk, I began to grow quickly. Her master used to pet me and take me to his farm, where I used to feed myself on green leaves. He was not annoyed even when I evacuated my body waste in his field. When I asked my mother the reason for this, I was told that our waste turns into manure for his plants, giving him great yields. That is why he was never angry with me.

Time continued to pass gradually and I went on living contentedly with my companions. After about an year and a half, a stranger came to my master. They talked for some time and then my master brought together about 40-50 of my companions and we were made to stand in a group. Then a big van arrived there and we were forcibly thrust into it. I wanted to go to my mother, but could not. When I moved toward her, an ugly-looking man hit me with a stick.¹³ Helplessly, we squeezed, ourselves in the van. My head began to reel due to over-crowding. My companions were also in bad shape. Fear was writ large on every body’s face and the jerks caused by the moving vehicle was scratching out skins. The day went by and night fell and another day and night passed but the van was constantly on the move. Twice the van-owners threw us some food but it barely sufficed to fill half our bellies. Next day, the van stopped in a bid city. A tall, bearded man approached the van, he

¹³Emphasis mine. Probably indirect reference to a member of a lower Hindu caste, imagined as dark skinned, considered “ugly,” and doing menial dirty jobs.

gave the van-owner something and we were all turned over to him.¹⁴ Our new master drove us with sticks to a house. He made all of us stand in the sun. Restlessness caused by sunshine, hunger and thirst, and to top it the fear of the stick were driving us towards our death.

After a long wait we were pushed into the house. A man sitting there was examining my companions with some tube attached to his ears. When our turn came our owner gave him some thing, and he send us inside without checking.¹⁵ I could not understand this but a senior companion of mine told me that he was a doctor and it meant our death was approaching us. Already half-dead with hunger, thirst and tiredness, I lost all my appetite on hearing this and could not swallow whatever little was given to us. Even water hurt instead of soothing my throat. Then the door of an adjoining room was opened and what I saw made me tremble with terror. My legs refused to carry my weight and darkness appeared before my eyes. Cries and wails of my companions coming out of that room made me weep. I tried to cry but the voice could not come out of my mouth and throat. I tried to run out but a man caught hold of both my hind legs and threw me into that room where a horrible person looking like a giant was slitting the throat of one of my companions with a massive knife. Suddenly, a thought flashed in my mind. Is this the same man who claims to be the descendant of sages and saints and who always sings songs of pity and non-violence? No, this cannot be the same man because even wild animals, who are solely dependent on flesh diet, never indulge in such mass killing as he was doing.¹⁶ While such thoughts were

¹⁴Emphasis mine. This is an indirect reference to the Muslim butcher caste (*kasaai, kureishi*) through reference to the beard.

¹⁵This is an indirect reference to the practice of bribing doctors not to examine the health of the animals to be slaughtered.

¹⁶Emphasis mine. This is an indirect assertion that flesh eating cannot ever have been an authentic “Hindu” or “Jain” custom (“Is this the same man who claims to be the descendant of sages and saints and who always sings songs of pity and non-violence?”). The “same man” means to say that, logically, the practice of flesh eating must have come by way of Muslim, Christian, and/or Adivasi culture and is thus not of Hindu (or “Aryan” origin).

passing through my mind, a man caught hold of my ears and pushed me toward that horrible man. The pain now turned my fear into rage, I tried to pull myself away, but in vain. My frustration resulted in boiling of my blood, froth started oozing from my mouth and involuntarily I passed urine and solid waste. But no one took pity on my helpless condition. Rather two other persons caught hold of me. One caught me by the legs and the other one started cutting my throat with a dagger. Fountain of blood spurted from my neck and my entire body was filled with pain. Now there was no alternative, but to pray for instant death. I only wished they would kill me with one blow and not prolong my agony. But no, I was destined to suffer more because the knife went only half way through my neck.¹⁷ Death was still far away and every moment of this torture dragged on like a year. Cursing my fate and remembering God, I continued praying and waiting for death.

Darkness gradually began to descend before my eyes and I started losing consciousness. Perhaps breathing had also stopped. It seemed as if I am dead and messengers of death were carrying me to the sky. But wait –what is that? My body still lay in that slaughter-house and now two persons were pulling my hide away from the flesh and fat below my hide. They threw my hide on one side and flesh on the other. After some time a person purchased my flesh and took it to the kitchen of a hotel. There a person sliced my whole flesh into small pieces. Probably, all these tortures were too little for this God like man, because it is his hereditary habit to rub salt on the wounds and this was still due. Why they should leave it for me? So after changing my meat to pulp he not only added salt and chillies [sic!] but fried me on fire too and thus gave ample evidence of this barbarity. I was wondering what next, when I saw another person arranging my meat in a plate and taking it out of the kitchen into a big

¹⁷This is an indirect reference to the Muslim custom to slaughter “*halal*,” a method of killing many non-Muslims in Gujarat consider utterly cruel because the animal is killed while still alive. The heartbeat of the dying animal is supposed to allow the blood (considered impure in Islam) to exit the body as completely as possible before the meat can be carved up for preparation and consumption.

decorated room where a young couple was sitting. As soon as the plate was laid before the couple, the male among them started eating my meat with a flourish of delight.¹⁸ But the female sitting opposite him appeared to dislike eating my meat and it seemed that she was just giving company to her husband.¹⁹

By now, I had reached the court of 'Dharamraj' and was standing in the queue of many souls. The loud voice of 'Chitragupta,' who was narrated the account of good and bad deeds of everybody, attracted my attention. On my turn, Chitraguptaji revealed that in my previous birth I had feasted on the flesh of a goat. As a consequence of that, I had to born [sic!] as goat and offer my meat to others. He also revealed that the persons, I had seen in the hotel eating my flesh were my own loving children of my previous birth, whom I had loved so much that for their sake I had staked everything in life. "Now that they are eating your meat in their present birth, they will have to suffer similar punishments for this in their next birth." Hearing this my soul trembled. How could I like my progeny to suffer the same tortures as had been inflicted on me? I, therefore, requested Dharamraj ji to forgive all of them because I too, had forgiven them and wanted no revenge of any kind. Dharamraj ji took pity on me and graciously ordered that, since as a goat I had eaten only leaves and creepers, and had done no one any harm, and had forgiven everyone, I should be reborn next as a man. My soul was thus sent to earth to take the human life.

Entering into my next re-incarnation, I vowed that now I would behave with the utmost rectitude and be a votary of truth and non-violence. Far from killing any bird or animal or eating its flesh, I would desist from causing the least pain to any living being, nor do anyone any harm. I would always offer protection to every living being. With these thoughts, I entered the womb of my new mother."²⁰

¹⁸Note the cannibalistic undertones.

¹⁹This is an indication of the gendering of dietary behavior in India, where many more men consume non-vegetarian food than women.

²⁰All emphases are mine.

It is significant how in the above account the violence of the slaughter extends beyond the mere act of taking life in the slaughterhouse. In fact, the violence of killing flows as “torture” into the activity of meat preparation and consumption as well. Violence contaminates all persons and activities associated with the flesh of the goat-victim. Even the mere witnessing of meat consumption in a restaurant by a wife ends in the horrific revelation of a cannibal feast of two siblings devouring their own father. The goat after leaving the womb describes its happy life with a farmer and then a terrible death by the hand of a “bearded man,” the Muslim butcher. The goat is killed in a terrible manner as it is not killed with one stroke (“I wish they would kill me with one blow”).

This is a reference to the Muslim sacrificial prescription to slaughter *halal*. When slaughtering, Muslims will typically make the first incision at the animal’s main artery and then place the animal head down in order to let the blood exit the body while the heart of the animal is still pumping. In turn, Hindus are said to slaughter *jhatkaa*, which is a one-stroke kill (usually of the head), considered more humane. *Jhatko maarvo* means, “to strike a sudden blow” and the causative verb *jhatkaavavu* means and “to cut off with one stroke” (GED, TMGED). In Gujarat, the slow manner of killing is always associated with the “Muslim manner,” and is always considered cruel (“the knife went only half way through my neck”).²¹ Muslims in turn will claim

²¹ According to Islamic custom, animals have to be slaughtered *halal*, that is, the incision on the throat has to be made in such a way, that the heart keeps on beating for a short while and the blood exits the body of the slaughtered animal victim as fast as possible. Muslims claim, when asked, that the animal is not suffering, even if moving, because the blood supply to the brain is interrupted immediately. In Islamic conceptions the blood of the animal is the carrier of much disease and has to be fully exited. Sikhs and Hindus, in turn, are said to slaughter *jhatkaa*, that is, with one stroke, in order to minimize the suffering of the animal. Muslims argue against this claim that this does not allow for exiting of the blood in a proper manner. Although an important distinction conceptually in Gujarat, I have seen many butchers of whatever religion slaughter *halal* in practice, for reasons of taste--because the meat remains more tender if the blood flows completely out. At least this is what even some Hindus and Sikhs will claim.

that as the blood flow to the brain is interrupted by a professional butcher's cut, the *halal* method of slaughter would actually not translate to more pain in the animal. An animal not slaughtered *halal* is considered impure (*haram*) and carrier of diseases by Muslims.²²

In closer inspection, the *jhatkaa* method of slaughter is usually identified with the Sikhs, who are always included in the category "Hindu."²³ It should be noted here that many Hindus in Gujarat deny outright that there ever was any tradition of animal sacrifice at all in Gujarat or for a long time due to its tradition of ahimsa and vegetarianism. The usual strategy of middle class and especially high caste people in dealing with the fact of blood sacrifice is either to displace the practice onto other regions (preferably Punjab or Bengal), other communities like the Vagri, whose membership in "Hindu" is anyway ambiguous,²⁴ or other historical periods altogether. In the latter displacement, unwanted customs are believed to have been abolished a long time ago, through religious reformation under the influence of Jainism and Hindu Vaishnava traditions (e.g. the Swaminarayan tradition). This religious activism is understood as agent of civilization.²⁵

However diverse the interpretations of the experience of dying and killing are, there is no closure after death in the account above. After a moment of surprise, the goat's spirit finds itself back in the slaughter house after it's own death. The author says: "It seemed as if I am dead and messengers of death were carrying me to the sky. But wait - what is that?" Although the goat is now dead it can nonetheless "see" and can "feel" what happens next. In other words, after the goat is killed, the goat's

²²It is interesting to note here that in ancient Vedic as well as more contemporary non-Muslim animal sacrifice (Alsdorf 1962, Jha 2002, Werth 1996), the sacrificial victim was throttled before being cut in order to a) reduce the experience of pain and, and b) to better control the flow of contaminating blood. Pain and blood are thus the contaminants for reciprocal violence.

²³The killing by a single, or two, strokes, is described in Westphal Hellbusch and Westphal (1976:180).

²⁴Vagri, for example, traditionally celebrated *jaatar*, a festival of the Mother Goddess, in which buffaloes were traditionally sacrificed. The custom has been rendered invisible and secret today.

²⁵Majumdar identifies periods and rulers engaged in converting Hindu groups to vegetarianism (1965:46pp.101pp).

consciousness becomes bifurcated, one dealing with the experience of reaching Dharamraj, the other witnessing what happens to its own flesh --its own body-- on earth. What now follows seems like a festival of violence and torture after the killing has already been committed. Now, the goat experiences being cut up (“changing my meat to pulp”), the burning sensation invoked by the usage of salt and chilies (“hereditary habit to rub-salt on the wounds”),²⁶ the heat of the cooking fire (“fried me on fire too”), and finally the uncanny experience of being served (“arranging my meat in a plate”) and being eaten in a “decorated room” of a restaurant.

The traditional separation of material body and subtle body (spirit) is confused here. The narrative proceeds as if the spirit, the goat’s soul, remains present in its own body from life to death further into being butchered, cooked, and lastly eaten. The goat witnesses all, the entire time until its consumption, its incorporation into another body. Then the account suddenly stops. But one wonders, why here? Why not follow the voyage further through the digestive organs of the meat eater into his colon, be evacuated into a toilet, enter a sewage, and find oneself back on the field as fertilizer? The goat’s spirit is in the flesh, while it is being cooked and eaten after it has already been killed. Thus the author—who is the goat’s spirit--leaves no doubt that not only the butcher, but also the meat cooker *and* the meat consumer are committing a “barbarity.” They all have in their own way a relation to the goat’s murder. The only difference is that the butcher is fully aware of the pain he inflicts in killing, whereas the meat cooker and the consumer of meat are unaware of the pain caused by pulping, cutting, spicing-up, and finally eating meat.

The text not merely wants the cooker and the consumer of meat to understand their “complicity” and their “guilt” because of the kill. Moreover the account wants to

²⁶The habit is “hereditary” because in Gujarat groups are often conceived according to what they eat and how they prepare their food. In communal Ahmedabad, Muslims in general are considered experts in cutting, slicing, and using knives.

terrify the cooker and eater of meat by how life lingers in the meat after death. When the eater looks at his meat, s/he is supposed to see a conscious goat, not the mere substance of “meat.” The eater is supposed to inhabit the goat, which sees a human being eating it. The eater is supposed to see himself as a goat seeing some else eating a goat, which is really himself. The meat eater is supposed to put himself in the meat that he is eating. That is truly a powerful way to enforce vegetarianism. This marks the emergence of disgust and the total identification with the animal victim.

We can see here the radicalization of *ahimsa*, which at the time of its emergence as an ethical doctrine, explicitly allowed for non-vegetarian consumption as long as the eater was not the killer, and the animal was not killed explicitly *for* the eater. There was no disgust at work back then. Meat was “the best of all foods” (Alsdorf 1962, Jha 2002, Schmidt 1968), but one should avoid the killing. One could eat meat and still escape the terrible consequences of the animal victim’s revenge by not falling under the shadow of its reciprocal violence. The complementarity between monk and layperson, or the complementarity of castes with their diverse hereditary functions and food habits, secured a workable separation that guarded against the threat of contamination with the violence unleashed by the killing. Certain necessary activities were displaced onto others, who with less danger could fulfill the work.²⁷

In the above text, however, complementarity finally collapses and makes room for a complete identification with the animal victim. The identification is so strong, that the victim’s spirit is never imagined to ever leave the flesh of the killed animal. But of course it is the human author’s own consciousness (in writing) which really is

²⁷This development is important because we can intuit from it that contemporary concern and care for the animal has its roots in the disgust for its flesh. Disgust metamorphoses into protection, and animal protection becomes the veneer for disgust. We can see in Bharat, who as an ex-farmer has no interest but rather disdain for Jaina animal activism, a disgust that has not yet become animal protection. He once expressed resentment against urban Jainas, who often chastise animal herders and farmers for their treatment of animals in the state. They have never milked a cow or dealt with a recalcitrant buffalo in their life, he had it. They had no right to comment on a farmer’s daily work of which they understood little.

the spirit in the dead animal's flesh. Now, an entire series of persons (the butcher, the laborer, the cook, and the restaurant couple) are understood only *in their relation to* the slaughter of the animal victim and the preparation and consumption of a meat, that still holds life (animated) and thus are responsible for the torture. No one is uninvolved but that person that chooses to eat no meat at all, and would not tolerate any eating of meat in the first place.

The cruelty imagined is not the single slaughter of a goat. The text insists on an artificial multiplication of cruelty, and its imagination seems to resist the finality of death, an acceptance of death as an absolute end. Death as the end, indeed, can never be imagined and thus one might argue that the author is simply consistent, thinking through logically the reality of slaughter in the face of the fact that the content of nothing (death) cannot take any ideational form in thought.

Death cannot be imagined, thus the author imagines life in death, the living dead. The author's imagination is spectral. It follows the logic of a Hollywood horror movie, where the author plays with the same material that commercial movies play with, where the dead are not dead, the living are really dead, and all boundaries have been shifted and are reversed in horror. We can be scared while watching the movie (a form of identification), but most will not end becoming philanthropists by watching the "Body snatchers" or an "Aliens" movie. As much as it might be entertaining, the imagination of horror does usually not make for a good *Menschenfreund*, compassion and care for the victim. The same is true here. The imagination of horror meted out to a goat in pain, does not bespeak one's love or care for it.

The solution would be to take death seriously as that which can't be thought about. Death would be the boundary of imagination and thus after the death of the goat, one would have to turn one's attention to something else. One would have to let go of the goat. This is what substitution and sacrifice is all about. In Vedic sacrifice,

once the offering had departed (was killed) communication was complete. For the author, however, similar to Mahatma Gandhi's experience of the goat in his stomach, the goat keeps on calling out in pain (1927:19). Sacrifice has become murder, but a murder of horrific proportions. The author's awakening to the animal's pain, the goat's consciousness, leads to no peace, but only to a sort of madness, where everyday activities like cooking and eating become horrific, while the goat feels a torture that never ends.

The violence of the slaughter contaminates them all. The "bearded butcher" is the killer, the "ugly-looking man" is a daily wage earner,²⁸ the cook preparing the animal victim for consumption tortures the flesh with his burning spices, the wife of the couple allows her husband to consume the victim's flesh, and the husband eats it. They are all involved; they all take part in the torture of the animal victim, and are thus responsible for the goat's plight. There is no functional complementarity anymore.

As if that were not enough, however, a trans-generational accountability is also introduced. Not only is the slaughtered goat punished as an individual for the transgression of indulging goat meat in his previous birth, but the punishment includes having one's own children eat one's own flesh. The couple in the restaurant suddenly morph into siblings in a previous birth, the son and daughter of the victim's previous birth as a human father. The father is eaten by his own children. There is a slippage here, as we are never told that the woman in the restaurant (in this birth a wife to a man, and a sister to her brother in a previous birth), actually ever ingests any meat. But at the end of the account she is guilty of the cannibal feast anyway. The

²⁸One wonders why the author describes the man with the stick as "ugly." Probably this is an indirect reference to members of lower Hindu castes, imagined as dark skinned considered "ugly," and doing menial dirty jobs like working in Muslim slaughter-houses. Lower status groups like Chamar or Vagri are regularly identified with hunting, animal slaughter (sacrifice), and meat eating (Werth 1996, Westphal-Hellbusch 1976, Briggs 1920).

cannibalism of children eating their own father in the form of a goat (as a punishment for *his* consumption of goat meat in a previous birth), lead them inevitably to have to be reborn as animal victims themselves in future births and become killed and consumed in the same terrible way. It almost seems here, as if one's own sins facilitate one's children's sins too.

The contamination with violence knows no ending in the above account and there is true excess in the telling. The terrible description of the slow slaughter of the goat results in no closure, death brings no ending of pain and horror. The cook dressing the meat is only adding pain to an open wound. The wife abstaining from meat while witnessing its consumption is not innocent but encouraging. And the victim-goat's sins of the previous birth, atoned for through the horrible experience of being reborn as a goat and slaughtered, is transferred to his children were it but for Chitraguptaji's pity. The killing of a goat—one is tempted to say, the “mere” killing of a goat—ends in a cannibalist nightmare of cosmic proportion engulfing not only many people but their respective incarnations too (compare Figure 27A and 27B).

The major technique of this rhetoric is the fact that any animal that humans can eat potentially could be one's own relative. Note that it is not enough to claim one is eating an animal that might carry the soul of a being that used to be a human in a previous birth. It is not only cannibalism, which is invoked here but kinship as such. More important than cannibalism, which inundates the entire account, is the horror of imagining being eaten by one's own children or eating one's own father. Vegetarianism strikes at the center of the social unit, one's nuclear family. The cannibal moment is a scandalous one, but in that lies not its uniqueness. In a sense, meat eating for orthodox vegetarians in Gujarat always carries a cannibalist undertone. After all, all meat (*ghosh*) is ultimately flesh (*maas*). But this account implicitly makes clear that eating meat might very well mean that you are eating some of your

own relatives. It is not the father or mother eating their children, thus not a reversal of usual forms of nurture in kinship ties. It is the children who eat their father who has loved them so much and sacrificed everything for them. To eat one's father is to hate him.



A



B

Figure 27. The “meatness of meat.” Retribution for culinary violence in the afterworld: In A, being eaten by flesh-eating demons (*pishacho*), in B, by animals, those whose lives one has taken. These depictions are taken from the walls of Gita Mandir in Behrampura, East-Ahmedabad, a very “tense” area.

8.2.1 Postscript: The humanity of a goat

A question looms over the anonymous autobiography of a goat, whose author pretends to experience what it is like to be a goat in a goat-eating society, which is also greatly invested in the practice of sacrifice and *ahimsa* with which this dissertation concerns itself. Is the author's feeling that brings him to view and dramatize the horror of animal slaughter not legitimate? Is it possible for me, by writing this dissertation lamenting the act of human slaughter, to simultaneously dismiss this author's lament of animal slaughter? Is the only difference between us that his definition of humanity encompasses a goat, whereas mine does not? Am I

merely limiting my claim of humanity's protections to those creatures that are closest to me, human beings, my own kith and kin?

I, too, encounter problems accepting certain forms of death. For example, while identifying a sacrificial theme in the killing of Muslims in Gujarat, I simultaneously resist defining the pogrom slaughter as a sacrifice, that is, as a legitimate killing that defies the definition of murder. I resist how apologists attempt to legitimize the violence by describing the pogrom as a spontaneous reaction of unselfconscious crowds breathed in an anger incarnate, which united them as "Hindus."

Am I, like the memory of the missing women of Partition referred to in chapter three, not also holding on to the dead and entering into the sphere of the spectral? Unable to accept the death meted out to Muslims in the city, I reconstruct the mutilation of bodies during the pogrom, based on reports and interviews, pictures and images, on what I saw and what was heard. Are my reconstructions, then, spectral, too, in a sense? Are they also not creating ghosts where there is merely unfathomable death? I admit that it is hard for me to let go of the manner and form that death took when it swept across Ahmedabad, beginning in the morning of February 27, 2002 in Godhra. The feeling of helplessness, and the shame of fear, makes my witnessing of Gujarat's violent explosion sometimes feel like I am complicit in it. Nonetheless, I do accept the dead as being gone, their silence as terminal. What distinguishes my account from those I have examined is that I do not have to invent ghosts in order to make them speak.

In 2003, shortly after Narendra Modi had shockingly been re-elected to the office of Chief Minister, I met, together with NGO workers, with female survivors of Naroda Patia in Vatva, all Muslim women who had lost husbands and children, who had been raped, beaten, humiliated, and then forgotten. Their talk, their sobriety and

matter-of-factness, rendered me speechless, and I was confronted with my own implicit preconceptions. After months of talking, reading, imagining, witnessing violence, I had expected those who were its most severe victims to act and talk differently.

Unimpressed and even bored with the umpteenth delegation charged with investigating what can hardly be described in words, these women seemed to know very well that a few NGO people could not really help them, in the face of so much denial and active resistance amongst mainstream Gujaratis, to make the perpetrators responsible for what had happened to them. To this day, without quite understanding why, I remain deeply moved by their non-dramatic composure, and, for lack of a better word, their bravery.

Although there was absolutely no reason to hold back, the women engaged in no blaming of “Hindus” or “Gujaratis,” vented no indiscriminate hatred and anger against the other community. They seemed to have a clear understanding who and what was responsible for their own victimization and they did not want to remember their loved ones for the manner in which they were killed. They had survived a horrific storm and they knew it. The election only saddened and disappointed them; they were not despondent. Perhaps they understood that Modi’s pathetic re-election revealed all too well the silent complicity of Gujaratis, their frantic fear of becoming unraveled and being held accountable for what so many had taken part in, actively or passively. Despite this, they did not allow the inhumanity they had experienced to strip them from their own. They remained sane while being surrounded by a sort of collective insanity.

In contrast to the author of the goat story, who inhabits someone else in order to dramatize his own rage, they resisted becoming my sacrificial goat. They did not allow me to inhabit them in order to acquire a state of dramatic intensity merely in the

service of myself. In fact, in my case, the surviving victims will simply not allow me to appropriate their pain. What a mum goat allows for, especially when it is dead, humans might desist from, that is, become the imaginary vessel for someone else's narcissist rage.

The rage of violence is always worst where it remains unacknowledged and denied. The slaughter of a goat is certainly nothing of beauty, but in the absence of a world free of violence, the equation of a human with a goat can only mean that violence will be displaced onto something else, preferably another human being who is in the way, who will in turn be blamed for the violence. In this movement, the real source of violence remains concealed. To hide the source of one's anger even to oneself produces the worst form of violence, a violence that can't speak its name. It is here, where I differ with the author of the goat auto-biography.

The author, it seems, identifies not animals with humans, but with animals against humans, because he is incapable of identifying the origin of violence within himself. I, for my part, would prefer to slaughter a goat and share its meat with other humans, especially those who are brave and care not to hate even when they have all the reasons on earth to do so.

8.3 The city body: Outer and inner demons

8.3.1 Fasting against sacrifice

On February 23, 2002, three weeks before we meet at *Mehfil* and four days before the Godhra incident that inaugurated the Gujarat pogroms, Sejal held a strict fast (*upvaas*). Although she was sick and feeling weak, she joined her parents and neighbors in a Jain locality of Ambavadi where she lives. When I call her on the phone that morning, she tells me I should not come to visit her today. She will fast the entire day. The reason was Bakri-Id, a Muslim festival at which goats were being

sacrificed, she explained. Jains all over Gujarat were very concerned and unhappy about this. Some Jains would eat “*no white as bakaraa are white*” (sic!). Some would not even touch water.

8.3.2 The hidden cow in the slaughtered goat

Sejal affirms what many Gujaratis, including Muslims, have told me, that the term Bakri-Id derives from the Gujarati word for a female goat, *bakari*, which is also the standard dictionary entry of the term. However, the onomatopoeic ring of *bakari*-spoken *bakri*, *bakru*, and *bakro*, for female, neuter and masculine respectively--resembles closely the Arab term for cow, *baqr*.²⁹ She is not the only one who makes no mention of this odd fact.³⁰

There is indeed much oddity in this strange little omission, not only because many Muslims share in it. After all, very few Muslims in Gujarat understand Arabic and even those Muslims who claim to do so often barely do, as many Middle Eastern students at M.S. Baroda University repeatedly complained to me. The Muslim prayers (*namaz*, the Arabic *salah*) are usually learned by heart and the Qu’ran is read in Gujarati, Urdu, English, and merely recited in Arabic. The way Arabic is used by Muslims often resembles the way Sanskrit is used and (mis)understood by many Hindus.³¹ It goes without saying that even if aware, many Muslims will not want to allude imprudently to the sound resemblance of *bakaru* and *baqr*. The Gujarati *bakari*

²⁹I want to thank Tarek el-Ariss at New York University for this information.

³⁰Jonah Blank (2001) gives some descriptions of goat sacrifices among the Daudi Bohra, mainly in Bombay, but does not allude to this fact either.

³¹Being ignorant of both, I unfortunately cannot add any insight into this fascinating terrain. I rely here merely on informal discussions that I conducted with a many people, from Middle Eastern students to local Sanskritists, linguists, Persian and Arabic language and literature teachers at Gujarat University, and historians at MS Baroda University. One professor, for example, complained to me that he has not had a single student in many years of teaching able to research the history of the city of Ahmedabad on the basis of Arabic and Persian texts; knowledge of these languages is completely absent among young Muslims, not to speak of members of other groups. But worse, there is, as he had it, among Muslims absolutely no interest in them. These are significant comments at a time when young Muslims increasingly identify more strongly with an external world of Islam, and Hindutva discourse is pregnant with historical rhetoric and “Vedic revival,” a sort of half-baked “Sanskritism.”

fortifies against the accusation implicit in *baqr*. The onomatopoetic slippage between cow and goat, *baqr* and *bakari*, is rarely mentioned.

It is left suspended in the air, as if recalling a secret memory of history better not openly discussed, a secret that makes for community. Although I have been witness to actual bull slaughter and endless accusations of cow slaughter, no Muslim has ever told me that *bakari* comes from the Arabic *baqr*, although there would have been no reason why this etymology, even if false, should not be appropriated and perceived, or why I would be denied any insight of it. Nor is there generally any avoidance exploiting the equivocal by Muslims, quite on the contrary. I have often experienced an almost childish fascination and creative play with the ambiguity of Gujarati or English terms and phrases forming a sort of linguistic defiance amongst Gujarati Muslims against that which they were excluded from. To allude to slippages and ambiguities of expressions through jokes and double entendres is a favorite pastime of many Gujaratis generally.

While speaking to a group of mixed aged Muslim men who I met during my language studies in 2001 in Baroda, I am told several such jokes. The conversations took place during the emotionally charged time immediately following 9/11. We had discussed more seriously the recent attack on Afghanistan, and I had brought some pictures from an American magazine, too expensive for most to acquire, which depicted the catastrophe in New York with dramatic pictures. Some Muslims showed compassion, a young Sudanese cleric even embraced me in sorrow and empathy. But the register changed fast once Afghanistan was invaded and this particular group of Muslims became very cynical. One Arif, a man in his early thirties, showed me a printout depiction of George Bush being anally penetrated by Osama bin Laden, a not so subtle photomontage, which created some minor stir amongst the Muslim entourage.

When we meet again he immediately says, “Penta...is gone, Penta...gone,” and waited for my laughter. Then he said, “Do you know Abubakr? He is the father of cow.” Arif explains to me that the Arab name literally means that. He says that the son of a cow is a “*cowboy*,” that is, an American. It is cowboys that are attacking the Taliban now, the sons of the cows. The “*gomata*” is the mother of cow, that is, India and its Hindus. “Who is then the *mota wala*? (big man), Arif asks me. Who is the boss? All look at me as if it’s understood. They laugh at the joke and finally at my lack of understanding. The word “Abubakr” says it all, because *abu* means father and *bakr* means cow in Arabic. The father of the cow is always above the son (the American cow-*boy*) and the mother (the Hindu go-*mata*). Abubakr is the master of the cow, the cow’s father. He was the first as Abubakr is the name of the first of the four initial Caliphs (rulers) after the prophet Mohammad’s death, part of what is known to Sunnis as the Rashidun. He is the legitimate head of all, since he was the first ruler before the Umayyad Dynasty even began.

That Arif would indirectly reference Muslim domination over cows (beef consumption), in a world where the Pentagon is gone, and where an American president is sodomized by Bin Laden, reveals an interesting confluence of images, all of which return later in different forms. What is obvious in this ironic triangulation of identity between Hindu, Christian, and Muslim is what is missing. The American is infantilized (boy), the Hindu feminized (mother), both rather conventional stigmatizations, which can also be found in Europe and have a longer history. But where is the Hindu father? The only father we have is the Muslim Abubakr, the father of cows. Note that the cow’s husband would be the bull, an animal also venerated in India, but also sacrificed and ingested during Bakri-Id. One of the Gujarati terms for bull--*baLad*--is figurative for dolt and stupid. Or, we have Mahatma Gandhi, too docile and feminine a figure for Arif, I am sure.

The Gujarati dictionaries make no such direct links either to how the Gujarati word *bakari* (she-goat) might reference a cow. *Bakari* is a she-goat, and *bakari-Id* is defined as “a Muslim religious festival involving sacrifice” (GED). There is no reference to the fact that the sacrificial victim, which is a ram (a male sheep) in the Old Testament, becomes in India a female goat, expressed in the festival’s name, Bakri-Id. The term *bak* is Sanskrit for the “Indian crane, a cheat, a rogue,” as well as the name of a demon killed by Shree Krishna, or alternately, a demon killed by Bheema (TMGED). Besides these, the TMGED has other interesting entries, when it translates the Idiomatic “*bakari be(n) thai javu*” as “to be cowed down, to be terrified.” It also adds the proverb “*bakari kaaDhta pese unT*” as “out of the frying pan into the fire” and “to go for wool and come home shorn.” Finally, the secret paradox of the substitutability of *baqr* and *bakari* emerges when it mentions the proverb “*bakari dudh aape paN li(n)Di kare*” as “the cow gives milk, but kicks over the pail” [sic!].

That the very term used in Gujarat for the Muslim ceremonial animal sacrifice references indirectly (onomatopoetically) that killing of which Muslims are always accused, which is cow slaughter, is a key to the structure of the entire slaughter discourse in Gujarat. It points to what is centrally omitted in it: The term *baqr* means cow in Arabic, the most forbidden fruit of sacrifice in Gujarat and India in general. But the *baqr* of *bakari* is simply not mentioned, making it possible for the accusation of cow slaughter to return at other moments.³²

8.3.3 Making visible meat

The Gujarati Bakri-Id, or Eid-ul-Zuha, falls on the tenth day of the Muslim month of Zil-Hijja. Whereas Ramadan is the feast of fast, this is the “Great Feast” (Turkish, Bine Bayram) or the “Feast of Sacrifice” (Arabic Eid-al-Adha or Id-al-

³²The term for bull in classical Arabic is *thawr*, goat is *maiz*, sheep *kharuf*. The latter is usually the preferred sacrificial victim during the festival of Eid in many Middle Eastern countries. I want to thank the Mona Zaki of Middle Eastern Studies at Princeton University for this information.

Kurbani). It commemorates Ibrahim's sacrifice of Ishmail [Abraham's son Isaac in the Old Testament].³³ The magical substitution of a sheep (ram, the male sheep) for the son, which is then slaughtered in his stead, constitutes the unique covenant in Islamic tradition between the people and their God in the same way as in the Hebraic tradition. The discrepancies between Muslims, Christians, and Jews only concern the question of Abraham's legitimate heir, or "only" son. In India, Sunnis as well as Shi'as require the hajji to sacrifice a goat, but other animals can be substituted.

In Ahmedabad every Muslim family who can afford it will acquire a sacrificial animal to slaughter, usually with the help of a member of the *kureishi jamat* (Muslim butcher caste). The sacrificial meat is divided; some meat is given to friends, some to the poor. The rest is consumed by those families who commissioned the sacrifice, or cared to do it themselves. Many members of lower status groups, as well as the poor, gather on this day in Muslim areas eager to receive gifts of meat. Amongst the Kureishi the meat is cut up, laid on blankets on a carefully cleaned floor in the living room, visible for everyone to see from the street. The meat is to be consumed by the eyes before it is eaten. Most Kureishi families will slaughter cattle, that is, bulls because it is much cheaper than goat or chicken, and of better quality than buffalo. Proudly displayed, the meat is then covered with blankets, and surrounded by the families who gather around it, drink *kir* (sweet milk) and eat sweets as well as kebabs and fresh liver fried in ghee or oil (see Figure 28). Participants at Bakri-Id wear their best clothes, often newly acquired for the occasion, and they are admonished to forgive and forget conflicts and to embrace people generously with, "Id Mubarak." This display and consumption of meat, the exploits of sacrifice, is impressive in a city

³³Whereas Jews, and Christians, by extension, claim that Abraham offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-2), Muslims claim that Abraham offered up Ishmail not Isaac, although there are divergent opinions among Muslim authors on the matter.

so concerned with the visibility or invisibility of meat, where indeed the mere sight of it can make a grown man faint.



Figure 28. A Kureishi family on the festive day displaying proudly their meat.

As an example of what they think of as the utter perversity of the Muslim act of slaughter, many Gujaratis point out that the Muslim butcher will utter the name of God in the very moment of killing. Indeed, the prescription of *halal* demands of the hajji, who slaughters, should recite, “*b-ismAllah al-rahman al rahim*” (In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful). Sometimes the ritual incantation *takbir*, “*Allahu Akbar*” (Allah is great or Allah is the greatest), is also used. According to my observations Muslims usually utter the *takbir* three times when cutting the animal. The phrase “*Allahu Akbar*” appears more than just in the context of animal sacrifice, however. The *takbir* is also referred to when Muslims are represented as killing Hindus, Jains, or Sikhs as in the movie *Gadar*. During communal riots and the 2002 pogroms, in turn, Muslim victims were made to say, *Jai Shri Ram* and *Vande*

Mataram, before being dissected, killed, and burnt. Far from insignificant, the use of these ceremonial incantations alludes to the sacrificial logic communal murder assumes in Gujarat.

Cow slaughter is illegal in Gujarat, and bulls are usually substitutes for the more expensive goats. The Gujarat government regulates the daily number of bulls (*baLad*, castrated bull) allowed for slaughter. In Ahmedabad alone, it is permissible to slaughter 60 bulls per day. But the demand is at least 15-20 times that amount. The actual slaughter quota in 1993 was around 500 a day, which makes most incidences of bull slaughter by definition illegal (see Figure 29 and Figure 30). One of the main reasons why the demand for beef has not lessened, but has actually increased in recent years despite strong agitation by Jain and animal protection organizations, and especially by the *Sangh Parivar*, is that one *keji* (kilo) of beef is three to four times cheaper than one *keji* of chicken or goat-meat (mutton). Muslims in Ahmedabad, and throughout the Gujarat, belong largely to the economically poorer sections of society. Any bull slaughter presents potential for trouble, which means, as the Muslim owner of a local illegal slaughter house tells me cynically, “At least 500 times a day there is potential for trouble.” Indeed in Ahmedabad, Bakri-Id is always also an instance for Baqr-Id.

I ask Sejal if the collective fast she participates in was due to the yearlong 2600 birthday celebrations of Lord Mahavir, the Jain champion of *ahimsa*, which Prime Minister Vajpayee had inaugurated in April the year before. Sejal declines and insists this was done long ago, already when she was young and had nothing to do with the BJP. The fast was a form of protest against the ceremonial animal sacrifices during the annual festival. She explains, “They have no right to kill only for festival.” The goat is killed in the house privately, she continues, and the meat is given to friends and

neighbors. Every year many members of the Jain community would be very upset about this.



Figure 29. Bull-slaughter during Bakri-Id.



Figure 30. Meat transport by a low caste Hindu employed by Muslim butchers during Id.

I ask Sejal if she is aware of the religious background of Bakri-Id. She tells me of “this pious man” whom God asked to give something most precious and valuable to

prove his piety. “His son, his only son, he wanted to give as that was his most precious gift. Thus he cut his son’s throat, but then, it was a goat...” But “nowadays,” she has it, “they do this only for taste.” To kill an animal just for the sake of “taste” was unacceptable for Sejal. Sejal uses the English term “taste” here with the inflection of the Gujarati term *svaad*, which means taste, relish, and pleasure. For Sejal *svaad maate* (for taste) means “for pleasure.” Muslims kill for the pleasure of taste.

It is because Muslims indulge in pleasure that she abstains from all pleasure and fasts. Sejal’s fast is a weapon, a “pistol” as Pratab had it, because she fasts against Muslim slaughter. Muslim transgression is in this way inscribed onto Sejal’s body. Their pleasure becomes her injury. Of course, according to traditional Jain thought what grows less in the body is valued positively. There is no injury in dying, only in killing. Fasting means conscious life, and overcoming death by embracing the severance from an injurious world of violence. In the context in which Sejal lives, however, fasting also means health and conscious life. Sejal is not a renouncer. She does not want to die in a fast unto death and thus when she fasts she does not consciously embrace death, the highest ideal in Jaina thought. Rather, what is significant here is that her erection of a boundary through *upvaas* (fast) is related to Muslim transgression. As she grows thinner and more lifeless, she is reacting to, in a sense compensating for, their expenditure of life (sacrifice). Sejal in this way internalizes the Muslim sacrifice of Bakri-Id onto herself. It is she who is sacrificed by them. Sejal takes the place of the goat. Or, to say the same thing, somewhere in the goat, there is a cow, the mother that Sejal always wanted to be.

8.3.4 The city during Bakri-Id

When I drive to the old city center at Tran Darwaja that same day during Badri-Id, there is no sense of tension or conflict in the air despite the stubborn fasting of many Jains. The area around Tran Darwaja (literally “three Gates”) is one of the

city centers frequented by many residents of Ahmedabad in search of a non-vegetarian diet. Some faint, others eat (see chapter four). I have met members of all religions, castes, and classes here. The meat and fish market is minuscule compared to, say, Colaba fish market in Bombay. There are a series of lower scale meat shops and some discreet, expensive ones with darkened windows and zooming air conditioners.

Every night, in front of some of the lower scale meat shops, several dozens people line up in orderly fashion and sit on their heels on the pavement in a typical way without entering the shops. Patient and quiet, they sit and wait. The owner of the shop sits next to a cash register and several large steaming vessels. Then a passer-by with enough financial clout walks up to the owner, hands over five or more Rupees (some up to one hundred), and the owner orders one or more of the waiting crowd to come inside and have a meal. The orderly way in which the poor line up in front of these meat shops stand in stark contrast to their dirty and torn clothes, the unruliness of their faces, their messed-up hair and beards. There is no “thank you,” not even a smile or a nod, nor any other kind of recognition when one pays the owner. He will simply tell the first in line to come and enter, while the others remain seated without complaint and keep on waiting.

This day, however, right around Bhathiar Gali, the little alley in which Bharat had collapsed years before, fish and meat is distributed for free by the sellers at the market. The recipients are obviously all poor, sometimes dressed in not more than a mere dirty rag. I ask a meat seller if the recipients also include “Hindus.” “What Hindu, What Muslim...” the man, obviously irritated, tells me. “They are poor, that’s it.” (“*shu Hindu, Muslims. gharibi chhe, bas!*”). Feeling somewhat silly at my own questions, I observe the scene silently. Again, no one says “thank you” but there is a perceivable glee on some of the faces. Around the corner, at Machhli Bazaar (literally “fish market”), I see a woman with her husband busily opening plastic bags from a

rather despicable meat and fish garbage pit, surrounded by dogs also picking the garbage. The woman takes out selected pieces of meat handing it to her husband, while throwing scraps to the ever closely encroaching dogs, which start fighting over them. She is so absorbed in her work that she does not take notice of me.

I walk into the narrow lanes reaching a pan shop at the entrance to a very pretty *pol* that a rare tree covers from the burning sun. A tall, muscled man in a long *kurta* stands there and stares at me silently. I sense that he does not want me to walk through here. He does not move a single centimeter when I walk past him to enter the *pol*. Usually in dense urban areas bodies automatically swing and sway back and forth and it is uncommon for someone to be so stern and not move out of the way. Feeling uncomfortable, I address a group of young Muslims on a motorcycle who had immediately hushed when I arrived. “Where do you want to go?” they ask me in a flash. One youngster places himself in front of me. I look past him into the *pol* I was entering and see four Muslim women sitting on the road without being able to see what they are doing.

I ask the boys where Lal Darwaja is. The moment I address them in English, their faces change, and the empty looks become a shy smile. They enjoy talking to me and lead me out. The muscled man still stares at me and does not move when I pass by him again. Although they do not tell me, I realize that they think I might be someone looking to create trouble, to provoke “tension.” On days like these, when violence could be possible, neighborhoods are vigilant even if the tension is not directly palpable. I enter Pir Mohammed road and enjoy the festive atmosphere. I walk into Dariapur where policemen in their dusty uniform fade into the grey of the city. Dariapur is a “sensitive area” and at many corners *tambu* (tents) are permanently set up.

8.3.5 The city police-post

A *tambu* is a police post set up in all places where communal violence is thought to be endemic (see Figure 31 and Figure 32). Baroda has several in the old city, as does Ahmedabad, as do even many smaller towns in central Gujarat. Armed policemen live in these *tambu* and slowly become part of the neighborhood. In tense times the posts are assigned extra men, but in calm times, they resemble the makeshift residences of migrant laborers who live without a home, squeezing space out of narrow roads and small squares. The only difference is that migrant workers won't be able to make demands on their neighbors.

Sometimes the policemen wander around, sit at street corners, often around the chaotically erected temples, sipping tea, caressing their moustaches, and scratching their scrotums. The posts are a constant reminder of what the city falls back into, repeatedly, all the while in the business of everyday life in the inner city, Muslim shoulder rubs Hindu shoulder. During long curfew hours after the first week of violence in 2002, I spend considerable amount of time with these policemen sitting in the shade being eyed by Muslim neighbors who are not allowed to exit their houses or lanes. Rarely asked for a curfew pass, and being a welcome distraction, these officers were eager to spend hours in talking and silly joking. I was even told to return the following day. It always seemed to me that the intensity and seriousness of the communal slaughter in the city stood in stark contrast to the childish curiosity of these policemen. They frequently did not perform their roles with much authority. I was often offered tea, tea that was not paid for and which the local *chaiwala* (tea vendor) had to provide for them free. Policemen are known never to pay what they consume and even when inviting a third, they do so on someone else's back.

There is strange sort of intimacy between the temples and the posts, the bored policemen and the surrounding residents, tailor and shoemaker, garage owner and

umbrella-maker, Hindu and Muslim. It can hardly be said that Ahmedabad's police posts promise security. With a few noted exceptions, most residents have told me that as with the many police stations in the city, their presence does not alleviate tension if the city prepares for another round of violence. That the police is part of society, and not outside of it, was brought home by Ahmedabad's Police Commissioner Pande himself during the pogroms on March 10, 2002, when he commented, "These people also, they somehow get carried away by the overall sentiment. That's the whole trouble. The police is equally influenced by the overall general sentiments."³⁴

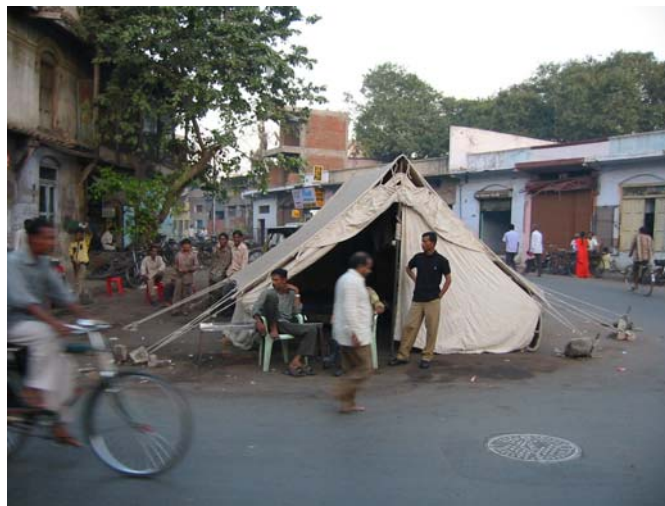


Figure 31. Permanent police post (*tambu*) in a "mixed area" defining an inner city "border," Ahmedabad 2002.

The police posts are only set up in those areas where the two communities are considered "adjacent" to each other, or where they are understood to somehow share space. Ahmedabadis will refer to those areas as "*mixed area*." At times the entire old city is referred to as a "mixed area" although nowhere is city space more clearly demarcated into separate "Hindu" and "Muslim" zones. Mixed areas have "border

³⁴*Star News* March 10, 2002, printed in GG (2002:115).

areas,” and it is those spaces, that are deemed most dangerous and prone to violence, especially during festivals, cricket games, or elections.



Figure 32. Police post in “border area.”

Every resident in Ahmedabad carries an inner map within himself, a grammar of space, distinguishing neighborhoods and areas by the level of dangerousness they pose in times of tension. The ability to define, or rather intuit, areas in relation to tense-ness and danger, stands in some contrast to the inability or impatience to read city maps (or the being unaccustomed to it). Many areas are simply off limits during communal trouble, but even in normal times, city dwellers will be prudent. A traffic accident or a loud exchange of words can turn into real danger if one happens to be surrounded by the wrong sort of people, in the wrong neighborhood, isolated and alone. Once, when I drove with Zakir, a Muslim cloth merchant at Kapad Bazar in Dhalgarbad area, through the city after the pogroms, he declined an offer for tea at a specific teashop simply by uttering “*border area*” and drove on. There are places in the city, which residents claim to have avoided for over 30 years since the 1969 violence.

Zakir knows that no one would ever mistake him for anything but a Muslim. He labors hard to make this identification a certainty. His hair and beard are dyed henna red, as bright as can be, to announce his membership in the minority community. Although members of other communities as well hide graying hair through natural dye, the stereotypical “*myan*” (pejorative for Muslim, literally ‘mister’) is frequently imagined with a red head and beard. Whenever I see Zakir’s fingers, they still carry red stains that remind me of this vanity. Zakir’s answer to the pogrom has been a gesture of red defiance. But nonetheless when he travels around with me he remains careful, gauging where we are and what that might imply if anything “happens.”

But it is not the mixing or the un-mixing of neighborhoods as such which leads to tension as one is all too easily led to believe. Tension is the expression of a much more fundamental dynamic. Even if one lives as a Muslim in a Muslim square, a Muslim street, or just a Muslim area, one still has to pass through the adjacent areas to go to work, to prayer, or to visit friends. And even if one lives as a Hindu in a middle-class Hindu area in the West of the city, fear is never completely absent as most activities require movement into non-Hindu areas. What the imagination of borders thus engenders and allows for is the establishing of distinctions and gradations.

The spaces of Ahmedabad are mixed and uneven. When moving through city space, there are moments when cautiousness is required, and moments when one can relax. Some areas demand careful driving with a stone-faced concentration ignoring whatever and whomever one perceives; other spaces allow for speeding and interaction with a world passing by: a nod to a temple or a dargah, a curious smile to another driver, a prolonged glance in the eyes of a beautiful woman. Some routes are marked specifically for work, others associated with festivals or religious processions when violence is a possibility, and others simply understood as for normal routines.

These distinctions between routes make some borders into sites of challenge for the courageous and provocation for the fierce. The border always allows for public display, an acting-up, and an acting-out. It communicates without having to be made specific, where one is, who one is, and how one behaves. In this way it is the border that creates the space around it, not vice versa.

In the spatial grammar of the city, the police post defining a “border area” reduces the meaning of encounters to two communities facing each other, irrespective of demographic particularities. The eye of the sociologist will always see many more communities involved in any given area than just the two aggregates “Hindu” and “Muslim.” But it is not where a man who could be classified as “Muslim” happens to live next to a man who could be classified as “Hindu” that conflict automatically arises. Posh apartment complexes in Vastrapur, Satellite, or Navrangpura, as well as many mixed areas in the city, which are not considered “border areas” attest to this fact. Equally, it is never too hard to find a “Hindu” or “Muslim” in Ahmedabad, who disavows division and introduces you to his friend in the other community, at the teashop or the eatery where they meet. One can always find the seemingly sane person who points out the seemingly sane relations with their neighbors of the other community. The person in question will usually elaborate passionately about the insanity of inner-city communal division.

In these cases the absence of hostility or suspicion is often explained by reference to specific distinctions like, “He is a Memon [Muslims merchant caste] and Memons are very peaceful.” Perhaps it is stressed that, “He is a Shi’ite not a Muslim,” “He is an educated Muslim,” or even just, “We are best friends.” Alternately, a Muslim might claim, “He is a Brahmin, and they are the learned people,” “He is a BC [backward class], they are not so staunch Hindus,” or, “He is a merchant and they are soft-hearted people.”

All these examples, however, can be logically inverted, turned around, flipped over, and what is an explanation for one person's benign-ness becomes another person's reason for suspicion. The members of a "*BC kom*" (backward community) can then be more dangerous than a Brahmin, precisely because they are beyond the Hindu pale (beyond any *sanskriti*, civilization). Or, the Bohra (Muslim merchant caste) is more aggressive than the poor Fakir [lower caste Muslim], because the Fakir is a simple minded man and anyway almost a "Hindu," whereas the Bohra is a proud Muslim. In other words, rationalizations for notable exceptions exist in abundance but there is nothing stable in them. Stability, however, is provided by the perception of danger, common sense, and the calculation of risk. It is here where the border comes into its own and provides the space where one's fear can finally meet its target, a threat. Thus is constituted an amalgam of many a distinction into two entities that constitute the "minority" and the "majority," divided by the idea that they are separate. In the grammar of inner city space the often abbreviated binary "Hindu-Muslim" is made visible, and brought into consciousness, by the existence of a border.

Now, all other distinctions disappear and are effaced. Suddenly there are only two communities and one border. The risk of violence is highest where the two communities encounter each other *qua* community. In mixed inner city space, in areas where Hindus and Muslims are mixed while at the same time so strangely separate, one consequently has to distinguish two forms of social encounter: on the one hand the encounter of two Ahmedabadis, two fathers, two mothers, two friends which happen to be members of two different communities; on the other hand, the encounter of two communities via the conduit of two individuals, an entirely different matter.

Hostility only results, when the stress is laid on the latter, on community (*saamaaj, kom, komyuniti*), which constitutes that form of experience where one encounters the other community in one's neighbor, one's tea-vendor, the bus driver, or

the policeman. Being historically a caste society, however, communities do not always relate directly with one another through exchange. Rather, between many communities the relationship established is one of withdrawal from exchange, thus allowing structural features like complementarity and hierarchy to emerge, based on a symbolic and libidinal economy, as it were.

In the community of the other one encounters that, which is most secret in one's own, like backwardness, jealousy, weakness, impurity, attachment, envy, longing, danger. The other comes can to stand as the incarnation of *Aussatz* (that, which is discarded), one's alter ego, of which to have fear almost follows automatically. But you are not scared because the other is so different (differences abound even within the category "Hindu"), but rather because the entity in which the other community encounters you, is necessarily antagonistic to you.

Thus it is when space prioritizes this stress on two entities that tension is felt to loom large. In acknowledging this psychological complexity of communal relations in Ahmedabad one can then understand the constant symbolic labor of the *Sangh Parivar* (and isomorphic attempts from the other side), whose sole goal is to awaken the *tatva* (essence) of the Hindu, that is, create *ektaa* (unity) in anger, communion, community. The *Sangh Parivar* is far from denying caste or ethnic distinctions within the "Hindu community." Rather, it wants to bridge those differences in a particular affective moment, channeling energy to one target, to one space, one border. Community is created through sacrifice, a sacrifice of a part of one's own community, preferably the other of one's own, which in this case is one's alter ego, the Muslim. The RSS in particular, attempts to make people sacrifice their petty differences in order to concentrate on a larger difference, which can accommodate the project of Hindu nationalism: Hindu and Muslim, India and Pakistan. This can be done even when the Muslim is never mentioned by name, as Pratab pointed out (chapter five). An activist

friend from Baroda, a Marxist, who has many relatives in the RSS, expressed it adequately, when describing RSS training camps, “In those camps they create a subconscious mind.” A subconscious mind is a mind that lays itself to rest, and hands itself over to an affective mood. Every affect needs a content, however, as it is fundamentally empty. The inner city border becomes that content, the form for one’s fears, the content of one’s nightmares.

Once there are only two, the communities are artificially brought on par with each other, although they are fundamentally unequal given the fact Muslims, divided internally into many subsections of caste and community like Hindus, are a “minority.” Evening out the two communities as if they were comparable, however, allows for antagonism to arise. As equal they compete for everything jealously, influence in local politics, in relation to population numbers, street visibility, and economic power even if sociologically, this makes precious little sense. The more the two spectral communities’ claim to recognition collides, the more there will be tension perceived.

This is the reason why so many Hindu residents I talked to when asked what could be a possible solution to communal violence in the city repeat in full sincerity the Partition scenario. They propose to repeat that very event, which is lamented at other times, which is named as cause for all other misery, the dissection of Mother. How can Partition be made responsible for all faults while inner-city partition at the same time is thought to be a solution to present conflicts? I always remained puzzled by the sheer hopelessness of this sort of answer.

According to this logic, Partition simultaneously got rid of the need for Muslim recognition in India. India no longer has to deal internally with the *Ansprüche* of Muslims (claims, demands). The conflict of recognition became an external one of two countries fighting a prolonged war against each other. In Pakistan the Muslims

became a border beyond which theirs is theirs. The same is attempted with inner city partition in Ahmedabad. To create separate space means to a) create the other community as one single entity, b) contain the other community, and c) to displace conflict with it onto a border, a marked space symbolized by police posts, signs, and boards.

We see a return of the very logic that Pratab and others claim to be Gandhi's *bhul* (mistake), when Hindus lament "*emni alag api*" (they were given separate). The logic returns although it is disavowed. It is lamented that they were given Pakistan, a separate state, at the same time everything moves into the direction of doing precisely that, giving them a separate space in the city. Finally, when Sandesh newspaper claims there are terrorists *inside* the border (*sarhad ni ander*) (chapter three), it is unclear which border is meant. Is it the border to Pakistan? The border of Gujarat? The borders of Saurashtra, Kutchh, central Gujarat? Or, the border of inner city areas marked by police posts? In this way external threat moves inwards to become intimate, the stuff of everyday life, where inner-city space becomes interspersed with "border areas," and where all Muslim areas or streets are referred to as "mini-Pakistan," or "Hindustan" in reverse.

The communalization of space in Ahmedabad has become so severe that neighborhoods are thought of as divided into two, and only two communities, despite all the sociological variance within each. The most radical expression of this development is perhaps the many boards that appeared in 2002--some set up spontaneously, others by organizations such as the VHP--defining inner city spaces as "Hindu" by e.g. welcoming imagined visitors to a "Hindu raashtra" (a Hindu nation) (see Figure 33), and thus indirectly defining all Muslims living within that same locality as "outsiders." In some areas Hindus and Muslims are incapable of encountering each other but as that, "Hindu" or "Muslim." Or, which is to say the

same thing, encounter is no longer possible at all. What encounters entail is no longer people but borders. As Bharat had it, Muslims are his *maryaadaa*, his boundary. To encounter the Muslim is thus to encounter one's own very intimate boundary.



Figure 33. Marking spaces. Typical boards set up all over the city by the VHP and the BD. The boards are announcing the entry into a “*hindu raashtra*.” Whereas left and right residents of specific areas are welcomed, in the center the traffic is welcomed to the Hindu Nation of “*karnavati*.” “Karnavati” is the un-official “Hindu” name for Ahmedabad.

The culminating effect of this severe development can be grasped by the automatic transformation of personal conflicts into communal conflict, which makes for the contamination of violence in certain city spaces, especially in the aftermath of

repeated bouts of violence. The psychology of communal relations is based on an intimacy of shared space. However, it is neither necessarily caused, nor amendable, through the manipulation of social or physical distance. It is expressed in space but is not of it (see Figure 34 and Figure 35).

A few months after the 2002 pogrom, I shifted my residence to the Muslim area of Shah Allam, where I lived until 2003. After many problems finding a place to live in the East of the city, I finally moved into a “border area” between the districts of Maninagar, Behrampura, Shah Allam, and Dani Limbda, not far from a relief camp in a Muslim shrine, which was still caring for Muslim refugees, displaced victims of the pogrom. The apartment building was a mixed one, not between Hindus and Muslims, but between Sunnis and Shi’as, and surrounded by lower class Hindu service castes.

Because I lived in a middle-class Muslim apartment block, few of my friends in the West part of the city ever wanted to visit me. As I had expected, I had to make new friends and acquaintances. Only after much labor was I able to also bring people like Bharat or Pratab to visit this part of the city and dare to enter my Muslim apartment. This particular apartment building had been attacked by neighbors as well as paid goons three times during the pogroms. Many residents had seen unfortunate Muslims burnt alive in front of their windows on Gita Mandir road. Housewives were still visibly shaken by what they had seen on those days. One incident they repeated to me several times: A group of youngsters had tried to drive a rickshaw or a *laari* (lorry) filled with gas cylinders into the parking lot right beneath the apartment complex in order to “blow us all up.” The residents protected themselves by collecting stones, building pipe bombs, filling acid bulbs, and throwing them onto the attackers from the high roof of the building.



Figure 34. Entrance to a small hospital in the tense Dani Limbda area, where Hindus and Muslim live close by one another. The red board with the arrow reads “Hindu-Muslim Medical Center,” stressing the fact that both communities are welcomed to use it.



Figure 35. On the border between “Mini-Pakistan” and “Hindustan.” On the outskirts of Ahmedabad, a *tambu* at the entrance to the Muslim ghetto of Juhapura. In Ahmedabad, Juhapura is the quintessential “Mini-Pakistan.”

One of the house cleaners, a Hindu woman in her 40’s, who came and cleaned my apartment daily, told me that the Bajrang Dal had come to her quarters during the time of pogrom. Matu is a member of the sweeper caste. When asked for her caste, she will immediately say “Hindu.” When the question is repeated using the Gujarati term *naat* (*kaya naat nu chhe?*), she will simply say “*toplivala*.” Her first name, *matu*, literally means dust, earth. Matuben was in no way anti-Muslim and she was close to Salim, the house guard (*chokidar*), who arranged for her to get cleaning jobs in the

apartment building. Both often visited me for tea in my apartment and we talked much together about the violence. Matu had a great sense of humor and was fond of liquor and chicken, but Salim tried to wean her from the latter habit arguing that Matu spends all her hard earned money on the illegal substance. He, too, liked a drink once in a while but he took care that his wife did not come to know. Matu lived alone, her husband has disappeared, but she kept contact with her married daughter in Baroda. To watch their friendship was comforting to me (see Figure 36 and Figure 37).

The members of the Bajrang Dal that came to her *vaas* (quarters) made speeches and offered chicken and alcohol, as well as money, to organize concerted attacks against the very building in which some of them were employed to clean by middle class Muslims. Unfortunately, she said, many complied in a sort of festival-like frenzy.



Figure 36. Matuben.



Figure 37. Salimbhai.

While I was living in the house, I grew close to Salimbhai, a Pathan. One day in February 2003, he came to me, exasperated and worried, and told me the following story. In the neighboring lanes of Dani Limbda, a poor and low-class settlement of factory workers and un-employed, which included diverse poor Muslims as well as Hindus, Salim had been witness to a quarrel between two Hindus, which soon turned ugly. The incident happened at a fancy temple next to a teashop, in an impoverished area with unpaved roads and dusty huts.

A Rabari girl (Hindu caste) had been “touched” or “bothered” by a young Hindu man. She told her father, who got a stick and began to beat the young man, which resulted in a row between neighbors and family members. But then, within half an hour, other people came and simply started throwing stones at “the Muslims,” which inaugurated what amounts almost to a ritual form of stone throwing. This was no quarrel between a Muslim and a Hindu, Salim assured me emphatically. He warned me that the entire area is tense and I should be prudent and cautious when I leave the building. Only the arrival of others turned the incident into a ritual of stone throwing, which, explained Salimbhai, always means “Hindu-Muslim.”

Stone throwing is an automatic, conditioned response to perceived tension. First there was a commotion at a teashop, then stone throwing, and then the entire area was “tense” again. “*Tenshun*” (tension) is a state with which everyone in Ahmedabad is deeply familiar. Tensions are always highest at a border, where one perceives or feels its presence most. The stones were thrown against the border in the shape of a Muslim, because as in Bharat’s elaborations of *maryaadaa*, the Muslim has become the border. The Muslim is a walking border.

This incident led to no serious injuries, as far as I know, yet it exemplifies the microscopic transformation of street aggressiveness into a communal clash, although it was not a communal issue at the outset. Note that the incident occurred without direct involvement or manipulation of the *Sangh Parivar* as in larger clashes. In a sense, this is testimony to the success of *Sangh*, for trivial conflicts can now ignite tensions without their involvement. As the boards proclaim everywhere in the city: Welcome to *hindu raashtra* (see again Figure 33).

The mechanical response to throw stones at “the border,” the Muslim and Hindu targets respectively, symbolizes the pathology of this part of the city. People threw stones at the “target” across the border, at whom it made most sense to throw

stones at, Hindus to Muslims, Muslims to Hindus, creating what the incident had not been at all from the outset. This displacement of violence onto an immediate target, channeling antagonism into familiar tracks, simply made sense to the participants after many months of violence, tension, and fear. Throwing stones means you do not have to deal with the real origin of violence. And stones have better targets if the communities are clearly demarcated in space, when the target is “there,” beyond a border.

8.3.6 Mushrooming temples

If police posts indicate the tension at the interface between communities, the boundaries within the body of the city, temples can at times become markers that permanently turn areas into “Hindu” or “Muslim” spaces. The smaller and more insignificant the temple, the more it connects the immediate surrounding to its new signification. The reason is simple. If a temple is large and well known, it will attract different sets of visitors from all over the city, bridging immediate class and caste divisions of a neighborhood.

In extreme cases such as the fancy Swaminarayan Akshardham temple on the Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar highway, or the series of wealthy ISKON temples (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), for example, its visitors often include middle-class Muslims and Christians who want to see spectacles of the divine. Or alternately, the Usmanpura Dargah, a 14th century tomb of Sayid Usman located in a middle class Hindu neighborhood, attracts many lower Hindu caste visitors in search for a cure for spirit possession and disease. By becoming tied to these diverse categories of visitors (devotees), the larger structures escape the immediateness of their surroundings. In other words, counter to intuition, physical growth encourages transcending social space, and although size makes a structure more visibly “there,” its visitors are much more transient and less tied to the structure’s concrete location.

Not so with the myriad of smaller structures in the city. The smaller concrete temples are usually decorated with white bathroom tiles in the inside and outside depicting colorful deities (see Figure 38). In the last few years they have sprung up everywhere in central Gujarat. The Muslim version of the street structure is a small shrine, a dargah, painted in green colors and with the *kabar* (grave) of a saint. Over the course of fieldwork, I witnessed the growth and expansion, as well as the withering away, of several of these structures. I always found them wonderful opportunities to sit, drink tea, and ask locals about their Gods and beliefs in an informal atmosphere. Questions about the age of the temple and the actual context of its erection can, however, be felt as too prodding and intrusive. Once a temple is erected, it is very difficult to demolish it. Followers insist that no human agency is involved in its emergence. It is always claimed that the deity, has “chosen” the place of emergence and has magically appeared in some form.

For example, on my way to a Ramkrishna center in Maninagar, I meet a man who introduces himself to me as “the painter.” He stands next to a Jogani Mataji temple, of the small bathroom-tile kind, not far from Juna Tolnaka. The temple is very new and freshly painted, well situated, not blocking the road, but still taking full possession of the entire street corner. The man who calls himself “the painter” is confused by my questions and refers me to another man, a shop owner of the street corner. Magan tells me that the temple was not built here just recently, but the structure dates back at least fifty years, when all this was *keti* (fields). Then, at the side of an agricultural field, a sudden Jogani appeared. He explains, the Goddess appeared, and a small structure was built on top of it. What appeared, he clarifies, was essentially the picture of the Goddess. The picture suddenly appeared, and thus, through this magical appearance, it became a Jogani space.



Figure 38. Small bathroom tile temple of Hanumanji.

Another devotee, Raju, helps me with the iconography of the image. Taking off our sandals we approach the temple and lean down to see the Goddess. He tells me that that Jogani cuts her own head off. He shows me the picture. “She cuts it off, two demons (*rakshaas*) are there, and want to eat the flesh of children. They want to drink their blood.” In response, Jogani cuts her own head and feeds the two demons, as well as herself, with her own blood. One can see the protected children sleeping underneath. Whereas in Ranjitbhai’s version, it was a married couple, which was being protected (chapter six), in Raju’s version the couple is brother and sister, two siblings who are children (see Figure 19 in chapter six).

The BJP is known as a party that demolishes mosques, not as one that demolishes temples. Everyone knows that the local BJP does not want to lose this immensely profitable symbolic capital. At a very fancy hotel in Baroda, a BJP party member official once told me with a surprising sudden spurt of *Menschlichkeit*, that one has to “tolerate” these “poor fellows,” who make a living with these annoying little temples. The tolerance to tolerate the poor man’s struggles for an income does not seem to extend, however, to Nepali street vendors selling chicken, leather workers (Chamar) skinning cows, or Muslim butchers slaughtering bulls.

In some mixed areas of Ahmedabad, where Muslim structures such as *dargahs* (shrines) and *masjids* (mosques) can be of substantial historical value, the city

landscape is inundated with these bathroom-tile temples. Next to the Muslim sand stone structure of a several hundred-year-old *dargah* (shrine), a sea of concrete Hindu temples mushroom in bright colors of red and white. Although Ahmedabadis accept these small structures as part of the urban landscape, they sometimes comment dismissively that they are largely erected for land-grabbing purposes. People build them overnight, smack in the center of street corners, walkways, even busy intersections where they are bound to hinder traffic and become a nuisance to neighbors of whatever religion (see Figures 39 through 44). But similar to the so-called “cow menace” on the streets of Ahmedabad, a cloud of secrecy and tension prevails over the question of their emergence and status.³⁵



Figure 39. Small street temple on traffic island.

³⁵The “cow menace” refers to the annoyance many members of middle classes feel towards cattle, and generally animal herders, who let their animals roam free in the city in search for donations of food, or snatching food from vegetable sellers.



Figure 40. Cluster of small street temples.



Figure 41. Small street temples grabbing land.



Figure 42. Adolescent street temple.



Figure 43. Street temple on road divider.



Figure 44. Street temple on sidewalk directly in front of a shop. Figures 39-44 depict mushrooming Gods in newborn temples. Note the interesting relationship to space: the structure either defines a new space, occupies existing space, or wrenches it away from where there is none left.

Once, Payal, who had taken an interest in these temples at my urging, politely asked a group of middle-aged men about the origin of a street temple near her house. She was briskly put in her place, chastised for her curiosity as a woman. The men were angry, she thought, that a woman, a Marathi on top of it, dared to ask them these “sensitive” questions. Payal’s mother-in-law, with whom she is not on good terms, also joined, and to Payal’s surprise, came to her aid, scolding the men for half an hour with a Goanese verve. What sort of holy men were they, she asked, when they couldn’t even answer politely a simple question? Moreover, her daughter-in-law’s intentions were good; she merely wanted to help a foreigner (a statement that might have made the situation even worse). Women in the entire neighborhood responded to the shouting and mobilized in support of Payal’s mother-in-law. Afterward, I felt very bad about the incident and advised Payal in the future to be more careful playing the ethnographer in my stead fearing the consequences.

The lives of temples track the social life of the contemporary intersection of religious interests with urban economic entrepreneurship (Figure 45). If space allows, the small temples invariably grow into big ones within a few years. And the larger they become the older they are claimed to be. When the grueling traffic flows by,

riders on two-wheelers greet the deities with a nod or a brief placing of a hand on the heart, risking accident, but always amazingly optimistic that nothing will harm them at that moment. Often a *paan*, or teashop, or both, quickly arises next to a temple. Ultimately, the religious entrepreneur seeks to become a *sadhu*. Then he and his followers tell elaborate stories and draw pictures of his spiritual predecessor (his Guru) and of the ancient origin of the temple, even when residents of the locality know very well that five years prior there was only a traffic island of concrete in the place where the temple now stands, where, police had smoked their *bidis*, wielded their *laatis*, and spit their paan.



Figure 45. Two small but very successful street temples on CG road (to the right in red and green), which can claim seniority to an ATM bank machine on the left next to it, and are frequented by employees of offices, traffic police, as well as people passing-by

One such *sadhu*, who runs an adolescent street temple the size of a small truck off Ashram road, told me that the biggest reward for him after all these years is to see people greeting the Gods when they drive by. He feels proud that he has become part of the traffic and the lifeline of the city. He has become part of what rolls by and used to ignore him, the people with work, with jobs, with families. He is with them but not *of* them, a true *sanyasin* (world renouncer).

The final sign of integration of street temples into urban life occurs the moment when neighbors and residents from far-off places come to visit during festivals. Then the temple becomes their central place of worship (Figure 46). Then

electricity or a telephone is suddenly provided. Neighbors are said to “offer” electricity, allowing for a line from their house to the temple. Those who openly disagree with this practice do accuse the temple builders of theft. Once the temple is large enough it is often protected by a ceiling and encircled by a large red grill to keep out thieves, monkeys, dogs—and stray cows. During “riots,” the grill also protects from vandals, Muslims, and Molotov cocktails, which people in Ahmedabad’s street fighting jargon call “*petrol bombs*.” If a stone lands on a temple or shrine during collective violence, newspapers often report, “Hindu temple stoned”.

There are also many small new Islamic structures in Muslim areas, as if to respond to the mushrooming of Hindu temples, but given the demographic dominance of Hindus, the territorial competition in Ahmedabad is obviously one-sided. In the end, there are many more Hindu deities than there can ever be Muslim holy men for whom it would be suitable to build a *dargah* (shrine). There is also a strongly perceived, if indirect, bias in the city municipal authority itself against small Muslim structures. Muslims lack a powerful and feared organization such as the VHP or the BD to seriously challenge and pressure the city administration on “religious” matters. In fact, Muslim shrines have become primary targets during violence, and in the 2002 pogrom, many older shrines simply disappeared—either destroyed or temporarily converted into “Hulladia Hanuman” temples (Angry Hanuman) (see Figure 47 and Figure 48).



A



B



C



D

Figure 46. Popular adult street temples, which outgrew their traffic islands, street corners, and road dividers in Raipur, Navrangpura, Shahibaug, and Lal Darwaja (left to right). At night, the devotees will be lined up competing with traffic for space on the road.



Figure 47. The disappearance of Vaji Ali Dargah in Shahibaug, which used to be in the middle of the road.



Figure 48. The remains of the attempted destruction of 16th century Isanpur Dargah with bulldozers in Vatva in 2002.

8.3.7 Bird feeders

At one of such “bathroom-tile temple” in Dariapur dedicated to a local Mother Goddess, a group of policemen is perfectly gathered together, and I want to take a photo of them. It looks as if they protect the illegally erected structure or perhaps, in

turn, feel protected by it. One fat policeman whose uniform is decorated with many medals, surrounded by smaller, thin colleagues sitting around him, listening attentively to his every word. The policeman with the many medals, presents himself to me as someone important, vainly, but after some hesitation declines my request for a picture. He asks if I am a journalist. I move on and pass many *chabutaro*, large traditional birdhouses into which fodder is given to birds in the mornings.

In some areas of old Ahmedabad, Hindu neighborhoods are identifiable by the sheer amounts of *chabutaro*. My roommate Bharat told me these birdhouses are for the feeding of all kinds of birds and praised them as an example of the true practice of *jivdayaa* (compassion for all life) and *ahimsa*, but a local resident, happy to hear me speak in his language, explained once that only the ubiquitous black *kaagdo* (crows) are fed as they are believed to carry the souls of Hindu ancestors (*mabapji*) who are worshipped. Some *chabutaro* are stunningly beautiful, decorated in many colors and carved out of wood (see Figure 49A). Others are merely plain grey metal poles lowered into a concrete basin. In Baroda, I even discovered a *chabutaro* sponsored by the VHP in the name of *ahimsa* (see Figure 49B). There the bird feeder, painted in a deep blood red as if to indicate *ahimsa*'s opposite, the drop of an "a" for violence (*himsa*), is itself enclosed by a little fence to protect the eating birds.



A



B

Figure 49. *Ahimsa* in the city: traditional *chabutaro* beautifully restored in the old city of Ahmedabad (A), and a modern one sponsored by the VHP and the BD in Baroda (B) in the name of non-violence.

8.3.8 Remains of urban magic

Temples, shrines, police posts, and bird feeders ubiquitously mark inner city space. They are central markers as well as sites of worship placed on the side, in the middle, and between things. Police posts are situated at the interstices of imagined space, between communities, and between those neighborhoods where the encounter is always symbolic and collective, where every act of an individual can become semantically over-determined as “Hindu-Muslim,” and where VHP boards welcome one to a *hindu rashtra* (Hindu nation).

But there are more beings than just Gods, birds, and policemen dwelling in the open city. There are city animals like cows, goats and dogs, human beings like migrant workers, and supernatural beings like ghosts, who inhabit in-between spaces (see Figure 50). As the son of Mr. Dabhi recounted from Naroda Patia (chapter six), a traumatized veiled Muslim woman from the destroyed neighborhood remained at the

side of the road for five full days without food and water. The blind, uninvolved bearded man at Shahpur gate (chapter two), that asked me which shop was being ransacked, too, was sitting on a road divider while around him was the mayhem of pogrom. I was unclear to which community he belonged to and I did not want to scare him with the question. There is something transient about these spaces of non-places, where one can be invisible without disappearing.

The space between roadways, the center of “four ways” (*chaar rasta*, a road crossing), or “six ways” (*chha rasta*), in which all directions meet, where everything begins and everything ends, are also preferred sites for magical waste (see Figure 51 and Figure 52). These spaces, which in many ways are non-places, are characterized not only by the presence of benign beings ignored but tolerated by the world around them, but also of pure evil that has to be avoided at all cost. In fact a popular “superstition” (*anshradaLu*)—often disavowed but never disappearing—haunts the street crossing. The evidence consists of magical remains left there, the stuff of *bhut* and *pret* (ghosts), often shattered and squashed by the rolling traffic.

If an evil spirit is identified and held responsible for some misfortune or disease, an exorcism by a small ritual called *utar*. The ritual remains become a potent magical waste. The waste has to be gotten rid of somehow, but in this case the usual means of garbage disposal will not do. It is always difficult to get rid of evil, which does not lend itself easily to elimination without some form of concerted action. The magical remainders of these small exorcism rituals are not called *prasaad* (the remains of *puja* worship, the food remains of the Gods, a form of blessing). Rather, it is the symmetrical opposite to *prasaad*.



A



B



C

Figure 50. An unknown woman who insisted to speak but to herself, and declined food and clothing, haunted a traffic divider in West-Ahmedabad for three weeks in 2002, then suddenly disappeared (A). She was mostly ignored by the traffic, as well as by the violence, like a veritable ghost. Below her (B, C), the irresistible and ubiquitous urban cows finding their ways to the spaces in-between roads.



Figure 51. Magical remains on a traffic island in the city. Note the red power, coconut, and the yellow lime.



Figure 52. Utar, that which remains.

Josephbhai, a Catholic from scheduled caste background who lives in Navrangpura, explained to me, that the coconuts or other offerings of some kind are left on the streets as “cast down evil spirits,” which were taken from a family member, or from the dark corners of a house. The small exorcism ritual, sometimes also performed merely pro-forma (in case of), consists of placing several objects like red

thread, red powder, and a *nariyeL* (coconut) into a *thali* (metal plate). The plate is then waved around the afflicted person in seven circles to confuse and constrict the evil in him or her. The evil, usually a *pret*, a sort of ghost, becomes entangled in the thread and enclosed in the objects on the plate. The term *utar*, a masculine term, means, “I cast down, descending, the evil spirited material,” as Joseph translates it. The evil substance is then caught in carrier substances, which become the carriers of the evil spirit, magical remains. “No one will even touch it,” he closes. “*Nariyelma pret chhe*” (in the coconut is the ghost), which means “*utar*. The *nariyeL* is possessed now. One goes away from it, one does not touch it.” At the end of the ritual it is important to leave the object behind and to step away from it. The physical movement away represents the ghost’s symbolic departure. The possessed substances are placed preferably at road crossings, traffic junctions where everyone is moving away from then, where roads lead away from a center (see Figure 53, A and B). According to Joseph, at certain junctures of the year, the practice is particularly prevalent, like at Diwali.

Salim and Matuben told me something similar, with slight differences. Both have seen and performed this ritual several times already. In the morning one has to circulate the chilies, lemons, and the *maatlo* (earthen ware) over the afflicted person’s head. The remains from disease or from the evil eye (*najar*) are in them now, but not the *bhut* (ghost) itself. According to Salim, the ghost (*bhut*) is still haunting the road (*rasta par*). Only the effects of the evil spirit are confined into the *maatlo* (earthen ware) or the *nariyeL* (coconut), which is thus called “*utaro*,” which he describes as remains. As in the case of Josephbhai, the pollutants of the purification ritual have to be left behind demonstrably departing from them, by placing them where others pass by (Figure 53, C and D).



A



B



C



D



E

Figure 53. Examples of *utar*, remainders of people's misfortunes.

The President of the Qureishi Jamat, the Muslim butcher caste, Mr. Kamalbhai Qureishi, also elaborated, for me, on “urban magic.” In his excellent English, he told me that at college examination times, business and health problems are prevalent. Therefore, some people visit places of worship, where others seek help with *utar*.

“They give some donation, sometimes only stone of green and red, and then they wish for something [for example]: If God gives me success, I promise to come [to worship] every day until my death,” he said.. “I will give my presence every Thursday there [in the shrine] until my death and by the will of God, if he gives me success, then I will have to fulfill [the promise].”

Then he asked, “Do you know *jadu*?” (magic). While his wife served us freshly fried homemade meat samosas, he explained, “It is some element we can’t see, like horror, like *shaitan* (satan), invisible powers. If they are harassing me, someone will suggest to me to take one coconut, circle it seven times around body, and then keep it in *chaar rasta*” (four corner, road junction).” This is done in order “to escape from that element who [which] is punishing me.” The same holds true for “animal liver, seven times circle, keep it there....The vultures will eat it.” I asked if one can touch it. “It is indeed, *katarnak* [dangerous],” he said, “if you enter or touch these spaces where this is kept. You will become patient of that, patient of that *tatvo*” (that is, a victim of the evil element). Mr. Kamalwala’s use of the word *tatvo* (element) is no coincidence. The etymology of the word for ghost, *bhut*, indeed implies element. A *bhut* is a “gone by, past, elapsed; (...) anyone of the five elements, animal, being, evil spirit, demon, ghost, (...)” (GED).

In his estimation, “99% Hindus have faith in this, usually BC [backward classes] but also others.” He told me to go to Abdul Wahab Saheb Dargah, opposite Gujarat Samachar Newspaper, where I could see possessed Muslim women, “one-two hours the women are murmuring, shouting, asking for freedom of that power, they are banging head against stone. As if suddenly struck by the intensity of the image, he repeated, “Crying they are!”

The magical remains of misfortune and disease are dumped on unoccupied traffic circles, at cross roads, or in the middle of a square, always between at least two

roads and four directions, and always with a a coconut or some red powder symbolizing blood and a lime, or both, which carries the evil pollutant evacuated from someone. Sometimes there is an unbroken coconut, sometimes a broken *maatlo* (earthen ware).³⁶ Sometimes, but not always, the substances are concealed in a black, red, or green bag. I was told that in what people call the “olden days” chickens were slaughtered at “four ways,” meaning an intersection, and their blood was spilled, but I was unable to witness such a practice, and indeed some people claim it does not exist anymore. Today all chickens have become coconuts, but their blood is still indicated, if unconsciously, by the red color of thread and powder. As so many things, exorcism, too, has largely become a vegetarian affair, today with the exception of Kamalwallas reference to liver.³⁷

But more importantly, these small magic rituals should not be overlooked, as they are practiced by all groups of Ahmedabad’s society. Although it is to be expected that members of the middle class will perform them less frequently, these practices are still prevalent across caste, religious, and even class divisions. The practice need no expert specialist and can be performed by anybody. The magical

³⁶Coconuts are vegetarian substitutes in *puja* rituals both in Muslim shrines or Hindu temples. The use of a substitute as sacrificial victim is of course also a Vedic practice, where the *pistapasu* and *anrtapasu* (untrue animal) could take the place of the sacrificial animal. However, Schmidt (1968:629) explains that the effigies of animals made of flower (cakes) had no connection to ahimsa and vegetarianism. Forbes (1878[1997]: 400, footnote 1) also notes the use of a coconut to represent a human being. Nowadays, laypersons often disavow the connection between *puja* (vegetarian offering ritual) and *bali* (blood sacrifice) , but religious specialists usually still acknowledge it.. On other interesting examples of the symbolism of coconuts as substitutes for blood sacrifices see Westphal-Hellbusch and Westphal (1976:176, 207, 209). That the ubiquitous coconut offered at Hindu temples all over South Asia today is the surrogate of a human being, symbolizing the head, is not just a transposition of scholars, but is mentioned at times explicitly in the accompanying liturgy (Smith and Doniger 1989:214). My argument is not that human sacrifice preceded animal sacrifice historically, then later replaced by vegetable sacrifice, but I am making a structural case, elaborated in chapter one, that all Vedic sacrifice was based on substitution of the sacrificer with a victim.

³⁷The *bali* sacrifice has become *puja* ceremony, many non-vegetarian restaurants have converted to vegetarianism, dietary habits of many people have been purified. However, the rumor of blood sacrifices carried out somewhere in some neighborhood, executed by particular people, can always sustain itself. Secret blood sacrifices has become an idiom to indicate dubious morality and degradation. And if not Hindu, then there are always the Muslims, who slaughter openly without hiding [sic!]. In the end the claim of sacrifice always is secure with the Muslim butchers.

waste is also found in all parts of the city. It does not accumulate necessarily only among more “lower” groups, but can be seen in all neighborhoods where there are more street dividers and traffic islands, the in-between spaces of the city, where all direction begins or ends. The reason for this astonishing fact in a society concerned with distinction is that these practices are not exactly based on a particular positive belief-system, but rather, constitute the underbelly of all existing religious belief (see Figure 53E).

Many a city resident speaking English will use the word “doubt” when a native English speaker might have used the word “belief” in order to describe this sort of urban behavior. The speaker might say, “*he is doubting*” (in English), when he means to indicate that someone believes in, say, a ghost. The statement “*he is doubting*” here does not mean he questions whether there are ghosts but that he is in doubt of the fact that there are no such things as ghosts. In other words, he is entertaining a doubt (*vahemaavu*, to entertain a doubt, to be suspicious). That, however, also does not mean that he positively believes in ghosts (*maanvu*, to believe); he is not affirming their existence independently as if a ghost were like a car, a house, or an elephant. The person in question is not thought to be delusional, but rather, as having been unable to see a ghost thus far; he only doubts the fact that they are consequently not there. Perhaps considering that ghosts cannot be seen anyway, there are other indicators that can lend evidence of their presence. That evidence is the stuff of everyday personal lives and varies from case to case.

In other words, even when people claim that they do not *believe* in it, this means to say, that their belief is not *of* it. To believe *in* something always also means to perceive (grasp, access) what one believes in. To perceive is to be perceived (the mutuality of *darshan*). Thus one aspect of one’s beliefs is that one owes oneself to the belief. One is part of one’s own belief. Stating “*hu manto j nathi*” (I do not believe in

this or that) can nevertheless imply a suspicion, or a doubt, indicating the Gujarati term *vahem* (superstition). That is why members of higher castes will often refer to Gods associated with lower castes, for example those demanding blood, not by claiming they do not exist as such, but rather, that their form reveals the low nature of those believing in them. In India, I found, people are acutely aware of the fact that the divine is a *Vor-stellung* (a representing imagination), elucidating the truth of the one engaged in the act of cognition. Thus, to say one does not believe in ghosts often merely means to indicate, that one does not consider oneself associated with the belief, not that invisible and malevolent forces are absolute humbug.

Like Payal (chapter seven) who disavows caste in one second but then proceeds in the next to explain why she would never marry a Harijan (untouchable), even if she loved him, belief and doubt are contingent upon one another in what constitutes *Aberglaube* (a faith in the register of a ‘however,’ a *super-stitio*). Payal claims that she does not believe in “castism,” and that she believes in the individual, but this positive assertion nonetheless allows for the suspicion that the “basic nature” defining a Harijan might nonetheless return. What she doubts and is suspicious of is not a worldview that critiques “castist” notions proper. In fact she might easily affirm that worldview. She is not being hypocritical here, for she speaks with the utmost sincerity. Rather, Payal is indicating a suspicion based on doubt, in the whim of a moment, that asks how it could ever be that there is no effect, no cause, and no reason whatsoever for the fact of caste division and untouchability. If she identifies with the political project of abolishing caste and affirming the individual, she nonetheless senses a suspicion that the experience of so many people around her, including herself, cannot be completely baseless.

The TMGED’s entry defines *vahem* as derived from Arabic for “deep thought” and “a whim.” In Gujarati it indicates “suspicion, doubt, fancy, misapprehension,

freak, imagination, conception” [sic!] and finally “superstition.” The adjective *vahemi* means also “suspicious, doubting, credulous” and then “whimsical, capricious.” The GED simply abbreviates the meaning of term *vahem* to “doubt, suspicion, superstition, misapprehension,” but thus loses the important contradictory aspects of “doubting” while “credulous,” “deep thought” while a merely a “fancy,” and sudden “whim” while a “misapprehension.”

In short, Ahmedabad’s inner city superstition is not simply a “belief” that one can assume and believe in, or choose to dismiss. It is not a positive assertion of a presence, but rather a negative reversal of the given, a possibility which logically can never disappear. One can always be suspicious of the given, and fear its reversal. To be superstitious is to be “credulous” that things are connected in ways that are not obvious. Accordingly, someone behaving superstitiously is someone who is fundamentally in doubt, suspicious of the normal order of things. It would make sense if this stance would accumulate more amongst desperate sections of society, but it seems, that there is enough desperation amongst members of middle classes too.

The other word often used for superstition is of Sanskrit origin, the term *andhshraddha* (superstition) and *andhshraddhaLu* also denoting “superstitious” (GED). It is the opposite of *shraddha*, the proper ceremony, or ritual. It is the proper ritual in reverse, not the absence of any ritual at all. Again we see the logic of ritual inversion at work, as we have in *kriya* and *pratikriya*, or in the thumbnail version of *ahimsa*, where *a-himsa* contains *himsa*, which calls for *ahimsa*, which again contains *himsa*, which again signifies *ahimsa*, thus leading to a series of substitutions *himsa-ahimsa-himsa-ahimsa* and so forth. Superstition can never cease because it is the logical underside of belief, a belief in the register of an endless “however.”

Why is it so important to place the magical remains at a crossroads? These interstitial spaces, it is said, confuse the evil spirits, the *bhuto* (ghosts), and they

cannot find their way back to their bearer. In fact, Ranjitbhai explained to me, if done properly, one has to bring the evil remains to the road crossing by walking backwards (although I have never seen anyone actually doing so). Walking backwards confuses the evil spirits about where one came from (note that Bharat, too, retracted his steps after fainting in Bhatiyar Gali, claiming to walk backwards in reverse).³⁸

Other people have told me that from these spaces at the interface of different directions, and the beginning or end of places, the spirit, and the affliction it causes, can better jump onto other people passing by. In this more sinister theory, placing the remains of exorcized misfortune on road dividers and traffic islands, serves the function of distribution and displacement of the evil one has been able to get rid of onto others. As elsewhere, another person's affliction helps with one's own, especially if that person swallows them whole.

I also had an encounter with concentrated evil of the urban kind. Driving with my scooter down the busy Gita Mandir road in the hot afternoon sun toward Shah Alam, a busy street bearing much East West traffic, I came across a red cloth bag in the middle of the road, obviously fallen down from a traffic divider. In a moment of absent mindedness, and because the dense traffic allows little room for evasion, I tried to simply drive over the bag, only to realize too late that something was inside of it. My front wheel slid sideways and came under the huge tires of a bus to the left of me. By chance, and because I was not fast, I was able to drop myself before my legs would get under the large wheels of the slowly moving bus. I landed on the pavement while the bus's hind wheels, almost in slow motion, crushed my vehicle's front tire. The bus paused for a moment as the driver made sure he had crushed my vehicle and not me, and then moved on with a bus full of staring people.

³⁸The *chudel*, a particularly fearsome female ghost, has feet that are turned the opposite direction.

Recovering from my wounds at the side of the road, I was offered water by a friendly garage owner, who introduced himself as Ritesh, a man in his twenties whose garage is located close to the place of my accident. He was able to replace my squashed front wheel quickly and thus restore my precious vehicle within a few hours. As I recovered from the shock of the accident, I complained about the custom of placing coconuts in bags that roll in front of moving wheels. Ritesh silently agreed, nodding, while repairing my scooter. It is not the first accident he saw on this traffic divider right in front of his garage, he finally agreed, lending authority to what followed.

Ritesh also did not think my accident was a coincidence. He did not actually see it, as the bus blocked his vision, but he avowed that he would never dare go and clean up the divider. No one would, he assured me. The remainders rot, vehicles crush them, and animals swallow them, he said. To try and come close to them would be looking for trouble. I had tried to ignore that which had left the divider (the space where there is no directionality) and which had placed itself directly in front me. Thus it assumed my direction, that is, it assumed me.

I objected to this explanation of intent, but Ritesh remained unimpressed with my objections. I had dared to touch the magical remains of an exorcism. They had been placed on the road divider a few days earlier, and had rolled off onto the road. They had been placed there, between where four roads meet, precisely in order to step away from them, to get rid of them. The only way to avoid the evil would have been to slow my vehicle and steer it clear of the remainder, steer away from it. The concentrated evil contained in the coconut had immediately assumed a new victim and almost killed me, he was sure. From the moment I touched the coconut I was incredibly lucky.

I knew he was right at least about the last part, about my luck. Unnerved about a custom that places objects in one's way, and then defines the outcome as willful misfortune, I drove off. It was then that I decided to document what I had until then considered insignificant, the remains of urban magic in the middle, on the side, and in-between spaces of the city.

There is something analogous about the leaving behind of magical waste on the street and the practice of inner city stone throwing. *Utar*, an evil harvested from a person, is (dis)placed in the middle, on the side, or in-between roads where others pass. A stone, in turn, is thrown because there is tension, a perceived danger. The police post in the neighborhood marks the danger of a very intimate and familiar kind, one's immediate neighborhood and their residents, whose physical proximity becomes the instance of imagining their social distance (in religion, in allegiance, in loyalty). Their very closeness becomes the impending danger. The community of the other becomes one's boundary, the border, and the target at which to throw a stone at. The target is that object on which to focus, while one bridges for the time being all internal division and displaces all that is unwanted in one's own community onto the other.

Both *utar* and communal tension displace violence from the self onto some interstitial space allowing for a strange sort of anonymity of intent and agency--the abstract other community, or the transient road traveler, one amongst many in a city of thousands of vehicles. In the logic of inner city division, the other community becomes a representation of what is secret in one's own. The "Muslim community" mirrors what is a secret in the "Hindu community," the malevolent intent to harm, sexual fantasies. The practice of *utar*, in contrast, hands over the magical waste to chance, to the anonymity of a city and its rolling traffic. Once placed there, it can't look back. In both cases what was once internal has the chance to be made external, but whereas in *utar* the evil is carried away, in the communal mirror, it always looks

back at you. It looks back at you and you recognize it, because you see the malevolent intent in the other, but you misread its origin, which lies in yourself.

While the superstitious practices of *utar* transcend all community, because the targets of evil are individual chance victims, inner city tension does the opposite. It feeds on the idea of an anonymous collective community acting as an organism. Thus it seems that communal tension is a form of reversed intensification of the superstition of *utar*, where the focus on displacing violence no longer chooses a chance target, which carries the evil away and out of sight, where it can't return. Rather in the context of communal tension the evil (the malevolent intent) finds a fixed target, the other community, Hindu or Muslim respectively. The other community never goes away, however. Rather, it looks back at you, now filled with your own intent, which you understand as its intent (theirs, their intent), in turn. The neighbor becomes a possible enemy, ever more monstrous, the more he was familiar to you.

This, of course, reveals the structure of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), where what is familiar returns externally as something unfamiliar, to which one reacts strongly (that is, which is recognized). The uncanny is in truth that which is secretly one's own (Freud's "*das Unheimliche is immer das heimlich eigene*"). The intensity of inner city tension far surpasses in significance the practice of *utar*. The origin of the fear, and its spatial expression in inner city division, lies in the malevolence of those who are scared.

8.3.9 "Ibrahim's decision:" transforming meat into meating others

On the day, which began this chapter, on which Sejal fasts and the Muslims celebrate, I walk through the city. I lose my sense of direction when my wanderings lead me to *Dariapur Char rasta*, a plaza where a notorious "Hindu area" meets a notorious "Muslim area." In the center of the place, there is not one but several *tambu* (police posts) with a great number of policemen sitting under trees. I see *banduks*

(guns) and many water jugs. Attempting to take a picture of the policemen, a middle-aged man approaches me. He tells me I better ask before taking a picture. His name is Firoz and at first, he too, believes I am a reporter. When I ask him why this large police crowd is gathered here, he tells me because of the Bakri-Id festival and the “decision of Ibrahim.”³⁹

The Hindus do not like the Muslims to “cut *gheta*”(lamb). He answers in a tone as if he is puzzled about this fact himself. They simply don’t join in the Bakri-Id celebrations although many have done so in the past. Then, lowering his voice, he tells me that at least half of all Hindus eat meat, but they will not do so in their own homes. If they do eat “it” (*le chhe*) in their houses, then only *chanumanu* (clandestinely). Jains, however, are strict *shakahari* (vegetarian), he explains. Firoz, although born and raised in Ahmedabad, is absolutely unable to understand why “they” can’t stomach the festival. My attempts at explanation make little sense to him.

While we speak, other local Muslim residents gather out of sheer curiosity and Firoz, gazing with concern at the policemen, does not want to keep on talking in the open. Standing on a street corner on such a day causes people to gather, where people gather the police sees a mob, and where police sees a mob anything can happen, especially if it happens to be the Muslim festival of sacrifice. Firoz takes my hand and brings me to the owner of a local book binding shop, who, as he exclaims, is much smarter than he is, and with whom I should talk.

Ahmad, the owner, seats me in a chair and offers me a nasty tasting “Udma,” a local Muslim substitute for Coca Cola or Pepsi. Hindus will usually offer you a Pepsi or a Coke as soft drink, but since the U.S. bombing and occupation of Afghanistan, many Muslims refuse to support the American soft-drink giants. If it has to be an Indian brand, they will offer you the spicier Coke variant, “Thums-Up.” The beverage

³⁹Firoz alludes to the Ibrahim’s decision to sacrifice his only son Ishmail according to God’s command. It was a decision, not only an order, a decision to follow an order.

is 30 years old and actually tastes much better than the American original. But since 1993, Thums-Up is owned by the Coca Cola Corporation anyway, which, after a 16-year ban, needed some leverage against the archrival Pepsi to reenter the market in India. Thus many Muslims prefer their own local substitutes in place of any of the others.

Ahmad is educated and speaks English well. He is acquainted with my academic peers at Gujarat Vidhyapit and was close to academics at the Tribal Research Center for many years. He explains to me that the Hindus whom I have seen taking meat from the Muslim shops at the market were not in fact Hindus. They were members of scheduled caste (SCs) and scheduled tribe (STs) groups, he claims. Commenting on the irritated meat seller, he laughs, “*dekho* (see), the poor, they belong to all” (see Figure 54).



Figure 54. Muslim meat-stand in Ahmedabad.

8.4 Conclusion

Who does the “we” include when Sejal speaks to me in the beginning of this chapter? The “we” includes Payal and herself (Marathi Brahman and Gujarati Jain), her academic advisors (Gujarati and Marathi Brahmans as well as Hindu Vaishnavas), her social universe of friends and colleagues (Vaniya, Patel) who all share middle-

class Gujarati habitus. They speak *shuddh Gujarati* and in varying degrees eat *shuddh Gujarati* food.⁴⁰ They are able to command a correct speech, which is often understood as a controlled speech. The correct speech is indicative of refinement through “education” and eating habits that suggest cleanliness and a concern for *jivdayaa* and *ahimsa* (compassion for all life and non-violence respectively). To be sure, Sejal’s self-understanding is very inclusive. The culture that Sejal means when she says “we” includes many different castes as well as denominations; it is not supposed to be exclusive at all.

Hindu Vaishnava and Jains (Vaniya), Brahmins and followers of the strictly vegetarian Swaminarayan sect, popular Gurus like Aasaram Bapuji, Pivi Atavale (Pandurang Shastri), or the upwardly mobile and successful Patel, all are identified with vegetarian dietary food habits. What all these groups have in common is not only that they are “Hindu” in an expansive sense of the term; but that they claim *jivdayaa* and *ahimsa* as key characteristics of their religious and cultural self-understanding as Gujaratis.

Sejal’s assumes an identity on the basis of a relationship towards animals, expressed through the relation to practices such as animal sacrifice, *ahimsa* (non-violence), *jivdayaa* (compassion for all life), and the diverse forms of vegetarianisms that are practiced in Gujarat. The term *jivdayaa* translates as “compassion for all life,” as well as “humanitarianism” (TMGED). *Jivdayaa* is a “humanitarianism” that includes all life, *jiv* meaning “life” as well as “small insect or creature,” and *dayaa*, mercy or compassion. Meat-eating and animal sacrifice are diametrically and logically opposed to a conception of humanitarianism, that resists substitution, that is, the conscious embrace of the injury of animals.

⁴⁰*Shuddh* is a Gujarati adjective that can mean pure, clean, purified, sacred, holy, chaste, free from fault, right, white, unmixed, unadulterated. It also indicates consciousness, awareness, expiation, purification as in *shuddhi aavavi*, to become conscious.

Perhaps we have now reached the moment where one must ask, how can it be that in a society obsessed with Vedic authenticity, those who sacrifice ritually--like contemporary Muslims--are accused of being slaughterers, since the most revered and oldest Vedic scriptures so famously claim “the killing in sacrifice is no killing.” The Muslim butcher who slaughters *halal* and utters the ritual *takbir* is accused of “murder” although everything he does resembles the Vedic injunctions of sacrificial slaughter. In fact, Hindu residents of Ahmedabad can even recite the *takbir* and at times know the meaning of it, perhaps because the slaughter of Hindus is always imagined along with its utterance (see chapter three).

To be sure, a Vedic Brahman is not a Muslim butcher. But the principle of substitution in order to wrench away life from a communication with the divine is underlying all sacrifice. The principle of substitution is fundamentally the same, be it the first born for the ram, or a series of animals and vegetable victims for the sacrificer, the *jajman*. Killing in both instances is taken seriously because it has to be controlled ritually. A modern secular slaughterhouse, in contrast, treats meat only as substance expressing a market value.

Sejal equates Muslim practices of ceremonial animal sacrifice with the practices of rural “lower” caste groups, who used to sacrifice animals for the Mother Goddess, a practice still performed today in relative secrecy. Sejal considers such sacrifice utterly “backward” and “*anshraddalu*” (superstitious), a sort of “false worship.” It is unnecessary and based upon false premises. Being an illegitimate religious ritual, it is not acceptable. Hence, for Sejal, every ceremonial sacrifice of this sort is a “slaughter.” Sejal tolerates Muslims as such, but not the fact that they claim cultural rights to take the lives of animals.

Although Sejal does not feel affinity with “Hindutva,” the identity she assumes, as well as what she implicitly excludes, allows for a clean symmetrical

binary of “Hindu” and “Muslim” to emerge. Her identity as Gujarati Jain and “Hindu,” her “we,” is already securely *within* Hindutva ideology, which defines Christianity and Islam as foreign while encompassing Jain, Sikh, and Buddhist traditions as part of the Hindu fold, those who share a concern for *ahimsa*.

According to Hanns Peter Schmidt (1968) the ethical doctrine of *ahimsa* has carried a universal *Anspruch* (claim) since its inception in ancient times. But there is little doubt that historically, the universal claim of non-violence as vegetarianism was strongly inflected through caste complementarity. The self-understanding of groups as closer or further away from ideals such as *ahimsa* and *jivdayaa*, was expressed traditionally in forms of caste boundaries, division of labor, endogamy and resulting hypergamy, and in commensality rules. In Saurashtra in particular, it is expressed in the traditional distinction between warrior (Kshatriya, Darbar values) and merchant groups (Vaniya, merchant values) (Tambs-Lyche 1992).

Thus in contemporary Gujarat, *ahimsa* understood as vegetarianism has assumes a new universal salience. It completes a trend perceived already in the 1960’s amongst Patel by ethnographers such as David Pocock (1973), who identified a process of decline of caste complementarity that until then had allowed diverse claims and practices to persist simultaneously. What makes this trend so enigmatic is that it happens at the moment when the influence of a liberalized market individualizes consumption patterns to a degree never before seen. Thus meat consumption, once considered a “Kshatriya” practice, today has assumed more and more the stigma of a Muslim practice when it is executed ritually, but an individual vice when meat consumption is identified as a practice of choice and excludes beef.⁴¹ But even if meat

⁴¹ Among Muslim groups, too, a logic akin to *varna* is sometimes prevalent, both from outside as well as inside the communities themselves. In the past many “noble” Muslims (Ashraf) were considered *kshatriya* in their own right, whereas the Ajlaf were classified as *shudra*. To distinguish Muslims on the basis of descent (proximity to Persian and especially Arab descent), innate character (proneness to violence), and traditional occupation, is still in practice today. Although I have collected some material on this, it would lead too far to attempt a fuller picture here. The question of education, wealth, and

excluded beef, however, there remains ambivalence because buffalo meat is often subsumed under beef. While Dalits, Christians, and Muslims are believed to consume cow meat (beef), buffalo sacrifices are indicated in many other lower status groups, traditionally in the context of the Mother Goddess buffalo sacrifice.

Sejal knows that “Hindus” do eat meat. She knows very well that non-vegetarian restaurants in Navrangpura or Satellite are filled with members of the Hindu middle class: Patel, Hindu Vaishnava, and even with members of her own community. But even if she underestimates the fact of meat consumption amongst middle class Gujaratis, for her these are mere aberrations, which have to do with a flawed understanding of what it means to be “modern,” an attempt not to be “backward,” a wrong departure from colonial injury. The fact that a Jain eats meat changes the truth expressed in Jainism as little as the fact that a Dalit, who considers himself a “Hindu” and consumes beef, changes the truth of cow worship.

When Sejal refers to Muslims as “honest,” she means that they will not hide or be ashamed about their dietary habits--unlike members of her “own” community who transgress dietary rules but hide or lie about their behavior revealing a sober, if hypocritical, stance. Muslims are not shy in the face of their own cultural traditions and will not easily calibrate their behavior to fit the proper norm. What makes Muslims “honest,” in Sejal’s understanding of a sane and proper morality, is that they do openly what they should not. The Muslim’s so-called “honesty” does not in any way redeem them for what they do, however. They are honest, yes, but they are still

violence, that is, the power and readiness to defend the community, play an important role for constructions and recognition of group status of “Hindu” and “Muslim” groups. In a city like Ahmedabad, riveted with communal violence, entire groups are sometimes referred to as “harmless,” “poor,” “highly educated”, and “soft hearted people,” or alternately, “they have red in their eyes,” “they know no limits,” they are “dangerous,” and “they kill without hesitation.” Muslims use similar stigmatizations amongst themselves frequently imitating the endless representations of divisions of Indian society, and often in the exact same terms as members of “Hindu” groups, but if Hindus refer to *hindu rashtra* in order to express a level of equality transcending these divisions, Muslims refer to Islam, and by extension, to the Islamic world to access a transcendent plane.

killing life without necessity, only for the sake of “taste,” only for “pleasure” (*svaad mate, santosh mate*). For Sejal, they lack vulnerability, an instinct for injury.

In Gujarati, “to tolerate” means “to bear, to suffer” (*sahan karvu*). The generic Mother-in-law has to be tolerated and the husband’s sexual demands endured. “Toleration” is a form of suffering and--as Sejal might say--one needs to be “tough” to bear this “rough.” To be tolerant here does not mean to be generous, but it means to endure, like marital sex has to be endured. Working in a Muslim college, Sejal tolerates Muslims, whereas the RSS does not.

The Muslim brings Sejal in relation to the process of an “internal schismogenesis” (Bateson 1958), where what once had been abolished returns in the garb of an external address. The address of the Muslim is really internal as it references fear of retribution by the reciprocal violence implicit in any meat consumption, and the disgust for flesh, an affect expressing revulsion, the opposite of desire for the animal. Thus renunciation and the abstention from eating meat, is not necessarily about love for the animal, but can at times be about disgust and fear of animal flesh. Disgust for putrefied flesh, fear of the possible consequences of reciprocal violence from the being that was killed, and the desire to protect a being, have merged in a new cultural form.

Muslims, however, like many groups considered “low caste,” display no such fear, or to a much lesser extent, if at all. They often lack violent affects like disgust. As an affect, disgust is not a feeling, but indicates a “secret” desire, a “former” desire, which is repressed. Desire never disappears, it is only transformed in relation to its object, and in this case into its own symmetrical reversal: disgust. Those groups that Sejal considers “rough” have no such “weaknesses,” no such intimate “vulnerabilities,” what she misconceives as an instinct against injury. It marks them

as strong, even while they are in fact the most vulnerable members of contemporary Gujarati society.

Many Muslims in Gujarat are converts. As former Hindu converts, again, something formerly internal returns externally. As converts they always carry the stigma of inferiority and thus have to be rendered “external” all the more. The internal returning externally is the classical case of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*). A Muslim will not fear to eat meat openly. He might if he was still a Harijan, or a Marathi Brahmin in Gujarat. But a Muslim will usually not lie about his diet, nor conceal it by calling it “cosmopolitan,” eat it only behind darkened glass, eat it only outside of the home, hide it from wife and neighbors etc. That is why Sejal says that Muslims were “honest.”

Worst of all, some Muslims might even joke and be ironic about the entire matter of meat eating, animal protection, and asceticism. Indirectly many Muslims, as well as members of meat eating groups like some Dalit, Thakor, Rajput, and other such groups, actually agree with the traditional classification of food substances as having moral qualities and affecting the mind of its eater, making it “hot” (*garam*) or “cold” (*thonda*) respectively. But unlike the high caste reading, for them “ritual heat” will be interpreted as a sign of power, not inferiority. Meat is identified with power and strength, undeniably linked to the ability to mete out *hinsa* (violence). What they would disagree with is not the fact that meat allows for *hinsa*. Rather what they might say is that those who do not want to eat it are more than just plain cowards. In this claim, at last, there returns the old claim of the Kshatriya, the rival of the Vaniya in Saurashtra (Tamb-Lyche 1992).

Chapter 9.0 Vegetarian Anger and Bovine Nationalism

9.1 Of cows, vegetarians, and slaughterhouses

Gujarat distinguishes itself from other parts of India in that the consolidation of high caste political dominance has made *ahimsa*, cow-protection, and vegetarianism hardly distinguishable conceptually. The influential merchant communities (Jains and Hindu Vaishnavas) are strict vegetarians, as are all other dominant Hindu sects and movements financed by them. To refer to groups as “vegetarian,” it should be clear by now, does not mean to suggest either that all Hindu Vaishnavas or Jains abstain from meat eating. It means, rather, that the communities in question are identified with vegetarian practices and obtain symbolic benefits from this association. The probability of vegetarian practices is higher in such communities, to be sure, but they do not wholly abstain from eating meat.

Because of the weight of the many traditional institutions identified with *ahimsa* (i.e., Vaishnava traditions, Jainism, Swaminarayan, animal shelters, popular Gurus, Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram, the Ahimsa research center at Gujarat Vidhyapit University), there is a palpable congruence between the insistence on *ahimsa* and militant agitation against cow slaughter by Hindu nationalist organizations. In fact, even if one were to take seriously the claim of these diverse organizations that they are independent and autonomous of the cultural politics of the *Sangh Parivar*, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between their stated intentions, goals, and actions. It has been pointed out in the context of the Ramjanmabhumi Movement (Nandy, et.al. 1995:107), that the general strategy of the sea of Hindu nationalist organizations, the many confusing “franchises” of RSS, VHP, and BD, is to rise high above all caste and denominational differences. This strategy seems to isolate only two ethno-religious groups in Gujarat, the Muslims and the Christians.

Most distressing, however, is the fact that this sort of vegetarian activism aligns itself rather well with opinions of residents in the city not directly involved in these organizations, and not necessarily agreeing with their methods either. As we have seen in the cases of Sejal, Bharat, and Pratab, for example, the influence of Hindutva expresses itself in diverse ways. It is this complicity that vacates a space for Hindutva organizations to further their agenda largely unhindered by the police, the media, or the common sense of the voter. In addition, vegetarian complicity lends the entire activism an air of a veritable movement, and not merely a political scheme of a particular government and party in power.

Here I will describe if incompletely, some of the measures taken by the government of Gujarat before, during, and after the pogrom. It will become clear how the state in many ways continues what extremist organizations have proposed and pursued for many years already. In what follows, my account will focus particularly on animal protection activism, vegetarianism, and cow slaughter. My aim is to arrive at an understanding of the precise way in which the accusation of “cow slaughter” becomes salient at the time when those accused of animal slaughter are themselves being slaughtered.

9.1.1 Micro *ahimsa* activism

In a city like Ahmedabad Sejal’s fast during Bakri-Id is not the only form that micro-activism for *ahimsa* takes. A week before Bakri-Id 2002, a Jain organization in Juna Vadaj threatened an *aandolan* (movement, agitation) against a mutton shop, which was little more than a small shack. Reportedly, the small mutton shop had opened in a neighborhood where there had never before been any meat sold and thus became an excuse for an assault.¹ The small newspaper clipping reporting the incident

¹Sandesh, February 15, 2002, “Junaa vaadajmaa muton shop same ugr virodh,” p.6.

did not ask if the Jain organization had arguments about legitimate locations for the shop or tried to justify their positions in some form of debate with meat sellers. Nor did it appear relevant that there is obviously a demand in the area in question for the mutton shop. It even remained unclear if the meat seller was a Hindu or a Muslim. Given the location in the city, a Hindu seller is more likely.

The organization's objection was simply a "Jain objection." "Jain" here is made to stand in metonymically for what Jainism ideally stands for, which is non-violence and vegetarian food habits. And if that was not enough, because of the ongoing 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir, the report insisted that "Jain sensibilities" be respected. Although Ahmedabadi residents are not naïve about the claim to non-violence of individual members of merchant castes, a general reference to "community sensibilities" is always about the community's sensitivity to precisely that reference. In other words, whenever "community sensibilities" are mentioned, one should begin to tread carefully. Such a reference always carries something of a veiled threat in it. It defines the prudent moment to abstain from further talk, that is, when "sensibilities," deep feelings usually involving moral or ethical issues, are concerned. The danger of hurting a particular collective sentiment arises when revealing hypocrisy and inconsistencies in a community's self-representation as if a community indeed were a person or a scripted narrative.

It is, of course, often a concrete individual, who one is confronted with when accused of insulting a "particular collective sentiment." But that individual is seldom shy about in whose name he is speaking. Most importantly, however, these impasses usually occur in the triangulating presence of a third. If no one seems shy of inhabiting that collective sentiment, it would nonetheless be wrong to say that it is always present and active. On the contrary, I was always astonished how well one can

escape the logic of community while suddenly being brought back without any prior fore warning.

Once, I discussed vegetarianism with a middle aged Hindu man, who I had just met on a train from Ahmedabad to Surat, while we were smoking cigarettes in front of open coach doors enjoying the breeze. He seemed jovial and open and we laughed at many an issue. I saw no reason to tread carefully in how to address a specific topic. A Christian colleague of his company joined us. I asked both why it was that, if Gujaratis were such staunch vegetarians, that they prioritized Ram so much who himself was a Kshatriya and a hunter, that is, the procurer of meat and without doubt a non-vegetarian. The Hindu man went completely silent and I could see that I had said something terrible. The Christian colleague felt uncomfortable and immediately turned towards me, “You can’t say that, You should not ask that...” I had never intended to insult the God Ram, but now it seemed I had precisely done so. We continued talking about other issues.

There is a strong fear of being shamed or embarrassed vis-à-vis the other communities, the main addressees of all of one’s claims. How can a community be “shamed”? By being seen and spoken about by the other communities. One community always means many communities watching. In the mirror of the other communities, reflecting yet broken, one always recognizes part of oneself in the other. Organized hierarchically at times, or competing as equals against one another at another, any weakness or inconsistency becomes sooner or later reflected, distributed, and shared by all. Newspapers speak frequently about “community” in its many avatars be it “minority,” “Jain,” “Hindu” or simply a specific caste groups. On the streets, too, communities are referenced in proverbs, jokes or mundane conversations. However much emphasized in one context or pushed aside in another, the community

is always visible and watching. Newspaper and TV have a great role to play in making visible “community” as such.

That everything is put on display makes for the enigmatic intimacy of communal relations in Ahmedabad. In this climate, that a Jain neighborhood would sport a mutton shop becomes not a sign of tolerance, but of weakness, possibly corruption, and definitely modern perversion. In the same way a mere question such as mine above about the Ramayan is a danger that becomes only virulent in the moment when a third is watching. I have no doubt that the Hindu man would have been fine with my question without his Christian colleague joining us. It was telling that the colleague felt so addressed that he, more than I, tried to alleviate the situation. It was as if I had voiced something he might have said or thought as a Christian.

Even if not openly displayed, inconsistencies between claim and reality continue their life as sayings (*kahevato*), jokes (*majaak, mashkari*), and proverbs (“*e kahevai chhe ke*”). The knowledge, or rumor, of many Jains in the city visiting non-vegetarian restaurants is different than the acceptance of a mutton shop in the heart of a Jain neighborhood. It is only in the moment when the statement becomes reflected in the mirror, visible on stage, that it becomes unbearable. No longer is the modern vice of meat eating displaced into other areas, which have to be reached in the dark of the night, or where one performs Americanisms, cosmopolitanisms, or where to eat means to sit behind darkened glass. Only now, through the mirror of communities, do one’s own inconsistent practices invade one’s own immediate vicinity. They become real only in the moment when objectified through the reflection in the mirror by others.

Consequently, in contemporary Ahmedabad, it is much safer for a politician or a newspaper to criticize individual religious specialists, popular Gurus, monks, or saints for their moral shortcomings than to blame a community of stature for

inconsistencies, hypocrisy, or the like. Religious preceptors are to some extent public personages, like rock-stars or movie actors, made and unmade by the people that follow them. They also attract criticism and doubt. In contrast to the popular Guru, however, the abstract entity “community” is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Everybody is part of one but no individual is equal to it. Thus whereas in the field of religious entrepreneurship, claims to counterfeit purity, sexual scandals involving religious specialists and so on are rather frequent, the same is much more dangerous for a “community.” To show the same willingness to criticize the anonymous members of a community considered “*ujliyat loko*” (noble, radiant people) and identified with a large moral claim seems unwise.

Criticism of the claims to *ahimsa* thus take the way of proverbs and sayings, where they appear in the mirror of communities, which often are astonishing for their honesty and directness. Some proverbs also migrate, the same being used for this community in this context, and that community in another context. Diffusion and contamination during the process of reflection is possible. Twice, once by a rural Thakor and once by an urban Muslim, I was told one such saying that plays with the stereotypes of the “tenderhearted *VaNiya*,” who abstains from injuring others, and practices a vegetarian food habit. It goes something like this, “*Maas nahi khai paN lohi to pi shakhe*,” (They do not eat meat, but blood, they can drink). Being a proverb about merchant groups in general, it is inclusive of Jain and Hindu Vaishnava respectively. One of the traditional occupations of merchant castes has been money lending, which included the practice of usury. The proverb combines the claim to *ahimsa* (non-violence) through vegetarianism while alluding to the exploitative practices of usury as a sort of vampirism.²

²On the culture of usury, credit, and cycles of debt in Western India see Hardiman (1996). The equation of exploitative practices like interest or surplus extraction with vampirism is of course also one of the most powerful metaphors in the early Marx.

That the threat of *aandolan* (agitation, movement) of an organization associated largely with a well-to-do middle class against a small meat shop owner is understood as an expression of legitimate non-violence, reveals the inverted world that is Ahmedabad today. Instead of choosing a meat shack to prove commitment to non-violence, the Jain organization could have confronted the restaurant and hotel lobby in the city, the pharmaceutical Industry of India (dependent on many meat products), or launched a loud agitation against Domino's Pizza, and Mc Donald's, which entered Gujarat only recently. But in all of those cases, alternatives and compromises were brokered beforehand, be it through bribery, shared interests, or mutual indifference.

When a British Anthropologist with roots in India visited me in my field site, she took residence in a middle-class Hindu and Jain area. In the first week of her residence she had a rather bizarre experience. Wanting to obtain some chicken for a dinner she was going to cook, and being unfamiliar with the immediate surroundings, she asked a rickshaw driver. He was appalled and denied knowledge of any such matter or even the whereabouts of such substances. She claimed to feel a shadow falling over her. Her own question had polluted her. She felt she had scandalized the poor man with a harmless question, especially because she was a woman of stature asking for *maas* (flesh), something identified as a vice of the low. This incident took place not far from Vastrapur, a middle class area in West-Ahmedabad that has several non-vegetarian restaurants.

Having been brought up in Bombay, and being a Parsi, she had ample experience in the ways of an Indian city, say, the diverse customs and dietary preferences of communities and castes. But the intensity of the man's reaction was rather unfamiliar to her. When we later discussed the incident, she aptly compared the man's reaction of what she would expect had she been asking for whisky or rum in a

prohibition state as a woman. But she had only asked for a piece of meat.³ The rickshaw driver's reaction is symptomatic for the atmosphere in particular areas of Ahmedabad, a city not only of communal divisions culturally inscribed in the entire urban fabric and physical geography, where certain areas signify vices and others do not.

Acting as if entire areas of Ahmedabad are officially vegetarian by definition, the organization in question is creating a symbolic space for a community not only associated with vegetarianism, but also with their influence and power. Given the legal murkiness of the entire issue of inner city vegetarian residential space, the state remained absent, which allows a free hand to such agitation, which are obscure but nonetheless consistently produce specific notions of "community." We will see how this enigmatic micro-activism, bringing into play communities as collectives and their respective claims to space, status, culture, and occupation, becomes even more severe in the case of cow protection organizations. Given the political and legal vacuum created by the withdrawal of the state, it is predictable that agitation, and resistance to it, often takes violent forms.

In Ahmedabad this violence is quotidian. Ever year, every month, every day, micro conflicts such as these in diverse neighborhoods eat at the urban body. Small meat shops, never more than a shack or a stand, are always run by members of lower castes and class groups, economically disadvantaged and in steady frantic pursuit of making a living. Of note is how *ahimsa* becomes relevant, precisely when barring another disadvantaged resident from the possibility of making a living in the West part

³The connection between liquor and meat, already detailed in chapter four in a discussion with the restaurant owner Mr. Gowda, has deeper roots. Traditionally the combination of meat and liquor consumption is indicated in the context of the yearly buffalo animal sacrifice for the Goddess, where the blood of the sacrificial animal was mixed with alcohol and drunk. For example, it is reported from the Bhil (Enthoven Vol. 1, 1922:168), but also of other groups like Rajput and Vagri (Werth 1996:369), Bharvad and Charan (Westphal Hellbusch and Westphal 1976:77, 155, 178), as well as Koli (Enthoven Vol. 2, 1922:256). One can even today find depictions of the Mother Goddess holding a liquor bottle in one hand. We can thus see how something forbidden rendered invisible has deeper cultural and historical roots, which reappear in significant forms in the present.

of the city. It would seem inconceivable for the state of Gujarat, or Ahmedabad 's administration for that matter, to protect the economically weaker sections of society from this sort of vegetarianism from above.

The threat of an “*aandolan*” (agitation) because of a meat stand, a non-vegetarian restaurant, or a new slaughterhouse, are not isolated incidences in a city like Ahmedabad, but recurring, frequently following the same logic as “riots.” That logic is one of repetition. Notwithstanding the repetitive structure of animal and cow slaughter agitation, and their backing by many Gujaratis, there was something special in what was to follow next until the beginning of the pogrom. As we shall see, with the advance of Narendra Modi to power, the level of political agitation and propaganda reached new heights fusing neighborhood micro-activism and government rhetoric.

9.1.2 Killing the cow killers

Four days before the Godhra incident Sejal fasted against Muslims in protest against the sacrifice of goats. On that day Bharuch police officials attempted to arrest several Muslims for illegal bull sacrifices in the village of Tankaria near Bharuch. One Muslim was shot dead.⁴ The report about this incident in the Times of India reveals the perfidious complicity of police and the media with the activities of radical cow protection organizations as well as the nature of the entire undertaking called “cow protection.” What is most astounding, again, is the complete absence of any judicious commentary by the newspapers in reporting an absurd incident, which nonetheless cost one man his life. Moreover, it occurred during the very festival that was supposed to signify forgiveness and peace for the minority community.

⁴Times of India, February 24, 2002, by Times News Network, “Police fire kills one at Bharuch slaughter spot,” front page.

Although a quota for bull slaughter exists in Gujarat, local VHP activists had informed the police of an “illegal bull slaughter” during the Muslim festival. The problem with this quota for bulls is that it is so small that any sacrifice can by definition be termed an “illegal sacrifice.” VHP activists first tried to block the sacrifice and then fled after an “irate mob” attacked them in the village of Tankaria near Bharuch. It is important to note that this “irate mob” were Muslims celebrating their own religious festival in their own village. The activists returned with the police, who together tried to arrest the slaughterers after the allegedly illegal *kurbani* (sacrifice) had already been completed. They were again attacked, however, by “a group of persons [read Muslims] enraged by the raid.”⁵

Local VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) *Gauraksha Samiti* (cow protection organization) activists had called the police after spying on the village for an entire week. Cow protector Jatin Vyas says, “The slaughtered animals were lying in front of us when we reached the place along with the police. We had gone to the site after keeping a watch on the village for over a week (...).” Even the Times of India does not feel compelled to comment on the enigma that activists of a non-governmental organization spend an entire week spying on fellow citizens in their own village during their own religious festival in which they are allowed to slaughter a specific quota of bulls. The activists claim to have recorded “evidence” for what they had suspected all along. In fact, they gathered evidence for what they suspect every year all over again.

Sandesh newspaper reported the same incident on the same day. Following its familiar pattern of intensification, the Gujarati daily alleged that not bulls but “mother cow” (*gau mata*) had been slaughtered for Bakri-Id, revealing the aforementioned

⁵Ibid.

hidden dimension of *baqr* (Arabic for cow) during every Bakri-Id.⁶ According to Sandesh, the activists had a tight case because they used private video cameras to document the “illegal slaughter.” It is unlikely that VHP activists were actually able to take this sort of footage unnoticed. But more significantly, the news report employs the word *katleam*, which in one of its dictionary meanings refers to “a general massacre of people.”⁷ The same term is used four days later to describe the victims of the Godhra incident. At Godhra slaughtered cows become slaughtered Hindus. I alluded to this substitution in chapter three, citing VHP leader Kaushik Patel’s statement in an interview to the Times.

Incidences of this kind are not isolated cases in Gujarat. “Tension” during the Muslim Bakri-Id festival are recorded almost every year from 1998, when the Gujarat BJP resumed power, to 2004. Time and again non-governmental organizations like the Bajrang Dal (BD), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and allied groups like the *Jivdaya Gauraksha Samiti*, or the *Ahimsa Devi Trust*, cooperate with the local state police in a crusade to detect illegal Muslim slaughter.⁸ Sometimes they claim illegal transportation of cows from Rajasthan to Mumbai for slaughter (read “abduction”), at other times illegal beef transport in air-conditioned trucks, a third variant is to claim illegal slaughter at a local slaughter spot.⁹ This trend existed even before 1998.¹⁰ As

⁶Sandesh, February 24, 2002, “Gau maataanu jaahermaa katleamthi haahaakaar: polis golibaarmaa 1 nu mot” [“Terror through public mass-slaughter of Mother cow: police fires one dead.”], front page.

⁷The term *katal* means “slaughter,” *aam* means “common.” Both words derive from Arabic. The word is translated as “a general massacre of people; a general slaughter without distinction or quarter” (TMGED). In the *Sarth Gujarati Jodnikosh* (SGJ), the term refers to a slaughter without control or restriction (*ankrush vinani*), bereft of discrimination, discretion, politeness, culture, or modesty (*vivek vinani*). In the *Gujarati-Angreji Kosh*, *katleam* is translated as “indiscriminate wholesale slaughter” and *katal* also as “massacre” besides “slaughter” (GED).

⁸The connections between these types of organizations seem obvious, but definite information about such matters are characteristically difficult to come by.

⁹Times of India, March 5, 2003, “40 tonnes [sic!] of beef seized in Vadodara,” p.3; Times of India, March 6, 2003, “Anti-slaughter crusaders a step ahead of police, butchers,” front page.

¹⁰For a select and partial list of the English media that in recent years has reported on the recurrent cow and bull slaughter issue, mainly in Gujarat (not including those reports mentioned in other footnotes) cf. The Indian Express, November 25, 1998, “Activists rescue 1,700 calves from slaughter house,” front page; Express News Service, April 12, 1999, “SIMI speaker held for provocation,” p.3; Times of India, March 30, 1999, “Violence mars festivals; two killed in Ahmedabad,” front page; Times of India,

informants told me repeatedly, the political atmosphere in the city changed perceptibly after the BJP gained an absolute majority in the 1995 election. Other people mention the reverberations of the ongoing Ramjanmabhumi Movement in the early 1990's (Nandy, et.al 1995), or the rise to fame of the BJP in the late 1980's (D'Costa 2002). The President of the Kureishi Jamat, the local Muslim butcher caste in Ahmedabad, offers a larger recapitulation of the slaughter issue reaching back to the cow activism of the Gandhian Vinobha Bhave in the 1960's, which I will elaborate on below.

In March 2000, The Gujarat Assembly unanimously passed an amendment to a bill declaring cow slaughter illegal and punishable in the State under the draconian "Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act" (PASA). For several years, local animal right activists and cow protection organizations, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and the Bajrang Dal (BD), along with the Home Minister of Gujarat, Haren Pandya, had pressed for cow protection legislation. The amendment for protection against "anti-social activities" explicitly covered cow slaughter as well as gambling.

A few months later, in December 2000, Keshubhai Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time, again with the backing of Pandya, lifted the ban on government employees joining RSS *shakhas* in their free time. Unofficially, government employees had been engaging in this practice, at least since the inception of a BJP government in 1995. Facing a concerned Parliament, the Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that the RSS was a "socio-cultural organization," not a political one, but that the

March 25, 1999, "Decision to allow sacrifice on Bakri Id condemned," p.3; Times of India, March 30, 1999, "12 Bajrang Dal activists held for staging rasta roko," p.3; Express News Service, March 30, 1999, "Surat peaceful on Monday," p.3; Express News Service, March 30, 1999, "Festivals pass off peacefully in city," p.5; Express News Service, March 30, 1999, "VHP, Bajrang Dal dharna today," p.3; Express News Service, March 30, 1999, "Two persons killed in Ahmedabad violence," front page; Press Trust of India, March 30, 1999, "Murders mar festive spirit in Ahmedabad"; Times News Network, April 25, 2002, "1,000 kg beef seized, 4 held," front page; The Hindu, April 11, 2003, "LS adopts resolution against cow slaughter," front page; Times of India, August 25, 2003, "Cow protection! How about a protection for commuters?" p.3; as well as "Cow slaughter and gambling come under Pasa regime," March 30, 2000, front page. <http://www.ahmedabad.com/news/2k/mar/30pasa.htm>, (viewed, May 25, 2004); and "Uma Bharati's Cow Agenda," by Ram Puniyani, 25 February, 2004, www.countercurrents.org, (viewed May 25 2004).

decision of the Gujarat government was not to be replicated at the center.¹¹ At the same time, in an answer to another concerned query by K.R. Narayan, then President of India, Vajpayee cited “constitutional difficulties” in asking the Gujarat Government to reconsider its decision.¹² It was well known that both, Prime Minister Vajpayee as well as the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Keshubhai Patel, had been RSS members themselves.

It was in 2001 that L.K. Advani’s protégé Narendra Modi assumed power over Keshubhai Patel, who had been the elder supporter of Haren Pandya. Pandya became instead Gujarat Minister of State for Revenue in the Modi government. During the 2002 pogroms, several eyewitnesses claimed to have spotted Pandya inspiring a mob to burn Muslim shops and homes in his electoral constituency Nehrubridge in Ahmedabad.¹³ In August 2002, Pandya handed his resignation to the Chief Minister. After the pogrom, Pandya had finally fallen completely from Modi’s grace, some say because he had testified to the Concerned Citizen’s Tribunal investigating the violence that the new Chief Minister had personally ordered the Police Commissioner, and other people present, to layoff for 72 hours at a meeting on February 27, 2002.¹⁴ The lay off in police action was supposed to give ample time for those organizations involved in revenge killings for Godhra to achieve their desired goals. It was in the initial three days of violence, that the worst killings had been perpetrated out in the streets, and, indeed, where the police had been largely absent (compare chapter two).

¹¹CCT, Vol. II, p.150 and Frontline Magazine (Volume 17/04), February 19–March 3, 2000, “Disturbing polemics.”

¹²The Hindu, February 20, 2000, “PM writes to President on RSS membership issue,” p.5.

¹³The personal involvement of Members of Parliament (MLA) as well as senior ministers of the state cabinet including Haren Pandya (Minister for Revenue), Gordhan Zadaphiya (Minister for Home), and Ashok Bhatt (Health Minister) in their respective constituencies is claimed by CCT, Vol. II, p. 76-77.

¹⁴I was unable to find more concrete evidence for this. Haren Pandya’s father Vithal Pandya, however, has made more or less similar claims publicly since his son’s murder. He claims that his son told him that Modi had orchestrated the riots after a meeting on February 27, 2002 with 50 top officials in Lunavada, Panchmahal. The meeting is also mentioned as highly suspicious in CCT, Vol. II, p.76.

The already tense relationship between the two younger political aspirants, one supported by Patel, the other by L.K. Advani at the center, came apart.

In March 2003, the ex-Minister was assassinated, under mysterious circumstances, after jogging in the morning at Law Garden. Many of Pandya's followers suspected foul play after his assassination, and when I passed by Pandya's house later on the day of his murder, the many supporters gathered on the street were explicit in their accusations against the Chief Minister. Nonetheless all of the accused arrested in the Pandya murder case were Muslims. Pandya's father, Vithhalbhai Pandya, to this day holds to suspicion concerning the context of the murder of his son. At a recent unveiling of a statue in honor of the former Home and Revenue Minister on Satellite road in Ahmedabad, he refused a chair in the front row and "preferred to sit with the audience expressing his strong displeasure at the 'political gimmick.'"¹⁵ The violence had finally eaten one of its own children.

It seems in retrospect as if the Chief Minister was already preparing for the tension at Bakri-Id and the post-Godhra violence. The Gujarat BJP experienced a fiasco in the 2001 Sabarmati Assembly and the Sabarkantha parliamentary by-elections, which had been preceded by its total defeat in the district and taluka panchayats and municipal elections. Gujarat is often referred to as the "laboratory of Hindutva," and its perceptible decline was to be halted at any price. In a small coup d'état the central leadership of the BJP replaced Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel with Narendra Modi in 2001 in order to halt the party's electoral decline in its most successful state. In order to allow the new Chief Minister to enter the House, the former Revenue Minister, Vajubhai Vala, even resigned his seat for the Rajkot-II by-elections, a prestigious constituency in Gujarat.¹⁶

¹⁵The Hindu, April 16, 2005, "Advani unveils statue of Haren Pandya," p.5.

¹⁶The Hindu, January 5, 2002, "Byelection: tough time ahead for Gujarat BJP," p.4.

It was to be expected that Modi, until then the general secretary of the BJP in Gujarat who had entered politics in the 1980 directly deputed by the RSS years earlier to enter the BJP, would have to come up with something to win Gujarati voters back. Modi had been an influential player behind the scenes close to Union Home Minister L.K. Advani at the center. He had organized Advani's famous Rath Yatra commencing in 1990, which inaugurated the Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya in 1992 and the following communal violence. He was a good candidate for the job given his experience in cadre mobilization and organization of elections and *yatras* (processions).

9.1.3 From cows to terrorism

When Modi came to power the animal and cow slaughter issue got further hyped. As if competing and simultaneously collaborating with Pandya, the new Chief Minister, who had taken over office from the ousted Patel, announced an "effective drive" against illegal slaughterhouses in cities all over the state in the first week of February 2002. It was claimed that the measure was a response to the demands of "Jeev daya organisations."¹⁷ In Gujarat, the term *jivdayaa* (compassion for all life) is the only term that is used synonymously with *ahimsa*, besides the English "non-violence."

Flanking Modi's initiative, Sandesh newspaper published a report elucidating the "long hand" (*laambaa hath*) of the butchers, who time and again are able to set up their illegal slaughterhouses after the police raided them and arrested the culprits. Despite the law, the work of the embattled police, and organizations like the Gitaben Rambhiya Trust (Ahimsa Devi Trust), the paper continues, the daily illegal slaughter of hundreds of bulls (*gauvansh*) for their meat persisted unabatedly. Then the article lists with astonishing detail all the illegal slaughter spots in the city: Jamalpur,

¹⁷Times of India, February 7, 2002, "Drive against illegal slaughterhouses in cities," front page.

Mirzapur, Dariapur, Khanpur, Dehli chakla (Dehli Gate), Gomptipur, Amraiwadi, Bapunagar, Shah Allam, Juhapura, Sarkhej, Vejalpur, Kalupur, Sabarmati, Maninagar, Narol, and Karanj, many of which are Muslim areas or neighborhoods, including many areas considered “tense.”¹⁸

Modi’s concern for the bovines did not only involve the slaughter of bulls, however. Already at the end of January, both Modi and Pandya had made suggestions to reform the traditional cow and animal shelters in Gujarat (*goshalas* and *panjrapols*) at a meeting of the Samast Gujarat Mahajan and Viniyog Parivar Trust.¹⁹ A *panjrapole* (animal asylum) is akin to an animal hospital and a *goshala* (cow-shelter) is a cow shelter.²⁰ The shelters are traditional institutions where *ahimsa* and *jivdaya* are transformed into the active practice of care. Mahatma Gandhi called them “an answer to our instinct of mercy” (Gandhi 1921:317). They have been recorded at least since the early 14th century (Lodrick 1981:1) and are known to exist all across India.²¹

In the late nineteenth century, however, the Arya Samaj inaugurated many Gaurakshini Sabhas (cow protection organizations) which started to run *goshalas*, too, especially in North India. With the growing militancy and coerciveness of these organizations, they in time became preferred sites for communal mobilization in the name of cow protection (Pandey 1990:176). I visited several of them in central

¹⁸Sandesh, February 9, 2002, “Gauvanshni befaam katal: kaanun kartaaa kasaai naa haath laamba chhe,” p.3.

¹⁹The description of the meeting is taken from, Times of India, January 22, 2002, “Giving a professional touch to ‘panjrapole,’” front page.

²⁰Note that in Hindi the term *goshala* can mean three separate things, field or pasture on which cattle are to be found, dairy, or an institution for the preservation, protection, and development of cattle. I owe this insight to Lodrick (1981:14).

²¹The association of panjrapoles with medical care and ahimsa is perhaps best exemplified by a small anecdote that is referred to by S. Commissariat (Vol. II, 1957:333) taken from “The Travels of P. Della Valle.” When the Italian traveler Della Valle visited Cambay in 1623, he visited at least one such hospital for birds and fowls, where he also found “certain little mice” that were orphaned and now well cared for. He also mentioned other animal hospitals for goats, sheep, and kids, as well as a third one for cows and calves. According to Della Valle, in the latter he also met with a “Mohometan thief, having been taken in theft and both his hands cut off. But the compassionate Gentiles [read Jains as well as Hindu Vaishnavas], that he might not perish miserably, (...), took him into this place, and kept him among the poor beasts, not suffering him to want anything” (1957:ibid.).

Gujarat, as well as in the cities of Baroda and Ahmedabad. The traditional Panjrapole often includes a Jain Bird Hospital, a *parabadi*, attached to it and thus not only cares for domestic herd animals like cattle, goats, camel, donkeys, and sheep, but includes also birds, dogs, and cats.²²

The distinction between a *goshala* and a *panjrapole* is often eclipsed, however, and although the Ahmedabad Panjrapole reported an intake of 12,000 sheep in 1973 (ibid. 16), when I visited the institution in 2002, it was taking care mostly of cattle with a token horse on the side. Ideally, the care given to animals in a Panjrapole follows the principle of *jivdayaa* and *ahimsa*, which is here extended to all forms of life, especially those animals for which humans no longer have any economic use (ibid.17).²³

In the year 2001 alone, the government of Gujarat supported the state's 400 animal shelters with Rs. 45 crore. While Modi concentrated in the meeting on how to avoid sending animals to shelters in the first place, and complained about the condition of the Banni grasslands in Kutch, a representative of the Times Foundation made a remarkable presentation. With the goal to make animal welfare commercially viable, the representative elaborated on how to introduce "professional management" for these shelters inclusive of "brand identity." The "economically viable panjrapole" is conceived as a sort of conservatory, and given the traditional shelters' vast free pastures healthy milch animals could be introduced. The shelters should be converted to an "animal hostel" that would then run on the basis of "own a cow, pay for maintenance and enjoy healthy milk." The representative maintained, of course, they would house invalid animals too. The concentration of healthy cattle in these

²²The *parabadi* is a version of the *chabutaro* described earlier in this chapter.

²³However, Lodrick (1981:17) mentions a birdhouse in Old Delhi that refuses to accept predatory birds as their behavior violates the principle of *ahimsa*. Something similar is reported in Gujarat by Rahul Sehgal, an animal rights activist of the Animal Help Foundation in Ahmedabad, who complains that carnivorous birds like vultures when injured and hospitalized die of hunger because of the refusal to feed them meat, Times of India, January 16, 2002, "Birds fall victim to killer kites in sky," front page.

modernized institutions could also solve the traffic and hygiene problems of the urban cow menace.²⁴

At the end of the meeting Modi is offered the gift of a cow and a calf for the occasion, an ancient tradition to honor the guest, but the Chief Minister reminded the trusts, that he does not accept gifts and suggested to auction them donating “proceedings to women’s education.”²⁵

Modi chose an apt moment for letting the old cow slaughter issue out of the sack. April 6, 2001 saw the beginning of the 2600 Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav of Lord Mahavir, the Jaina champion of non-violence. The committee in charge of the year-long birthday celebrations of the 24th and last of the Jain Tirthankaras, had delivered a note to the Gujarat government, pleading that “such slaughterhouses earned a bad name for Gujarat as well as India where apostles of peace and non-violence --Lord Mahavir and Mahatma Gandhi--had done a lot to mitigate the suffering of animals.”²⁶

A few months later Union Home Minister L.K. Advani together with Justice Ghuman Mal Lodha demanded a ban on the book “Holy Cow: Beef in Indian Dietary Traditions,” as well as the arrest of the author Dwijendra Narayan Jha, a historian of ancient India at Delhi University (and the arrest of the Indian publisher of Matrix Books on top of it). The book had initially run into trouble with a civil court in Andhra Pradesh, which placed a restraining order on its release, publication, as well as printing. The Hyderabad-based Jain Seva Sangh had sought a court injunction and the VHP “exhorted its cadre to confiscate and burn copies.”²⁷ The Animal Welfare Board of India also joined in the demand to ban the book, as well as the arrest of the author. The charge was that many references in the book were opposed to religious

²⁴Mahatma Gandhi (1921:317). Already proposed to transform traditional *panjrapols* into dairy farms and “great profitable national institutions.”

²⁵Times of India, January 22, 2002, “Giving a professional touch to ‘panjrapole,’” front page.

²⁶Times of India, February 7, 2002, “Drive against illegal slaughterhouses in cities,” front page.

²⁷Outlook Magazine, September 17, 2001, “A Brahmin’s Cow Tales,” by Sheela Reddy, p. 62.

“sentiments and fundamentals of Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.”²⁸ Note, how again sentiments become not aspects of a person but of entire communities and religious traditions.

Jha, a Brahmin knowledgeable of ancient Sanskrit, had dared to claim what many Indologists, Western as well as South Asian, knew all along, which is that beef consumption was not “Islam’s ‘baneful bequest’ to India”, but had been a practice long before Islam’s arrival on the Subcontinent (2001:X). While Justice Ghuman Mal Lodha described the book as an “atom bomb explosion against our religious feelings and sentiments,” Jha defended his book as countering “the false consciousness of the ‘otherness’ of the followers of Islam” (ibid.).²⁹ Justice Ghuman Mal Lodha’s language conjured up the excited atmosphere of nuclear crisis at the time. India had made three underground nuclear tests in May 1998, followed by Pakistan’s five tests in June. These reciprocal nuclear tests seem like the foreplay to Pakistan’s horrendous Kargil war adventure of 1999. Unable to publish his book in India as no publisher dared to, Jha was able to publish it in 2002 with Verso in England under the title “The Myth of the Holy Cow.” The paper cover of the hard cover edition carries the dramatic subtitle, “A book the Government of India demands be ritually burned.” Note that Jha writes as a Brahmin to counter stereotypes about Islam, and as such is accused of disturbing religious peace.

Ahmedabad was engulfed in pogrom violence between February to April 2002, but Narendra Modi was in no way humbled by it. In August, literally within weeks after the gruesome violence had abated the Modi cabinet even proposed to develop *ahimsa* tourism, and to open a modern “Ahimsa University.” In the old city and in the border areas of East Ahmedabad’s communal tensions ripened, as I experienced first hand and described in the previous chapter. Modi’s oddly timed suggestion for

²⁸The Hindu, August 9, 2001, “Book on beef-eating runs into trouble.”

²⁹The Hindu, August 9, 2001, “Book on beef-eating runs into trouble.”

ahimsa tourism was made in view of marking the birth anniversary celebrations of Lord Mahavir, the stalwart of *ahimsa*. The enthusiasm for the anniversary year of Lord Mahavir had passed without friction through the entire pogrom. In August, Gujarat's Urban Development Minister I.K. Jadeja remarked, "Efforts will be made to make the university the destination for learning the ideology of non-violence."³⁰

However, shortly before Modi kicked off his "Gaurav Yatra" election campaign, the Chief Minister did finally have to confront the accusation that he disregarded the principles of *ahimsa* and *jivdayaa* with which so many middle-class Gujaratis identify. Despite the promise to ban all new slaughterhouses in the state, the Center's Planning Commission of 2002 had recommended 65,000 new slaughterhouses in the country, including in Gujarat. The tenth Five Year Plan intended to promote meat consumption, increase export of meat products, and raise the number of slaughterhouses between 2002 to 2007.³¹ It was understood that the protein intake of Indians was deficient in comparison to other countries. In 1992-93, under the central Congress government of P.V.Narasimha Rao, direct state patronage had been extended to meat export in response to rising demands for beef in the Middle-East (90% buffalo meat), and the country's need for foreign exchange.

Not only the Gujarati "Jain community," represented by specific Jain organizations, felt betrayed, but also "certain Hindutva groups" like the Saurashtra VHP, as well as the, always enigmatic, "Sadhu-Sant Samaj" (literally, the society of renouncers and saints), who announced their loud objection. Modi had won a seat in the Rajkot-II by-elections, a constituency in Saurashtra with 30% Jains, which had been vacated specifically for him, in part by taking a "vow to save animals." It was a

³⁰See Asian Age, August 27, 2002, "Cabinet nod for Ahimsa University," p.11; and Express News Service, August 28, 2002, "Gujarat will show the way: Modi," an article in which Modi claims, "Gujarat has the potential to be developed into a global heritage center for religious harmony (...)."

³¹Times of India, September 2, 2002, "Saffron goes red: Abattoir row rages in S'ashtra," p. 5.

“vow” (*pacchkhan*) for “*jivdayaa*.”³² The sudden revelation angered members of the Jain community, referred to as “Jain community leaders” by the Indian Express. They felt misused as a “poll plank,” by a Chief Minister who would implement the Planning Commissions’ recommendations for new slaughterhouses in the state. On Wednesday 28, August 2002, a rally against new slaughterhouses was organized in the city of Rajkot. “Sadhus” of the Jetpur unit of the VHP, even threatened an “agni-snan” (self-immolation).³³

Modi was able to reign in the small upheaval, when his own Planning and Implementation Committee chairman Vijay Rupani simply denied the information and claimed that, “The entire controversy has been created by the Congress.” VHP Rajkot unit President Chaman Sindhav affirmed that, “the issue was politically motivated.” The statement that something is “politically motivated” in Gujarat is idiomatic. It has to be understood in the context of the political process itself, which is conceived as “corrupt.” The idiom of corruption is used repeatedly in interviews, public statements, and newspapers to dismiss an issue for the time being.³⁴

The sheer absurdity of the fact that the Chief Minister is accused of betrayal concerning his pre-Rajkot election promise of “*jivdayaa*” (compassion) towards animals, a few weeks after several thousand Gujaratis lay dead, remains puzzling to me to this day, especially since he got enthusiastically re-elected with an absolute majority in December 2002.³⁵

³²The Indian Express, August 29, 2002, “Jains refuse to be cowed down, lock horns with Modi,” by Hiral Dave, p. 5.

³³Times of India, September 2, 2002, “Saffron goes red: Abattoir row rages in S’rashtra,” p. 5.

³⁴For the citations see Times of India, September 2, 2002, “Saffron goes red: Abattoir row rages in S’rashtra,” p. 5; and The Indian Express, August 29, 2002, “Jains refuse to be cowed down, lock horns with Modi,” by Hiral Dave, p. 5.

³⁵There were several immediate public attempts to address the violence in the city. On Tuesday March 5, 2002, a March in the name of non-violence in West Ahmedabad passed from Gandhi’s Kochrab Satyagraha Ashram to the Sabarmati Ashram organized by the Secular Movement for Democracy (though including many other groups as well). On March 7, members of the ABVP, the BJP’s youth wing in Gujarat, attacked a peace meeting organized by Malika Sarabhai (the Sarabhais are one of the most illustrious families in Ahmedabad). Mrs. Sarabhai had already faced opposition when she

9.1.4 *Gaurav Yatra* and “soft Hindutva”

On July 30, 2002 an independent administrative body, the Election Commission of India (CEC), visited Gujarat to test the viability of elections there. Their verdict was an outright negative due to the fact that many members of the minority community were still living in refugee camps, making free and fair elections impossible. Angered by the Election Commission decision to delay the elections, Modi went on the offensive and attacked the Chief Election Commissioner, J.M. Lyngdoh, in speeches. His technique consisted in prefacing sentences pronouncing the commissioner’s full name, repetitively and slowly, “James Michael Lyngdoh...”, “James Michael Lyngdoh...”, “James Micheal Lyngdoh...”. This technique drew attention to the fact that the Chief Election Commissioner hailed from a Christian background, without having to claim so openly, which would have been illegal. It did not go unnoticed, however. At a small town or village in Baroda district, Modi addressed a group of Adivasi claiming that Lyngdoh and Sonia Gandhi, the head of the Congress Party, would be "meeting each other in church."³⁶

The commission spoiled Modi’s plans to hold election as soon as possible after the violence, which would surely secure a safe victory in the face of fear and insecurity in the state. As we shall see, however, the delay did not harm Modi’s

initially tried to organize the meeting in Gujarat Vidhyapit, a University founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. After several suspicious phone calls, the venue for the meeting had to be changed to Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram, where simultaneously there was another separate peace meeting by Gandhians. I witnessed the attack. In view of this incident, the “Gujarat Convention” was held in Bombay, in June 2002, but even there encountered opposition by the local city police. The influential Jain Acharya Mahapragya had embarked on a three-year “Ahimsa Yatra” in December 5, 2001, originating in Rajasthan, to spread peace in the country. He entered Gujarat sometime in 2002 after the pogrom. To my knowledge he did not encounter any opposition. According to the NGO “Anubhiva,” the violence in Gujarat died down upon his entry. The Jain Archarya is also said to have entered highly sensitive areas of Ahmedabad, and “the very glimpse of the Archarya disarmed them. They aschewed [sic!] violence and pledged to refrain from killing innocent creatures” (*Anuvibha*, Quaterly Newsletter of Anuvrat Vishva Bharati, Vol. 6, Oct.-Dec. 2002, p.3). Anubhiva is a self-proclaimed non-profit NGO established in 1982 mainly to create awareness of *ahimsa*.

³⁶The Hindu, August 23, 2002, “Modi Launches tirade against CEC,” by Manas Dasgupta.

electoral success in December. Indeed, it offered Modi more time to plan his election campaign, *yatras* being one of his real strengths.

In accord with the new epithet “the butcher of Gujarat” used for Modi in certain circles of Gujarat, the preparation and execution for the “*Gaurav Yatra*” election campaign (literally the “procession of pride”) again brought the cow slaughter issue to the fore. The Chief Minister, decided to launch his election procession from Phagvel. Phagvel is a small and insignificant village in Kheda district of central Gujarat, but it is in the heart of Shankersingh Vaghela’s Kapadvanj Lok Sabha constituency, Modi’s political rival. Shankersingh Vaghela ran against Modi on a Congress ticket, promoting what he called “soft-Hindutva” against the Chief Minister’s “Hindutva.”³⁷

Vaghela reacted quickly, insisting also to visit Phagvel, infuriated by the Chief Minister’s nerve. Claiming Kshatriya status, whereas Modi is only a Ghanchi (oil presser’s caste), he tried to play out his own association with the warrior nobility, fasting an entire day and daring Modi to enter the local temple.³⁸ Both were photographed with colorful turbans on their head and silly swords (*talwar*) in their hands.

³⁷Shankersingh Vaghela was certainly no newcomer to Gujarati politics. A senior to Modi who had been the Vice President of the Janata Party in Gujarat from 1977-80, General Secretary and President of the BJP from 1980-91, member of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and then Chief Minister in a short interim from 1996-97, he later joined the Congress Party. It seems in retrospect that Vaghela was chosen as a running rival to Modi because of his intricate knowledge of the complicated caste [politics in Gujarat. Although he was loudly denouncing every move of the Chief Minister, accusing Modi of genocide, RSS connivance, and the VHP as having fomented the “riots,” his own political background never made him more than a weak version of Modi during the election campaign. The fact, that Modi could not claim a noble background made him much more credible as an adherent of Hindutva, given the large number of lower caste voters and the ideology’s thrust of encompassing all Hindus. Vaghela’s half-hearted “soft Hindutva,” even if well intended as attempt to take the air out of Modi’s momentum, failed drastically. Unfortunately, Vaghela’s defeat occurred at a time when a change of government in Gujarat could have actually translated into a realistic chance for redress and investigation of the pogrom. It was one of those few times when electoral politics actually mattered.

³⁸The Indian Express, September 2, 2002, “Modi swallows *Gaurav* but Vaghela refuses to relent,” Himanshu Kaushik, front page.

Like several places in central and North Gujarat, the village of Phagvel is associated with a local temple whose followers worship a version of the mythical saint-hero Bhathiji Maharaj, a Kashtriya who had sacrificed his life for the sake of cows. According to the Times of India, this hero rescued cows taken “from the hands of Muslim butchers some 150 years ago.”³⁹

As the newspaper reports, “It is said that on the day of his marriage [Bhathiji’s], while priests were busy solemnizing the wedding, news came that some Muslims had impounded cattle and were taking it to a slaughter house at Atarsumba village. Bhathiji, a devout Hindu, apparently left his marriage in the middle of the ceremony, took his sword and rode his horse towards Atarsumba where he fought the Muslims and freed all the cows. The village rejoiced, but one old woman pointed out that her cow was still missing. Bhathiji returned to Atarsumba looking for the cow but was ambushed and killed by the cattle lifters.”⁴⁰ Bhathiji’s beheaded body was lifted on a horse and returned to Phagvel. “The waiting priests completed the marriage ceremony and the people built a temple to consecrate Bhathiji’s sacrifice.”⁴¹

In a different version, which I recorded earlier in 2002 at a rural temple near the Little Rann of Kutchh in Surendranagar district, Bhathiji Maharaj actually kept on fighting the thieves long after he had been decapitated and rode, headless, home alone. The pivotal point of this version was that the decapitated hero returned to his home village and haunted the precincts. The depictions on the shrine’s outer walls were beautifully painted and explicit about these details. The red image of the deity and his two consorts (who all retain their eyes) are depicted in chapter four (FIG). No mention was made that the cattle thieves were planning to butcher the cows for food.

³⁹Times of India, August 24, 2002, “Why Modi chose Phagvel as launchpad,” front page.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

When asked about the whereabouts and identity of the Muslims cattle thieves, a local *pujari* (priest) simply said “*Pakistani hatha*” (they were from Pakistan).

My contention that Pakistan as a country certainly did not exist at the time of Bhatiji’s heroic deeds, met with indifferent silence. For him, the figures in the story were Pakistanis and that was that. The border to the enemy country indeed was not very far from this priest’s shrine, and blaming the Muslims of the neighboring country behind the border, was a safe bid. Aside from the reference to the enemy country, what the priest was really telling me was that the cow thieves at the time were not from around here. The priest’s tactfulness not to accuse ancestors of local Muslim groups with cow theft, some of whom might be his personal friends or acquaintances, is typical for many a rural institution in Gujarat with similar traditions. Historically there were several groups that were known for cow theft, and not all of them were “Muslim.” Today they are all “Pakistani.”

The stories of martyrs (*shahid*) sacrificing themselves for cows is common especially amongst Rajput, Ahir, Charan, and Bharvad groups in Gujarat. In Mehsana’s Visnagar taluka there exists the legend of Dasdiyo, again featuring a beheaded Rajput who saved cows. In that particular version, the nipples of the beheaded hero served him as eyes, a devotee who was born in the vicinity of the temple in Ahmedabad explained to me. In Kutchh there is Vanch Sadala, also a religious institution traditionally associated with cow protection. In rural Gujarat there are even several places, like Mohabali Shah and Haji Pir in Kutchh, for example, where the cow protector happens to be a Muslim and is venerated in a *dargah* (shrine), which is traditionally visited by diverse Hindu castes honoring a heroic Muslim Pir as a protector of cows.⁴²

⁴²My first research in Gujarat in 1995/96 was at Shah Mahabali Pir, a Muslim shrine (*dargah*) in Northern Gujarat specialized on spirit exorcism and healing of mental diseases. During the annual Urs festival, milk believed to reside in the upper parts of the shrine’s cupola, is magically renewed (exchanged). The cupola of the shrine resembles a large breast, as many cupolas do. Although a

The priest's version of the heroic legend of Brathiji reveals that not every cattle thief is necessarily a Muslim, nor must every Muslim necessarily a cattle thief. He does not mention butchering, since the bovine animal is also symbol of wealth and honor, not merely food. In the contention of the rural *pujari* (priest) that the thieves were Pakistani, we can, as in chapter eight, perceive how a border allows for displacement, but in this case the local Muslims are included on the Indian side of the border. Local Muslims are not the same as those across the border. In this version, the thieves were not Muslim but Pakistani Muslims.

Most importantly however, the gist of the story was not the identity of the thieves, who were anyway "Pakistani" (read: from somewhere else), but the fact that the hero's devotion was so strong that he rode without a head on his shoulders defeating the thieves magically against all odds. The priest and the depictions on the temple wall left no doubt that what was significant were the hero's supernatural powers, which caused awe but also a certain amount of fright. In rural Gujarat, the magical deeds of saints or warrior heroes, both Muslim and Hindu, are never recounted without a healthy amount of respect for the incomprehensible possibilities of magical power. In fact, every saint is also known for his power and the danger he poses to the innocent. He can be dangerous even for those who do not necessarily deserve any punishment, which explains the prudence displayed in the context of the sacred. The entire rationale for erecting a temple or a shrine is precisely to contain that power and create a controllable relationship to it.

In the version of this story reported by the Times of India, by contrast, the fact that the hero rides home without a head is merely due to the fact that his corpse was placed on a horse by his beneficiaries, the aggrieved parties in the village of

Muslim Pir, Mahabali Shah was not only known to be a vegetarian (he was called a *sanyasi*, a world renouncer), but he was also celibate (*brahmacharya*), living only on meditation, milk, and water. Cf. Ghassem-Fachandi (1998).

Atarsumba. The supernatural aspect of Bhathiji's power, always an instance of dread, has been replaced by the horror of the butchering of cows, a very contemporary concern. The supernatural danger implicit in magical power has become the secular danger of Muslim butchers living amongst us in the here and now.

Whereas the priest identified the mythical cattle thieves beyond the border in Pakistan, Modi's rationale to begin his election procession in Phagvel was to bring the border into the neighborhood, identifying the cow slaughterers in Gujarat. This episode reveals how local traditions are made to express present political urges by fusing local tradition with nationalist discourse and appealing to the volatility of communal relations. For Modi all borders are internal borders, and in the aftermath of the pogrom, there is no doubt where the danger lies. The internal Muslim is but an avatar of the external one, the Pakistani. For Modi, not only is the Pakistani a Muslim, but the local Muslim is a Pakistani. In this way he brings together the loss of cows with the butchering of cows.

During the *Gaurav Yatra* Modi repeatedly referred in his speeches to Pakistan and "*myan Musharaf*" (literally, Mister Musharaf), the enemy country's military head. "*Myan*" means mister, but is often used pejoratively for "Muslim" in Gujarat. When Modi said "*myan Musharaf*," he always stressed the "*myan*" while addressing Gujarati crowds in rural areas.⁴³ In contradistinction to the *pujari*, who used the figure of Pakistan in order to displace agency of evil deeds away to an outside (to Pakistan), Modi's "*myan*" signified through its ambivalence the borders (and evil) inside of the state of Gujarat. Being legally bound not to publicly denounce Muslims through pejorative terms during an election campaign, Modi's instrumental use of "*myan Musharaf*," which he reiterated throughout the campaign, served to accomplish the

⁴³Narendra Modi's speeches during his 2002 election campaign are partly depicted in Rakesh Sharma's documentary "Final Solution." I accompanied the film crew for several days in 2002 in Northern Gujarat. The three and a half hour documentary is by far the best on the 2002 Gujarat violence and its aftermath.

opposite of what the priest intended. Through the enemy country Pakistan, Modi referred to the local Muslim.

Shortly before the election in December 2002, in a brand new fifteen-page BJP manifesto, the Gujarati government announced under the aegis of *Sudarshan Suraksha Kavach* the formation of a “Youth Commando Force.” This force would, besides preventing terrorism, also engage in *gauraksha* (cow protection) and slaughter house control in coordination with the defense ministry.⁴⁴ Here, finally, Narendra Modi came full circle in suggesting equivalence between terrorism and cow slaughter, united as the new threat to counter.

Even after the election victory, Modi continued to woo the Gujaratis with questions of meat consumption and vegetarianism. After he was criticized for the “bad name of Hinduism” that the pogrom had resulted in, Modi responded by emphasizing the tradition of *ahimsa* in Gujarat. This follows the general strategy to stress cow slaughter whenever in aggressive posture, and vegetarianism when less combative, while still making the very same point. During the Navratri celebrations at the occasion of Gandhi’s 135th birthday celebration in a speech in Porbandar, the Mahatma’s birthplace, Modi focused specifically on Mahatma Gandhi. While speaking about the “hidden strengths” of Gujarat, including vegetarianism, Ayurveda, naturopathy, Yoga, *khadi* and village industry, he said:

“Gujarat’s main strength lies in its vegetarianism. Most Gujaratis are strict vegetarians. The concept of “Chhapan Bhog” or 56 different dishes is native only to the Indian context, and more especially to the Gujarat culture. The beauty of the Gujarati palate lies in its variegatedness.

Vegetarianism is the first step to a healthy society. When Gandhiji went abroad at a young age, he took a vow that in any event he would not indulge in the

⁴⁴Asian Age, December 2, 2002, “Modi plans to form Youth Commando Force.”

consumption of animal flesh. According to the ancient Vedic texts of India, it is mentioned that there is ‘fire’ or ‘Agni’ in the stomach (kund) [sacrificial pit, vessel for sacrificial fire]. It is this fire or heat that digests the foods and provides nourishment, and strength to the body as a whole. According to our Sanskrit scriptures, if a vegetable, or fruit, or food grain is put in fire, then that fire and its container is called a Yagya kund” [sacrificial pit, vessel for sacrificial fire], but if dead flesh is put in fire, then that fire becomes the fire of a ‘shamshaan bhoomi’ [still earth, ground of death] or the fire of the funeral pyre. The fire of ‘Yagya’ gives life, energy, strength, and piety, while the fire of the ‘Shamshaan’ consumes and converts dirt to dirt and ashes to ashes.”

Modi is no Sanskrit scholar, as is clear from this passage. But the distinction he draws between “yagya” and “shamshaan,” the distinction between sacrifice offering life and consumption signifying death, is that between eating vegetarian food and eating non-vegetarian food, between Hindu and Muslim. Those that consume vegetables sacrifice and attain life. Those that eat death become the death that they were eating. They become that, which itself is sacrificed, the sacrificial victim. Thus eating death, for Modi, “converts dirt to dirt, ashes to ashes.” The flesh-eaters are those that will be sacrificed in order to attain life. They are sacrificed by those who do not ingest death that is who do not eat flesh.

He continues, vegetarianism is “unavoidable for the purity of thoughts and action. It is a kind of purity of means. You reap what you sow (...).”⁴⁵ Always referencing “Bapu” (that is, Gandhi), Modi then continues to enumerate the familiar environmental arguments for vegetarian food, the fact that many people in America are vegetarians, and that all meat is consumed at the expense of the poor. The

⁴⁵“Speech delivered by Hon. Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi on the 2nd October 2003,” at www.gujaratindia.com/Media/Speeches/Porbandar.pdf (accessed August 4, 2004).

Navratri celebrations that followed his speech were used by Modi to start his “Vibrant Gujarat” campaign, an attempt to attract international investors to Gujarat, which had accrued large economic loss due to the pogrom violence. Modi called Navratri the festival of fearlessness and vegetarianism.

In the Navratri celebrations, which take place yearly over nine nights, Gujaratis dance the Garba in the traditional festival in honor of the Mother Goddess. Navratri has been a “vegetarian” festival for quite some time. Ethnographers have reported buffalo sacrifices in rural Gujarat (Westphal Hellbusch 1976, Tambs Lyche 1992) taking place still in the 1960’s, and I heard such stories in North Gujarat in the mid 1990’s. In Ahmedabad the joyous festival consists of neighborhoods placing a Mother Goddess image in open space and dance around it. Some participants also drink alcohol and engage in romantic love. Students at Gujarat University claim that if illicit sexual encounters are ever possible, it is only during these nine nights. The instances of unwanted pregnancies and abortions were a testimony to this.

When I sit with Mr. Kamalwala, President of the Kureishi Jamat, during Bakri-Id 2003 at Mirzapur *chaklaa*, not far from the BJP’s head-office and the *Gujarat Samachar* newspaper, we eat *kebabs* and drink tea. Mr. Kamalwala understands Modi’s electoral triumph of December as a symbolic endorsement of the pogrom violence. How could Muslims have become so despised, he asks me. Mr. Kamalwala has many friends from diverse communities, but most told him they voted against the BJP. He simply cannot understand how someone like Modi, who had assumed power through an external coup from the center, actually managed to win the confidence of Gujarati voters after what he had done. He recalls how Hindu politicians used to come to the square for liver and chicken to woo the Muslim voters many years ago. Today, that has become unthinkable. A Gujarati politician would

never let himself be photographed with a Kureishi, eating meat in the heart of Muslim Ahmedabad, he stresses.

After Mr. Kamalwalla leaves, a young man, a Muslim, starts talking to me. He tells me of the insecurity in which he lives. He would like to move to Bombay but knows no one there. Gujarat is dead for him, he says. “We are now like them.” Raising his chin he points out a menial worker, member of a lower caste, who just exited from a slaughterhouse.

9.1.5 The Goddess of non-violence: the enigmatic *Ahimsa Devi Trust*

When I ask residents about the whereabouts of the “Ahimsa Devi Trust,” they are eager to show me the way. The building in *mandvi ni pol*, in the heart of old Ahmedabad, is well-known. At a building with a large board announcing the trust, a woman is depicted with a green Sari petting a young calf in motherly care (see Figure 55). To the left of the entrance, there is a color painted bust of the same woman. I was told it was marble, but it is not. Above the bust of the woman in green Sari, it reads in red “Immortal Martyr, the Goddess of Non-violence” (*amar shahid ahimsa devi*) (see Figure 56).



Figure 55. Gitaben Rambhiya Smurti Ahimsa Trust in old the heart of Ahmedabad.



Figure 56. Gitaben Rambhiya bust in the old city.

Mr. Bachubhai Rambhiya is a strange fellow. He runs the trust in memory of his slain wife Gitaben. It is also called the “Gitaben Rambhiya Trust.” When I arrive at the office, he is very astonished to see me. He is visited frequently but not by people like me. I give my references and he is pleased. He is astonished and gives many quick orders to bring tea, some “breakfast” (*nasto*, something to nibble on), excusing himself for how he looks, for his non-existent English, and for his Gujarati, which is heavily inflected with Marathi.

He also apologizes that he is not prepared for my questions. Indeed, I had grown tired of the usual guardedness and calibration of topics, which has severely worsened due to the pogrom, and therefore had not announced my visit as the polite norm in Ahmedabad demands. But after I tell him that I simply want to know the history of his wife, the so-called “Ahimsa Devi” (Goddess of non-violence), he insists I stay and ask questions anyhow. I can still come back another time on top of it, he tells me.

I had heard much about Bachubhai Rambhiya. Most of it was negative. Besides his appearance in newspaper articles, usually in conjuncture with the impounding of illegal beef, the rescue of cows, or the identification of illegal bull slaughter, a policeman (member of a lower caste group) told me that Mr. Rambhiya was a dangerous man and his organization responsible for much communal trouble in the city over the years.⁴⁶ Even his deified wife had a case filed against her when she was still alive by the police for bribery, impersonating a police officer, and extortion.⁴⁷

A University professor told me that the husband, Bachubhai, was actually a cattle thief and a “drinker of this booze” (liquor is illegal in Gujarat). A secular animal rights activist from South India (from PETA), advised me to stay away from this man and his many “watchdogs.” The activist made it clear, that there are only two types of animal activists in the city, those that are connected in one way or the other to the *Sangh Parivar*, and those that are not. Rambhiya was of the former type and thus spelled trouble. Even an elderly member of the city’s Panjrapole, the animal shelter financed by many Jains, warned me of the man I was going to visit. He claimed that the entire trust was part of a VHP outfit with many unsavory connections to the “subterraneous world” (read underworld). Muslims from the Kureishi Jamat usually simply call him a “goonda” (criminal) and his slain wife “goonda woman” (criminal woman) on top of it. One man told me that Gitaben was in fact the “Jain version of a goonda woman” (sic!).

Despite these harsh characterizations, in the posh Ambavadi area in the Western part of the city, opposite the prestigious C. N. Vidyalaya School, there is a city memorial erected for Bachubhai’s slain wife Gitaben as a champion of *ahimsa*

⁴⁶Times of India, March 6, 2003, “Anti-slaughter crusaders a step ahead of police, butchers,” front page; Sandesh, February 9, 2002, “Gauvanshni befaam katal: kaanun kartaaa kasaionaa haath laambaa chhe,” p.3.

⁴⁷India Today (Magazine), September 21, 1993, “Ahimsaa, Maansahaar ane Amdavad,” by Dipak Soliya, p. 24-25, Gujarati Language Edition.

(see Figure 56). At her memorial pigeons are fed with fodder in the little enclave on a traffic island brought by her husband every single day. The memorial resembles a similar one erected for other reasons by the Jain community in an adjacent area of the city. The Gitaben memorial is erected at the very spot, where two Muslims stabbed her to death in 1993. In the neighborhoods of West Ahmedabad she is well known as someone who insisted on not letting the butchers get away with murder. While the police is bribable, and politicians corrupt, Gitaben Rambhiya stands for truth, even if her courage is considered somewhat insane and suicidal.

The office we meet in is in a house situated in an all-Hindu lane in the symbolic center of the old city, not far from Manek Chowk and the Jumma Masjid. The office is full with depictions of Gods and large photos of his wife in a green police Sari surrounded by cows and calves, or standing next to the God Krishna as his avatar as a child (*baal Krishna*), who received milk from the tit of a cow (Figure 57A and Figure 57B).



A



B

Figure 57. Depictions of Gitaben Rambhiya (with green “police” Sari), fusing photography with painting.

There are many cows in Ahmedabad and Bachubhai is a busy man trying to save them. His office sports several telephones, I count at least four, some of which ring while we talk. When I return with a Maharastrian friend a second time to the

office, I am introduced to Bachubhai's son. He is made to bow down and receive our blessings.

Bachubhai's short life story is entangled with his wife's and he narrates this story in the same pathos, the same rhythm, hurried, schematic, sounding exaggerated at times, and always clichéd. As is the case in talk about many popular saints and Muslim Pir, the narrative seems trite and pre-structured around what it means to convey, not what actually happened.

According to Bachubhai, he was once a spoiled brat living in Mumbai where he was born into a wealthy family, getting pocket money from his brother. Money brought all the vices of the world, especially roaming around with young girls. He eloped and married--seven times, in fact. His parents were fed up with this his demeanor. Then came the moment which was going to change his fate. Hanging around girl's colleges, he met Gitaben, a second year Masters of Arts (geography) student at Sophia College. Gita was a Maharashtrian, like Bachubhai himself. Being good-looking she was chased by Muslim boys, and finally she asked for help from her famous loafer, Bachubhai. The relationship developed into a deep friendship and eventually resulted in marriage.

Bachubhai's lifestyle radically changed through his wife. He says, "She made a man out of an animal. Today whatever I am, I am because of her. She is my God. She is my whole being. If I have any problem, she solves them all. I ask for her strength and she gives it to me." Despite the usual post-marital residence practices of living with in-laws, Gitaben and Bachubahi left his home to found their own, as her penchant for truth and bold statements soon got her into trouble with her sister-in-law Bachubhai's younger sister. With no money they went to Gandhidham in Kutchh, where they started a humble restaurant busyness. Gitaben was fond of reading and read all the works of Mahatma Gandhi as well as Swami Vivekananda. She also had

much faith in the old sages of Girnar (in Saurashtra), who lived in one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. She made 108 trips to a particular peak in Girnar although one single trip is already beneficial for locals. She left home everyday only with a bottle of water and climbed the mountain barefoot only to return in the evening for dinner.

Finally drawing his attention, a sage approached her and offered her anything she wanted, but she declined and said she wanted nothing for herself but only to work for non-violence. The sage gave her a “*ling*,” a small symbol of the deity Shiva (the form of Shiva’s penis). He promised her that if she could retain the *ling* for 21 days unharmed, she would be blessed with instant richness. If she lost the *ling* people would not remember her after her death. He predicted that ten years after her death she would be worshipped by people in small villages and her son would become famous. Gitaben lost her *ling* after 10 days leading to her impoverishment.

Bachubhai and Gitaben moved to Ahmedabad and she started working for Shambu Maharaj and Suresh Bhatt, who were already advocating non-violence in a big way.⁴⁸ She received Rs. 400 a month as a salary. Bachubhai, meanwhile, made a little side money selling buttermilk and mouth fresheners. Gitaben used to carry a whip everywhere she went, and immediately upon receiving information about the butchering of cattle at a specific slaughterhouse, she would go to the place and save all the cattle. Bachubhai shows us the whip that he has kept until today. She turned to force, if needed, and, in fact, as Gitaben used to beat up the butchers, several times she was beaten up in return. Several times, she was also hospitalized. One day she was able to save 752 cows near Sabarmati railways station and had to stay and sleep in the

⁴⁸Shambu Maharaj is a locally known Hindu “saint” heavily involved in communal politics. His hometown is in Virodchandranagar. A credible friend of mine, a Muslim born in the same town, told me how his father used to invite the saint to neighborhood feasts where meat was consumed. Shambu, however, turned into a staunch vegetarian and ran cow protection agitations in the 1990’s in Ahmedabad. He probably turned communal some time in the 1980’s. The saint is also shortly depicted in an interview in Patwardhan’s “Father, Son, Holy War” 1994.

grass for four days. But she was happy at the end of the day because she “had saved those dumb who were doomed to die” from ending up as a meal.

The “Great Lady” also paid kind attention to human beings. She used to help women battered by husbands, force the husbands to stop drinking, and save the eunuch community from social ostracism. Though her language and manners were very rough at times, her work, Bachubhai points out, was intended to produce smiles on people’s faces. Gitaben was a “simpleton,” owning only two cotton saris, but she was very strong-willed. When a village girl was raped and the parents of the girls came to Gitaben for justice, she rushed to the Chief Minister of Gujarat in Gandhinagar, threatening to chop off the penises of all the boys who had raped that girl. (Gitaben was also known to keep a “razor blade” with her wherever she went). The culprits were the nephew and friends of the then Chief Minister of Gujarat. The girl was given two lakh rupees compensation and the culprits were imprisoned for seven years because of her stern insistence.

In 1990, Bachubhai continues, Gitaben received the Rani Jhansi Award. When being honored by the Mayor of Ahmedabad, she refused to accept an award until “the whole of Gujarat stops the butchering of animals.” Bachubhai then remembers her greatest feat to date: Gitaben conceived the second time 10 years after her first pregnancy. On June 7, 1991, she had gone to save 10 cows during the last days of her pregnancy. She had labor pains and called her husband to inform him that she was going to sign herself into a hospital after rescuing the cows. For eight days after giving birth to a boy, she rested, but when she received another phone call to save another 20 cows, she rushed out to do so.

For these activities, Gitaben attracted the wrath of the butcher community. She was threatened over the phone and even in person. A police officer named Gharchar was bribed by butchers with two Lakh Rupees, and arrested her under false charges.

But she was released after two hours. Although the government of Gujarat through the Animal Welfare Board supported her morally, they did not pay her for her work, Bachubhai complains. The arrest, as I learned later from a policeman, was due to her impersonating a female police officer wearing a green police Sari as well as possession of an illegal country-made revolver.

Gitaben saved 16 million cows, Bachubhai claims, from being butchered during her lifetime. On August 27, 1993, she received a fake phone call. She left home to save another group of cows. A week earlier Bachubhai together with an advocate had warned her of a plan to kill her precisely on that day, on August 27. Gitaben went to save the six cows, and left them behind at the Panjrapole (animal shelter) for safekeeping. Upon entering a police station to ask for police protection she was stabbed by two Muslim boys right in front of the station. They stabbed her twice, she retaliated, but by the fourth stabbing, which was close to her neck, she gave in. The Muslim boys did not stop and kept on stabbing 22 times, Bachubhai recounts.

There were two witnesses to the stabbing, Police inspector Parmar and constable Radheshyam, but they refused help having been bribed to do so. Her driver and assistant, Hitesh Patel and Bogilal, both ran away out of fear. She was rushed to V.S. Hospital but succumbed to death at around 2:00 p.m. Bachubhai remembers all the details, including the murderers' names, Zakir Chhino and Baba Khan. The two boys were charged with murder and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Bachubhai's legal advisor did not charge him a single paisa for the case. In four years, the culprits are scheduled to be released, but Bachubhai wants the Supreme Court to sentence them to death.

After his wife's death, the hospital was flooded with her devotees, including many a Muslim, he remembers. The people mourned for twelve days, especially in Kathiawad and Kutchh. Prominent politicians of the day came to his place to pay

homage. Bal Thackeray, Uma Bharati, Sonia Gandhi, L.K.Advani and many more celebrities arrived.

Bachubhai is disappointed that despite all the attention he received at the time, the government refused to support his organization financially. He only received two Lakh Rupees from the insurance but nothing further. Her monument was built in only 28 days and “earned its name in the Guineas Book of Records” (see Figure 58 and Figure 59). Now he runs three institutions in the memory of his wife’s name and he has 200 investigators working for him. He does not keep any financial account for the organizations but spends all the money “spontaneously” as he has it. It runs on the money from well-wishers and with the help of Her.



Figure 58. Gitaben Memorial in Ambavadi.



Figure 59. The resemblance to a Jain memorial.

Bachubhai considers himself a pious devotee of his own wife, who for him is a *devi* (Goddess) ever present watching over him, and the cows (see Figure 60).



Figure 60. Bachubhai Rambhiya. Note the country-made revolver above his head in front of an image of a Jain Tirthankara. To the right hangs an image of the now legendary anti-colonial Bhagat Singh twisting his moustache with a revolver in his hand.

It is clear that Gitaben Rambhiya must have been a remarkable woman in her own right, courageous beyond a doubt, but also extremely stubborn and self-righteous. Dressing up as a police woman in a green Sari, beating up Kureishis with a whip, while protecting ostracized hijras, threatening politicians with castration while saving cows and illegally extorting money, Gitaben Rambhiya certainly was one of those characters that makes fieldwork so worthwhile in India. I regret not having been able to interview her personally, but had instead to contend with her husband.

There is a socio-logic to the fact that a radical cow-slaughter organization like the “Ahimsa Devi Trust” fuses the claim to *ahimsa* with the specter of the Mother Goddess (Devi), she, who traditionally demands blood. We have come full circle, because here now, it is *ahimsa* itself, which allows for the desire of violence (*himsa*) to be acted out.

9.1.6 The return of invasion

We can see that slaughter—*katleam*--precedes the Godhra incident in myriad ways. If one asks when did the alleged victimization of Hindus, the “slaughter,” actually begin, it is difficult to identify a definite time. There is no consensus about this. Some say “slaughter” began, in the 1990’s or 1992/93 post Babri Masjid demolition violence, when Hindus were the victims of Muslim anger and Muslims were killed in revenge. Other’s turn to the 1985/86 “reservation riots,” or Indira Gandhi’s “Emergency” in 1977, where the Congress Prime Minister decided to dispense with democracy for two entire years. Most agree that the 1969 violence in Ahmedabad was vital, but many go even further back, and finally land at Partition.

Partition is always an adequate beginning, even in Gujarat, where comparatively little of its horror was witnessed directly. Reading slaughter back in time does not stop at Partition either, however. As we have learned from Bharat and in the legend of Bhathiji Maharaj mentioned above, it can reach even further back. If

need be, it can reach into the recesses of an unknown time, full of stories of Moghuls and Sultans who destroy temples at Munsar tank or elsewhere, steal women, and cows. This time is a mythical time of which few historical facts are known; it can be poisonous in a political context where Hindutva ideology defines its content, its purpose, and its transformation into national time.

When Bharat refers to the Muslim rulers of a pre-British age he does so as if they lived in his own grandfather's generation. If I compare the way Ahmedabadis talk about "Akbar and Birbal," for example, they seem in more proximity with this past than Germans of my own generation are with the First World War.

At last the very beginning, the absolute beginning, will be the invasion of Sind by the Arabs. Slaughter reads backwards into history and ends only where, logically, the Muslim ended, that is, where they first invaded India and all the slaughter initially began. In Gujarat this beginning will be conceived as the destruction of the Shiva temple in Somnath, and the entry of Muslims into Saurashtra as referred to by VHP-founder K.K. Shastree (chapter four). It does not matter that this perception is historical nonsense. It all makes so much perfect sense that when "they" weren't there, there was also no slaughter. The same logic is expressed as a rationalization for inner city migration and its borders: if they are not here, there is also no violence. In this discourse, time and space fulfill the same function by allowing to imagine a space in which "they" are not present. The slaughter always started with them. The Muslim, after all, is a butcher (*kasaai*).

This movement back into mythical time, as slaughter reaches back to an original first Muslim as the Adam of Invasion, simultaneously arrives at the neighbor's doorstep. The slaughter always also creeps into the present, to the Ahmedabad, that I share with my interlocutors in the years of 2001, 2002, and 2003 respectively. Thus history, myth, city space, and the meaning of interactions in

everyday life in a divided city, are brought to express the same: the experience of invasion. The country historically attacked by invaders; the family by marriage, rape, and conversion; the mother by Partition, rape, and animal slaughter; the country by terrorists; the city by anti-social elements; and one's own mouth, eyes, and smell, by the flesh food eaten by others. In this way the story of slaughter is but a variation on the theme of invasion. It has no end.

9. 2 The angry Hindu

The following text will describe the metamorphoses of vulnerability and division into anger and unity. It is an example of the magical voice that the *Sangh Parivar* successfully employed to lend meaning to the pogrom violence. It is a short article, which seems like a subtext to what many Gujaratis have communicated to me in their own respective ways during and after the violence, the emergence as unity as Hindus. The text is part of an edited volume including statements by journalists, writers, the Chief Minister Narendra Modi himself, and others, about the Godhra incident and following pogrom. Its paperback cover depicts the burning coach of Sabarmati express in Godhra. The text translated here is the second article of the volume, as if by introduction, and significantly, similar to the "auto-biography" of a goat, it remains anonymous, whereas all the other utterances have authors attached to the texts. The author is simply named as "*ek krodh hindu*," an angry Hindu. The volume appeared on the Gujarati book market some time in August 2002.⁴⁹ The following translation was prepared with the help of Professor Raymondbhai Parmar. In the translation much of the tonality and imagery is lost, which I will amend by offering some of the insights, including those of Mr. Parmar, about the text in the commentary afterwards.

⁴⁹Ek krodh Hindu (2002: 11-17). Translated into English with kind assistance of Professor Raymond Parmar.

Why did anger come? (*gusso kem avyo?*)

A famous pseudo-secularist (*nakali sekularismvadi*) wrote a letter in a weekly. Reading it, some angry Hindu roared. Immediately upon looking at this article, his eyes turned red with anger.

Yes, undoubtedly, I am angry. My anger is appropriate. If I were not angry I would not be a human being (*maanas*). For a long time I have been suffering insults quietly and until now I just have merely kept on suffering (*sahan karvu*). The enemies have kidnapped my fellow brethren (*samaaj baandhvo*) and rendered my numbers small. The result: My country worth worshipping (*aaraadya bhumi*) was broken. My traditional right (*paramparaagat adhikaar*) was snatched away.

Afghanistan, West-, South-, horizontal land, Sindh, Balutschistan, half of Punjab, half of Bengal, and a third of Kashmir were stolen. I suffered countless violations (*atyaachaar*), insults (*apmaan*), and I was hunted in mass-killings (*samuhik hatyao shikar*). I was chased out of this territory (*pradesh*, country, region). And nonetheless it is said that I should not become angry! I should not remain unbent (*akkad*, remain stiffly upright)! I should not angrily shout: This is enough!

My Gods and temples were rendered unholy (*apavitra*). They were destroyed. The attackers crushed the statues of my Gods under their feet. My Gods are crying out in shrieks of horror (*chiso paade chhe*). They are looking at me for their re-establishment. If I express my suffering to them, the secularists make it seem as if I break the religious peace (*saampradaayik shaanti*, communal harmony). They begin abusing me.

You pour salt into my wounds, but still expect that I should keep my mouth shut? The main reason for my anger is your betrayal and deceit. You come to me when you need my vote. But you are promoting (*chadhaavavu*: to indulge, increase,

to offer to in worship) those who are attacking me. If I save myself from their effort (*aakraman*, also invasion), then you call me communal (*saampradayik*, sectarian).

When they are shouting 'we are in danger' even if this claim is not true you give them support in the name of minority. In Godhra a violent Muslim mob well equipped with weapons attacked us. The reaction (*pratikriyaa*, counteraction, retribution, retaliation) to this was natural (*svaabhaavik*). Around this, how much noise was made! But in Kashmir how many temples have been destroyed? When my brothers and sisters were driven out (*tagadi mukavu*), there was not even a single word of protest coming from your mouth. And still you blame me for being angry?

When some Muslim or Christian head of state come to my country and then visit a mosque (*masjid*) or church (*girajaaghar*) for prayer, their followers line up in front of them as if for a lecture. That news you print in big big continuous letters in the [newspaper] columns. If not that much, then you silently praise their feeling of patriotism. But if our president or minister performs *puja* (worship) in some temple, you start shouting. This shows the *khataro* (suspicion, doubt, fear) about their own 'secular tradition' (*dharm-nirpeksh parampara*). If the Ramayan is screened on TV, this, too, you are not able to tolerate (*vethvu*: to put up with, endure, bear). In this you see 'Hindu extremism' (*kattarvaad*).

The logic of your arguments reveals your own double standard. The number of worldviews from followers of divers sects is less than mine. You gave them the name 'minority' and you have started advocating their rights. In Kashmir and West-East states Hindus also are in the minority. They were chased out of the region and were treated like second-class citizens. Yet still, I have never heard you advocate in favor of us (Hindus).

You failed to see the ugly face of communalism when in Kerala the Muslim League and the 'Kerala Congress' --which means the 'Christian Congress'-- sheltered

Congress and communists who substituted their rule. When I voiced a little protest, all of you, one after another, immediately began to identify the mark [sign] of communalism in the clear picture of Kerala. If any point or issue about Hindus is raised the minority becomes upset about the issue (*pareshaan thai javu*). For you, to offer a coconut (*vaghervu*: to sacrifice, to increase) or to light a lamp (*dip pragataavavo*), is also forbidden behavior. For you, secularism (*dharma nirpekshita*) means that, even though a Hindu home, there is nothing Hindu in it. And so it should be in the way of life of a nation (*raashtra jivannu swarup*, the form of national life). In short, I am not remaining me. I should forget my identity (*asmitaa*, pride), that is what you are desiring.

However, you should also understand that I will never fulfill this wish in your mind (*man ni muraad*, intention, anticipation, hope). In my heart Maharshi Arvind's voice (*vani*) is echoing full of emotion: "On the foundation of Sanatana Dharma India will rise again." The words of Gandhi are deeply resounding in my life: "If no Hindu lives in India, in that India, I do not wish to live." I also have not forgotten Annie Besant's words: "If Hindu dharm is ruined (*nasht tashe*), then India will not remain India." Swami Vivekananda's voice keeps resounding in my heart: "Hindu dharm is India and India is Hindu dharm."

Sometimes, I feel pity for your mental corruption (*maansik vikruti*, perversion). In my country there are ninety percent Hindus. You fail to grasp even such a straightforward fact clearly? For my country's Independence I shed my blood (*khun vahaavyu*, I carried the burden of blood). That also you do not understand and you wish to keep me separate (*algo*, distinct, disconnected, distant) from the very people who openly enjoy those rights. These are those people who in private talk together with foreigners have broken my motherland into pieces. You don't want me to teach my culture and traditional spirituality to my children with love. I should not sing

praise to my ancient great men...and those people who are annoyed [care for] of each and every holy matter (*darek pavitra vastuthi chid chadhe chhe*).

They, in turn, can teach in their school whatever pleases them. Can you not see the horrible unevenness (*bhishan bedbhaavo*, terrible differences)? That which we are offering at the feet of our God—money earned in sweat--that money my rulers have begun to waste. The question of the so-called ‘minority’ taking money must be addressed because they are nourished through my wealth (*dhan*, money , capital, property). Through my helpful contribution (*dhan*), they go on the Haj-pilgrimage. I should tolerate all this insult, injustice, and exploitation (*apmaan, anyay, shoshan*) quietly?

And still you dare to ask me not to become angry? Even *kshudr* (insects) are reacting, don’t you know that? Am I inferior even to an insect (*kshudr*)? You make fun (*majaak*) of me by saying I am an “angry Hindu” (*krodh Hindu*). In my mind that is not a joke. It is a compliment (*prashansaa-stuti*, a praise of admiration).

For a long time I was unconscious (*bebhaan avasthaama*, not alert). I was not alert at the time when my motherland (*matrbhumi*) was broken into pieces. But the continuous blows on me have awoken me. Now I have started to hear, understand, and think (about) the ongoing oppression that has befallen me (*maaraa par gujaaraata traasone*). This is the result of my former mistakes. Now, I will no longer remain fearful, I will not remain quiet. Now I will speak. I will become active (*sakriya banish*) and energetic (*sfurtimaan thai*), I will fear no challenge (*padkaarothi darish nahi*). I will confront them (*saamno karish*).

That you call me “angry Hindu” (*krodhit Hindu*) fills me with delight. Until today, I was the angry landowner, farmer, Malik [village head], laborer; and then I was the angry Kannadi, Marathi, Bengali; and then I was the angry Jat, Harijan, Brahman, Rajput; and then I was the angry Lingayat, Arya Samaji, Jain. But now you

have given me a new name – ‘wrathful angry Hindu’ (*kruddh gusso thayel Hindu*). In this, all can be included. Everybody is included in this. That name suggests that after so many centuries my existence (*astitva*, being) has become complete (*samagra*) and a perfectly united form (*sampurn ekam naa rupe*), a Hindu form.⁵⁰ Now, I can think as one unit. I am able to have an experience (*anubhavi shaku chhu*). I am able to do work. Is that a small gain?⁵¹

I was in decline for many centuries (*maaru patan thayu hatu*). The main reason for this was that I was un-united and divided (*asangathit ane vibhaajit*). I had forgotten my real and natural Hindu identity (*asmitaa*, pride, identity). Knowingly or un-knowingly you admire [envy] me for my experience and now, for resolving my mistake.⁵² Keep in mind that you yourself have accepted that my anger is not just the anger of some small flock of people (*samudaaya*). It is the anger of 90 crore people (*loko*)... The anger of 90 crore people.⁵³

Now I understand. How ignorant I was about the hard reality of the world until now. I always thought that as I gave respect to the opinions of other sects, they also will give respect to my Gods and temples. I understood that I make no attack on another country, but they also do not make any attack on my country in turn. It was my expectation that if you are good, then the world is good (*aap bhala to jag bhala*).⁵⁴ I lay trust in the fact that in war those *niti-maryaadaao* (morality of boundaries, rules of moral conduct, ethics of limits) I am observing would also be observed in the same

⁵⁰The significant sentence reads in Gujarati: “*aa naam sanket kare chhe ke aatla saikaa pachhi aaje hu samagr [whole] ane sampurn ekamnaa rupe, Hindu rupe, astitvamaa aavyo chhu.*” An alternative translation of this sentence could be: This name suggests that after so many centuries I have arrived in existence (*astitvamaa aavyo chhu*) in a perfectly united form, a Hindu form.

⁵¹“*Have hu purna ekam tarike vichari shaku chhu. Anubhavi shaku chhu. Kam kari shaku chhu. Aa kai nano-suno labh chhe?*”

⁵²“*Tame jaane ke ajaane maari prashansaa kari chhe ke me mari bhulno anubhav kari lidho chhe ane have sudhaarvaano nishvy karyo chhe.*” Knowingly or unknowingly you admire me for having learnt my lesson and having decided to correct my mistake.

⁵³One crore equals 10 Mio. 90 crore Hindus is 900,000 000 Million people.

⁵⁴This is a very common Gujarati saying: “*aap bhala to jag bhala,*” , “If you are good to the world, the world is good to you.”

way by my enemies. I was giving the enemy's women respect and kept the limit (*maryaadaa*, boundary, separation). I believed that the enemy, too, would act like that in turn. I accepted equal rights for all sectarian opinions and beliefs. O.k. (*bhale*), their confidence (*vishvaas*, hope) and mode of worship (*upaasna paddhati*) should be according to their wishes (*game te hoy*, literally, as they like it so it should be). I believed that others would also show that kind of inclination towards me.

But alas, I have been cheated again and again. I have been betrayed. I have been stabbed in the back. Those that I had allowed to built their worship place (*pujaa sthaan*) in my land (*bhumi*) started to render my worship places unholy and began to demolish them in return. In return for giving them freedom (*svatantrata*, independence) to continue their method of worship (*upaasna paddhati*), they started to destroy my religion. The answer to my morality (*nautiktaa*) came through their immorality (*anautiktaa*). I considered all as equal. They dealt with me even worse than with an animal. As compensation for my *bhalaai* (kindness) I met with *buraai* (wickedness).

Now, I also have knowledge of the dealings of the world. Now I have also decided to put into practice that tit for tat (those rules tit for tat). There is no doubt that in the manner of spiritual ideals my morality is in me.⁵⁵ It is my most excellent cultural treasure. I'll never leave it. Never ever. If I allow them to go I would not remain a true Hindu. I would not remain the descendant of my great monks (*mahaan rushimunio nu santaan*). But I have become *saavchet* (cautious, vigilant, alert, attentive) now.⁵⁶ I will no longer allow others to take improper advantage of my

⁵⁵This sentence poses some difficulties for translation. The original: "*nihsandeh maaraamaa maaraa nautik temaj aadhyaatmik aadarsh ni chetna chhe.*" Four possible alternatives to the above: Undoubtedly in that manner my spiritual faculty of knowledge mirrors my morality. Or: Certainly, in me my morality is alive by way of spiritual ideals. Or: Without doubt, my morality is within me in the manner of spiritual ideals (of the faculty) of knowledge. Or, more elegantly: Most certainly, within me, my morality is mirrored by my spiritual knowledge.

⁵⁶It reads: "*saavchet bani gayo chhu*"

goodwill (*sadbhaavnaa*, good nature). To do good dealings (*sadvartaav*) with evil men (*durj no saathe*) is a vice (*avgun*, bad quality). It becomes a *badi* (an addiction, a bad habit).

The truth is, I am more angry with myself than with any other. I am angry about myself. For a long time I have allowed my *jaat* (tribe, race) to be deceived in different forms in the past. After Independence my *jaat* was cheated, was deceived, through the hands of pseudo-secularists (*nakali dharm nirpekshvadiyo*).⁵⁷ How many lessons I have learnt now! I will pay attention to the preaching and warnings of my saviors (*udhdhaarko*), protectors (*sanrakshko*), Great Men (*mahaapurusho*, glorious men).

Shankaracharya said: “Generosity expressed towards good men is very good. Expressing generosity to evil men is not good.” Shri Ramkrishna Paramahans narrated the tale (*bodh-kathaa*, moral lesson, story) of a snake. According to the story a snake had assumed a complete virtuous conduct (*purepuro saadhu-vrattri*) through the preaching of a *saadhu* (an ascetic). The snake was rendered half dead by the throwing of stones on the part of travelers. Seeing the snakes’ miserable condition, the great soul said: “I told you not to bite, but not to stop hissing.”⁵⁸ The snake understood its mistake and started to hiss again. Its life was saved.” [sic]

Swami Vivekananda advised his own disciples in this way: “If anyone insults your mother you experience (*anubhav*) that through the insult your blood is boiling. O.K. like that, today, if any Christian missionary (*isaai mat pracharak*) abuses Hindu

⁵⁷*Dharm nirpekshvadiyo* refers to those secularists, whose idea of secularism excludes any religion. There are usually three different forms of secularism referred to in Gujarat: *sarva dharm sambhaav* (equal status to all religions), *bim sampradayik* (literally, without sect, without sectarianism), and *dharm nirpekshta* (without any religion at all).

⁵⁸The full sentence reads: “*bhai, me tane dasvaani naa paadi hati, fufaado maarvaani naa paadi na hati.*” It should be noted here that the verb “to hiss” (*fufaado maarvaa*) is constructed in Gujarat with the verb *maarvu* (strike, kill, throw) and the noun *fufaado* (hiss of a serpent). This is a known tale, part of Gujarati folklore.

religion, gives bad names, and then converts your religious brethren (*dharm baandhvo*), then also your blood should boil and rise.”

When making a boat trip Swami Vivekananda threatened two Christian preachers (*issai dharm pracharako*) to throw them into the ocean by holding them at their feet. These Christian missionaries had kept on insulting Hindu religion. Both Christian preachers started shivering out of fear. When they stopped hurting Hindu religion and apologized, then Swami Vivekananda let them go. Shri Krishna and Chhatrapati Shivaji’s method was exactly like this. In order to observe the most excellent moral behavior, they have always used their *vivek-buddhi* (wisdom, discreet intellect, power of discrimination, consciousness, awareness). It is because of these glorious men that the Hindus have remained Hindu.⁵⁹ This fact I have now understood.

I have now experienced the importance of my anger. Because of this fear has slowly arisen in the heart of my enemies-by-birth (*janm jaat traasvadio*, long-time terrorists). Out of these terrorists a few have started to leave (*chhodi bhaagvaa*, to run away, to escape) the camp of secularism (*dharm nirpekshata*). They have begun to realize the full extent of my anger.⁶⁰ Not only that, but they have now begun to respect my anger (*samaan karvaa*). You are but one [single] knowing being (*buddhijivi*, being intellect) and such was your vanity (*abhimaan*).⁶¹ As if pure reason (*bauddhikta par keval*, intellect) was yours alone, only recently have a few high judges, admirers, journalists, historians, writers, professors etc. begun to defend my position (*maaraa tarafe* [sic!], to defend in my direction). The fortress of ‘intellectuality’ from which you safely rained down melee and missile weapons upon

⁵⁹“*Aa mahaapurushone kaarane j Hindu Hindurupe bachi rahyo chhe.*” Because of these glorious men Hindus have preserved the Hindu form. Or: It is because of these great men that the Hindu has saved himself as a Hindu.

⁶⁰“*Emne maaraa krodhni yathath anubhuti thavaa laagi chhe.*” They have begun to feel how angry I have become. Or: They have begun to experience the reality of my anger.

⁶¹That is, “you had an ego.”

me, that fortress is going to be collapsing in a short time.⁶² Beware! Now your mental hypocrisy (*bauddhikta dabh*, intellectual hypocrisy) will strike you back like a boomerang (*valto fatko maarshe*).

Before I finish my *vaat* (matter, talk, story), I insist you understand the hidden meaning of the famous journalist's warning: "It takes time for the Hindu to awake, but once awoken, even the Himalaya is shivering. And the Himalaya is the residence (*nivaas sthaan*) of the most angry Hindu--Shiv."

9.2.1 Language and Authority

Professor Raymondbhai Parmar, former teacher of the prestigious St. Xavier's College in the city, helped me translate the above text. He wanted to quit half way through feeling disparaged by the attacks on Christians. Raymondbhai is a middle-class Catholic from Dalit background. The style and tenor of the text angered him. From the language he conjectured that it was obviously written by a first-generation literate, probably a member of a lower-caste (SC, ST) or intermediary caste (OBC), with not too much experience and knowledge about either *shuddh Gujarati*, nor Sanskrit. The text was also not written by a Gujarati Brahman because the author had mixed quotidian Gujarati expressions with Sanskrit terms in an ill informed manner. It does not seem to be written by someone with even a rudimentary knowledge of English either. In fact, even the for the urban middle class so characteristic "Gujarezi" expressions (English and Gujarati mixed) are almost completely absent. English is painstakingly avoided.

As Parmar had it, there is a strong Sanskrit bent in the text, a visible intent not to use Gujarati at specific moments, but to inundate the text with obscure and somewhat confusing Sanskrit terms like *prashansaa-stuti*, *aaraadya bhumi*, or *nivaas*

⁶² "Bauddhiktaa' naa je salaamat gadhmaa rahi tame maaraa par shastra, astroni varshaa kartaa hataa e gadh have thodaa samaymaa dhasi padvaano chhe."

sthaan. The substitution of everyday words associated as “Muslim” with Sanskrit terms associated as “Hindu” is carried out to the detriment of elegance and readability. The author will use, for example, words like “*shatruo*” (enemy, to cut in Sanskrit) instead of the much more common *dushman* (enemy, opponent), which is derived from Persian.⁶³ According to Parmar these Sanskrit terms float into a simple Gujarati in an incompetent way.. There are also many mistakes in the text, in grammar, punctuation, as well as vocabulary use itself (including in the use of Gujarati words).

The creation of a new purified language, which no longer indexes humiliation and shame, or rather, conceals it under gold and glitter, is characteristic of the style of “Vedic revival” in Gujarat, a tendency to identify everything new in science and technology as a “Vedic return.” One might be allowed to call this “Hindu Kitsch,” a substitution of usable words with non-usable ones, inaugurating the emergence of a language as pure adornment and decoration.

But perceptively, Parmar adds, that the use of Sanskrit terms in the text, indicating the speaker’s relation to something Vedic, does not mean that the person in questions claims to be a Brahmin or a person of some stature. The anonymous voice that speaks does not try to inhabit Sanskrit knowledge. There is always a sort of division of labor, a remarkable sort of deferral at work. The author, through his use of Sanskrit, never seems to claim authority over the terms. In other words, the author knows his or her place and delegates to the *mahaapurosho*, the Great men of the Hindu tradition. But he uses those terms only in order to indicate his own relation *to* them.

It is, thus, not the authority of the author, but of “Indian Sanskrit tradition” which is intentionally established through the use of Sanskrit terms. By extension the usage establishes authority of all things “Hindu.” The author uses Sanskrit to express

⁶³Indeed, to address the enemy who came and conquered with the very word that he left behind, *dushman*, seems to be intentionally eclipsed here.

a relation to that cultural sphere he claims he is part of, in fact, a child of. In the logic of the book of which this article is a part of, his lack of authority and education, paradoxically authorizes him to speak the things he says. The author, whose class or caste position is somewhat obvious to any educated Gujarati, does not need to claim mastery over Sanskrit or religious knowledge, in order to establish his own authority. In what then consists the authority of this anonymous author?

His authority resides in his anger, courage, bluntness, and directness. The author knows that any Brahman or middle-class educated Gujarati might recognize that the speaker is not a member of the “Savarnas” (high caste: Brahmin, Vaniya) or might even find many mistakes in the text. But what is much more important, is the author’s deference, reverence, and the respect that he offers to the “*mahaapurusho*” of the Hindu tradition. The spirit of the text truly tries to transcend castes and communities of the Hindu fold into an identification, which does not claim parity with the educated language of higher castes, but devotion following the logic of *bhakti*. The unsophisticated use of language does not hamper that attempt.

9.2.2 Healing Anger

In this text, the inability of “Hinduism” to experience unity, to create a satisfactory experience of unity, is alleviated. It is only in the experience of anger that wholeness is finally accomplished. The anonymous writer makes this rather explicit: “*aaje hu samagr [whole] ane sampurn ekamnaa rupe, Hindu rupe, astitvamaa aavyo chhu.*” Today my existence (*astitva*, being) has become complete in a perfectly united form (*sampurn ekam naa rupe, Hindu rupe*), a Hindu form. In *sampurn ekamnaa rupe, Hindu rupe*, we see the emergence of an incarnation of the Hindu in anger. The author refers here to the name given to this new Hindu by his enemies, the “*kruddh gusso thayel Hindu,*” the angry wrathful Hindu. Thus it is anger that makes perfect,

whole (*sampurn*), not the knowledge of Sanskrit. It is the magic of becoming one, one form (*rupe*, also incarnation), in anger.

The many “injuries” enlisted come from diverse areas, historical times, political and social contexts. They are all condensed into one so that the feeling of injury and anger can arise and sustain itself. Like disgust, anger allows entering into a sphere of pure sentiment. In anger, you can regress to the moment before any distinction is made (before the symbolic), and thus it makes you whole. If non-violence is conceived as the law of the Father (Gandhi), anger is prior and enters the level of the imaginary. Here one is swallowed by a sentiment, that of Mother. But unlike the paralyzing affect of disgust, anger also allows for a target. The narcissist revolt, which consists in the insistence of claiming injury, facilitates an Oedipal return of the son to the Mother, a turning away from the Father, the feminized figure who eschewed anger, to a perfect prior unity in anger.

The text, a formidable piece of Hindutva propaganda, does much more than just describe “anger,” it actually performs a transformation of “anger” into “voice,” while at the same time lending legitimacy to the violence that created the group. The text is believable precisely because the execution of Sanskrit or the many references to the “Vedic,” are unsophisticated. It also shows how fear is “overcome” in the emergence of “anger,” how humiliation becomes strength, how weakness becomes power. Similar to the anonymous author, the text’s addressee is the anonymous “pseudo-secularists” (read secularist), Western educated, dismissive of religion, who always underestimating the genuine religion of the masses. Thus the text functions perfectly as the voice from nowhere, resounding everywhere.

The text also describes the moment of anger as a spontaneous coming to consciousness. We have encountered this elsewhere already, when “Hindu

awakening” is described by terms like *jagruti* and where the becoming “Hindu” is a coming to oneself, becoming the *tatva* (essence) of Hindu, *hindutva*.

There is a double entendre in the last two sentences of the text suggesting the line of interpretation I have followed here. In the quotation of the “famous journalists” when describing the people’s anger, the author says, “It takes time for the Hindu to awake, but once awoken, even the Himalaya is shivering. And the Himalaya is the residence of the most angry Hindu--Shiv.” One might also translate the last sentence into, “And the Himalaya is the residence of the Hindu’s most angry God, Shiv” (*paramkrodhi*, holy anger).

The text ends with conjuring up the anger of the Hindu God Shiva (*paramkrodhi*), the angriest of all Hindus. But there is a slippage. Why would Shiva shiver? In the face of what does the God have to be afraid? Is Shiva trembling because of the intensity of his own anger, or shivering in the face of “Hindu anger”? The power of Shiva, as some Gujaratis would say, is *shakti*, the female source of all power. Shiva’s anger is always *Her* power. Even the Himalaya, his abode, is trembling once She is awoken. Shiva trembles in sight of “Hindu anger” of which he himself is the most perfect expression. But his power is not his own. It is given to him by *Her*. It is she who is the prior one. She, of course, is the people, the primal force, before any distinction, of which even the Gods must be trembling.

9.2.3 Essence awoken

On March 12, 2002 the city’s air is heavy with heat, fear, and excitement. Bharat, unsatisfied with my opinions, insists on explaining to me what he now calls “the Godhra massacre” (*Godhra Hatyakand*). What had been an *akaasmat* (accident) perpetrated by Muslim *goondao*, had now become a massacre. He is angry at me. “The Muslims attacked, raped, and cut into pieces women.” “Hindu women” he concretizes and adds, that they were “*young blood*” (in English). Bharat says

verbatim, “The women were raped for the pleasure of men” (*jaatiya sukh maate stri par aatiyaachaar*). Initially, he had told me (see chapter four) that Hindu pilgrims were attacked on their way to Ayodhya. The attacks were an attempt to stop the building of a Ram mandir. Although no news to me, he had not told me about young girls, maiming, and rape before. However, it is important to understand that Bharat is perfectly sincere in his description.

The deliberate massacre going on while we talk is really the massacre of Muslims, but for Bharat it is now the massacre of Hindus in Godhra that is relevant. What is significant about this reversal is that the horrific imagination feeds on real acts, which are perpetrated on those who are accused of perpetrating them in turn. We had been exposed to these horrific impressions in diverse forms in the last 12 days together. It is as though the unleashed violence not only breaks and evaporates bodies and properties, but it enters minds eating away the mental seams that allow us to keep separate and distinguish what is a victim from what is a perpetrator, one incident from another incident, a rapist from a rape victim, and a murderer from a victim of murder.

But there is another more important reason why it is important to understand this mimetic circulation. After the above, Bharat says, “*Gujarat public aa jaaNe chhe, tyaare emnama Hindutvaa aave chhe.*” “Once the Gujaratis came to know this, then Hindutva was emerging within them,” or alternatively, “[...] Hindutva came into them.”

For Bharat and many others, Hindutva is *not* one political ideology amongst others. It is not a substitutable historical narrative against other possible alternative narratives. For Bharat Hindutva does not compete with Marxism or secularism. Rather, it is something constantly kept at bay, which can rise to the surface from some depth, like the churning of the milk ocean at the beginning of time. You stave Hindutva off because you are kind and tolerant, but if you are pushed to the limits it is

Hindutva and nothing else that emerges. It is what you are if you are true to yourself, what lies at the bottom of yourself.

That Hindutva (literally “the essence of Hindu”), is understood to emerge akin to a mystical essence, is corroborated by the propaganda pamphlets of the *Sangh Parivar*, which always speak in experiential terms of *Hindu jaagruti* (Hindu awakening) conducive to the epical and mythological. In this extremely belligerent literature, Hindutva is never a system of ideas, thought, or theory. Everyone can feel this *jaagruti* that becomes the experience that fuels the anger, the anger whose truth is only itself, its own intensity.

9.3 Delegation and the silent sacrifice of *seva*

A complicated division of labor characterized the ancient Vedic sacrifice. In the context of killing, and the dangers of contamination that this implied, the multiplication of tasks allowed the individual participants to divide roles and thus lessen the risks of the reciprocal shadow of violence. There was the *yajman*, the sacrificer who commissioned the sacrificial rite. He was to offer gifts for the service and reap its benefits. Then there was the class of Brahmins responsible for the exact execution of the rite. The *hotri* was the sacrificer who poured onto fire; the *udgatri* was the singer chanting during the rite, and the *adhvaryu* was the working priest who muttered the sacrificial formulas (Farquhar 1993: 28). The division of society into *varnas* and the later emergence of a caste system, too, is a complicated division of labor displacing onto another what one cannot do, but might be dependent upon (Dumont 1980).

The shoulder of the *Sangh Parivar* is made broad by many a functional division also. The odd mushrooming of institutions gives the “*Sangh*” the air of elusiveness. But the term *sangh* (organized body, union, association, crowd, GED) is unambiguous as it refers to the *Sangh Parivar*, the many institutions associated with

Hindu nationalism, as well as to the RSS itself. Thus in everyday parlance in Gujarat, the “*sangh*” (organization) means both, the RSS, as well as the “RSS family.” The functional division does not lead to confusion, because in the end, they are all one: the mother organization as well as the family of associations, organizations, and institutions that the RSS founded after independence (Jaffrelot 1996: 123, Blom Hansen 1999:97-99). This is the reason why Bharat as well as Pratab, countering my own confusion, always insisted to call “mother” by its name, the RSS.

The flowering of many institutions allows for blame never to address or reach the center. There is the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), the religious wing of the RSS and a “cultural organization.” At least since the 1980’s the VHP, too, has produced or recruited a confusing sea of seers, saints and sants, like Mahant Avaidyanath, Mahant Ramchandradas Paramhans, and many others. The goal was to erect an ecclesiastical structure within Hinduism called the Margdarshak Mandal (Jaffrelot 1996:350). There is the Bajrang Dal, founded in 1984, the “military wing” of the VHP, founded in preparation for the Ramjanmabhumi Movement (ibid. 363).

Then again, there is the Durga Vahini, the female wing of the Bajrang Dal modeled after the Rashtrasevika Samiti, which is the only other RSS affiliated organization from before Independence. There is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political wing, and a party in power in Gujarat, which has a Youth wing, the ABVP Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (All-India Students Council). Narendra Modi, for example, was explicitly deputed into the BJP after many years of successful work in the RSS (like the Nav Nirman Movement and launching an ABVP branch in Mehsana). He became the BJP’s, general secretary in Gujarat. There is the *Seva Vibhag*, the social service wing of the RSS including a veritable sea of organizations such as Vidya Bharati, Sanskrit Bharati, Vanvasi Kalyan, and many others.

Functional division creates a division of labor displacing possible blame to centripetal organizations while letting the center remain intact and pure. If the RSS was banned for two years in the immediate aftermath of Gandhi's assassination in 1948, a banning of the RSS today would be hard to imagine, at least in Gujarat.⁶⁴ The institution rarely becomes visible as such. Other organizations, would take any blame for them like the Bajrang Dal for example. Or alternately, it would make no difference as the organization is securely spread and branched out.

Members of the VHP like international general secretary of the VHP Pravin Togadia, not only interact and are voiced in the media constantly, they also spend time in prison and have to deal with numerous court cases. In contradistinction, RSS supremo K. Sudarshan regularly even refuses to talk to media and is seemingly outside the purview of legal prosecution.⁶⁵

9.3.1 Corruption and its opposite

It is not only Bharat who thinks the Indian state or anything having to do with "politics" is corrupt. Nearly all my acquaintances and friends would argue in a similar way. The political sphere is a domain of rapid circulation, exciting but also subjected to uncertainty, impermanence, and sudden betrayal ("corruption"). The word corruption, alternately used in English, Hindi and Gujarati (*corruption*, *bhrashtaachaar*, *laanchrushavat*, respectively), emerges in many contexts but

⁶⁴With growing political influence, confidence, and organizational sophistication, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has in the recent decades incorporated figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Sadar Vallabhai Patel among their heroes, which would have been anathema some 30 years ago (Nandy et.al. 1995: 84). In the 1920s Gandhi was resented by large numbers of Brahmins (especially in Maharashtra, from where the RSS emerged) for his preference of the style influenced by *bhakti*, excluding many Brahmanic traditions, his insistence on *ahimsa*, and his mobilization of many lower caste groups (Jaffrelot 1996:46). Noorani (2000:49) traces the newly found enthusiasm by the *Sangh* for Gandhi to the RSS's "mass contact programme" (sic!) of "Swadeshi" in 1997, and the 1998 50th anniversary of the Mahatma's assassination.

⁶⁵For a discussion on division of labor within the *Sangh*, see Noorani (2000), Blom Hansen (1999), and Jaffrelot (1996).

nowhere so predictably as in the sphere of the political.⁶⁶ This is a common statement in Gujarat repeated ad nauseam revealing how the political process is perceived. I have yet to meet Gujaratis of any political leaning who would care to disagree that the political sphere is contaminated with corruption--be they Gandhians, secular Marxists, “progressive” democrats, or neo-liberal Hindu nationalists, the later of whom many were very active in the Nav Nirman Movement of the 1970’s initially concerned with price increases and, amongst other things, with anti-corruption (Shah 2002:348). In fact, Narendra Modi earned his first political spurs during the *Nav Nirman Andolan* in Gujarat.

When Gujaratis speak of the “political,” they usually mean politicians, law, law enforcement, as well as everything else associated with the state (*raajkiya*, “relating to statecraft”). The term *raajkaaraN* (politics, administration of the state) has to be taken literally in its compound, *raaj* (rule) and *karaN* (reason, rationale, cause). The term *raajniti* can mean all three, “politics,” “polity” as well as “diplomacy.” Finally *raajramat*--literally the game of rule (the rule of the game)--is an antiquated word for “diplomacy” as well as “political intrigue” that Bharat likes to use.

It always astonished me how the seeming lack of political naivety can nonetheless metamorphose into stubborn support, and at times outright enthusiasm, for a concrete politician like Narendra Modi, or a political party, like the BJP. The reason for this lies in the intricate connection between political parties and civic institutions like the RSS. Narendra Modi, as well as his predecessor Keshubhai Patel are known to have been members of the RSS, “Narendrabhai” even a high-ranking “pracharak” (literally priest). Political scientists, and historians have already analyzed the

⁶⁶*Bransh* in Gujarati means “fallen” and “fallen state,” as well as “corruption, decline, decay” (cf. TMGED). The term *bhrashtaachaar* (or *bhrashtaa*) is most commonly used besides the more colloquial adjective *lanchiyu* (“inclined to take bribes”).

connections between politics and the RSS, its history and development, as well as referenced the machinations of endemic political corruption in general as well as in central Gujarat (Jaffrelot 1996, Blom Hansen 1999, Nandy et.al. 1995, Noorani 2000, Brass 2003, Shah 2002, 2002 FEH Report).

My own contribution will be to draw attention to another sort of connection, one that is more perceptual than discursive, but nonetheless decisively frames the social world of someone like Bharat. Bharat conceives of the state and all that has to do with it as corrupt. Where, then, in his view, is the sphere characterized by the absence of such corruption?

For Bharat the state is the purveyor the Indian nation and its people. It consists of many smaller collectives (ethnic, caste, religious groups) and, he thinks, because it is obligated in theory to support and represent the claims of all groups, it is contaminated with “corruption.” Bharat says the state is “*laanchiyu*,” that is, by its very nature inclined to take bribes. If the state does something for you, it is because you have somehow managed to have a special influence over it, which usually comes down to bribing some state officials (*laanch aapvi*). If it does not do anything for you, then that means that you have no influence over it and someone else will use its resources to their advantage instead. For Bharat failing to bribe does not mean you are confronted with an honest official, but that you have failed in your attempt to wield influence. To fail to wield influence by bribing signifies castration, not honesty.

Note that Bharat considers the state apparatus in which people receive a payment and are employed “corrupt,” whereas he does not talk of corruption in the practices of organizations like the RSS, in which people are understood to provide *seva*, voluntary work, and where payments are not bribes but donations (gifts *pradaan*, charity *sakhaavat*). The state might be ideally neutral, but the very fact that it tries in

theory to keep equidistance to all, forces everybody to try and establish that “special” relationship to it, which is then called “corruption.”

Hence, counter-intuitively for Bharat, it is the state’s very aspiration to “neutrality” which makes for the fact that it is so “corrupt.” Even if one were so naïve as to think that a state official was actually indifferent to influence peddling, in the moment the supposedly “neutral” state official steps into his office, he can never remain so. In the moment a state official receives a payment (*laanch*, bribe), he has passed from an empty vessel to one filled with someone else’s will to get something done. In reality, thinks Bharat, the state always serves some group to the disadvantage of some other group precisely because it attempts “neutrality,” an emptiness that can in practice be filled. And unfortunately, if I were truly honest, I would have a hard time proving Bharat wrong in his assumptions.

As an institution that is obligated by law to engage with the demands of everybody and anything, the state becomes the site of a very ineluctable contamination, the flow of demand, that is, corruption. The very processes that are constitutive of any genuinely democratic polity, delegation and representation (*pratinidhi* means delegate, agent, representation), are what Bharat understands as the cause for the state’s corruption. The act of representation is an act of internal diplomacy, an act involving exchange, arbitration, and compromise.

Bharat tells me that even a local representative of the BJP, a politician, has to visit slums in East Ahmedabad and has to “take tea with Vagris”--a community Bharat considers *halku* (low, thin, inferior), and *gandu* (dirty, crazy)--if he wants to win local elections. Similarly a policeman, too, cannot choose where and for what he will be employed and with whom he will have to interact. There is corruption because a policeman, incidentally a Hindu, might have to beat up a Hindu who demonstrates for the building of a temple in Ayodhya. Thus the policeman or the *pratinidhi*

(representative) becomes the instrument of some will external to the state. That external will was powerful enough to bribe him and take control of the void that is the state's purported neutrality. The state, belonging to all and everyone, honors all claims—or none, which for Bharat is the same thing--and is, thus, fundamentally corrupt. This logic will become clearer when we understand to what Bharat is opposing the state.

By definition, the RSS, in comparison to the state, cannot be corrupt. The RSS is not at all neutral, but self-consciously partial and partisan. Its higher rank members are people who are understood to be fanatics, *ruDhichust* (orthodox) and “staunch Hindus” (*kattar Hindu*). A fanatic can never be corrupt because he never accepts the claims of others, he only demands that his own claims be satisfied. He acts as if he is above and on top of the social order, neither mingling deeply in it, nor completely outside of it. RSS officials will not let themselves be bribed like state officials. They are not paid employees doing *naukari* (lowly work) but merely devotees engaged in *seva* (voluntary service, devotion).⁶⁷

In sum, the state is corrupt because it has by definition to represent all people. Employees receive payment for their work (*naukari*) and the low wages are

⁶⁷An important asymmetrical connotation appears around the figure of the “fanatic,” which disappears in English (and consequently in English language talk-shows or newspaper articles). In order to denote an orthodox Muslim, the term *jhanuni* (fanatical, mad, obstinate) will often do in Gujarat. For Hindus, however, the term *ruDhichust* is also often used. I have never heard a Muslim being called by this term. Similar to the Greek *ortho*, the Gujarati *ruDhi* indicates a perspective from the very center of the social, where its anchor is situated. The adjective *ruDun* means good, virtuous, auspicious and proper. *RuDh* means “established by custom,” “commonly known,” and “generally perceived.” The term *ruDhi* indicates “customary usage,” “established practice,” or simply tradition. The noun *ruDhichust* (*chust* means firm, devoted) is translated as “very conservative” and “insistent on the observance of custom” (cf. TMGED, GED). In other words, the *ruDhichust* person might be a fanatic, but he is resolute about that which is established as the right and proper. He stands in no opposition to the social, but stubbornly affirms the auspicious. The *jhanuni* person, in contrast, speaks from a position that is contrary to the given, from an outside (or from the interstices). He is “mad” and “obstinate,” his goals not being aligned with the collective. The significant difference between *jhanuni* and *ruDhichust*, Hindu and Muslim fanatic respectively, are completely lost in English, which lends a false impression of equivalence.

supplemented by illegal bribes. These bribes have to be accepted because to ascend to the desired job as a state employee, meant to pay a bribe in the first place.

For Bharat the state cannot be communal openly but is so in reality. It is filled by the many particularistic wills of other communities. It grants advantages to the minorities, especially Muslims and Christians, whereas the RSS, which *de facto* is an extremely communal organization, is not considered communal by Bharat, because in it, all are supposed to be the same that is “Hindu.” This notion remains oblique, or even absurd, only as long as we do not understand that the RSS simply insists on identifying the Hindu within every Indian. The RSS eliminates all difference and thus supposedly all communalism as well. All Indians are Hindu beyond their specific caste and ethnic differences, and theoretically, therefore, even Muslims can become Hindus if they were to call themselves “Hindu Muslims” and genuinely accept Hindu traditions and the Veda. There is no imperative for conversion. This simple logic has an amazing power over Bharat which cannot be stressed enough. He thinks, they could be part of us but they actually choose not to. Thus Bharat understands the power of the state not as an emancipation from the particularistic demands of religious and sectarian groups, but as an instrument to their claim. One of the most important instruments is corruption.

In contradistinction to the state, which has to represent all the particularistic demands (be they legitimate or not) and in consequence becomes corrupt, the RSS represents the whole. It does not delegate power to constituencies, which Bharat considers ludicrous. He mentions the rights of a *hijra* (eunuch) to demand a donation on trains, for example, the claims of a Vagri to sell vegetables for higher prices on street corners in middle class areas, the right of a Nepali street vendor to sell chicken in front of the Indian Institute of Management, the right of a shop owner to sell

Valentine's Day postcards (a "Western" tradition), or the right of a Muslim butcher to slaughter and sell the meat of a bull.

In a society where exchange is the pervasive rule only the withdrawal from exchange can create a sphere of purity. In its self-representation, the organization of the RSS does not ask for anything but claims to offer selfless service to that which transcends society, the Hindu nation (*Hindu rashtra*).

The disengaged but stern way in which Bharat perceives the legitimacy of an organization like the RSS, reveals the realization of Jawaharlal's Nehru's worst fears. Nehru understood that, unlike Muslim communalism in India, Hindu communalism was much more dangerous because it would always appear as mere nationalism. Bharat sees no contradiction between RSS, Hindutva, and democracy. For him these institutions are supplements of each other. "Politics" is necessarily always going to be the way it is, "corrupt." But if this corruption takes over too much, the protectors will be there, those that are only concerned with what is really important, the preservation of the whole, the Indian nation.

In representing the nation the RSS competes with the state, which also is busy representing (and thus ruling over) that eternal something that transcends yet ideally anchors the country. But in this competition, the RSS has an immense advantage. It does not have to rule, it does not have to govern, it never has to get down to business. In fact, RSS representatives insistently attempt to give the organization an air of aloofness helped by the myriad organizations described above. RSS officials appear to disdain the lowly sphere of the political, while pretending a sort of indifferent openness to many a political party and ideological stream. In contradistinction to the VHP, RSS officials, although always busy meeting religious and political leaders, rarely let themselves be addressed directly and personally by the media.

In this way the RSS seems to resist the promiscuity of exchange and is sheltered from accusations of “corruption.” This is why Bharat sincerely believes its claims. The RSS might be dangerous, brutal, and even act in morally ambiguous ways, but it is never corrupt. Its representatives can never be bought. The organization is fundamentally reliable and its cause is always good, because the *kaaraN* (cause, rational, reason) for *raaj* is by definition not a particularistic demand but made in the name of the Hindu nation, which includes all those who are willing to recognize who they really are.

The reason why many Gujaratis simply clandestinely and ambivalently accept RSS violence is that they agree with what it stands for, even if they are uncomfortable about the organization’s methods. Ultimately, members of middle class households, and of castes who sternly identify with ahimsa, treat the RSS as an organization that coordinates and arranges the Hindu reaction to Muslim aggression, be it from Pakistan or one’s Indian neighbors.⁶⁸ By treating the nation like a divinity to which devotion is due, the RSS, claiming to serve the highest purpose, the nation, accrues maximum benefit. In this way, a Hindu communalist organization has no problem straddling Hindu-dominance on the one hand and national unity on the other. Such a position would be quite impossible for any Muslim communalist organization because, symbolically, “Muslim” by definition signifies division.⁶⁹ Arguably the largest grass roots organization of the world, the RSS maintains no membership records, is not registered with the Government of India as a public or charitable trust. It keeps no official bank accounts and thus also pays no income tax. The RSS is barred from

⁶⁸In fact many acquaintances—also former members of the RSS itself—repeatedly warned me to be careful not to mingle with members of RSS or VHP before, during, and after the pogroms. People might be generally unaware about all the activities of these organizations and their extensions, but they are not naive about their systematic involvement in violence in the past or in the present.

⁶⁹In the organization’s own description, “swayamsevaks” are those “self-inspired people who have volunteered to serve Her cause selflessly” (“Her” means “Bharat Mata,” that is, Mother India). (http://www.rss.org/New_RSS/History/RSS_Story.jsp, accessed 14 February 2005 official RSS website).

accepting monetary contributions from abroad, but Sangh-affiliates are financed partly by flows from Britain and New York through institutions such as the India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF), which collect money for developmental projects such as *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* in Gujarat or the *Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society* in Tamil Nadu (SVRDS). Its diasporic branch institutions include also many institutions such as HSS (Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh), VHP America, HSC (Hindu Student Council), and the FISI (Friends of India Society).⁷⁰

9.3.2 Gifts that do not indebt

At the heart of religious exchange in India lies the logic of the religious gift structuring an exchange between a layperson (*dunyadar*, world dweller) and a renouncer (*guru*, *sanyasin*, other-wordly), which always results in an act of delegation. Giving a religious gift absolves the giver from the absolute implications of hierarchy, but ideally, it does not indebt the recipient. The layperson delegates to the renouncer the act of renunciation itself as well as community with the divine. One always gives in order not to have to give oneself and thus the religious gift in India is ideally an unreciprocated gift (Parry 1986).

The act of *seva* does not simply imply “service” to a religious institution or divinity, but also means worship, attendance, nursing, and “service rendered to others without any selfish motive.” A *sevaadaasi* is “a woman kept by a sadhu or recluse for his personal service.” The entry in the GED dictionary cited here, ends with a curious questionmark inside of a bracket: “(concubine?).” That a sadhu, ideally a celibate (*brahmacharya*), would keep a “concubine” is initially a strange statement for someone familiar with the conceptions of religious renunciation in South Asia. But the bracket expresses what I have observed myself numerous times in the context of

⁷⁰FEH 2002:4. The report also gives an excellent overview of the at times confusing sea of RSS organizations and their many branches, partly funded by foreign sources. The report makes a strong case for the systematic funding of violence in India through international flows of monetary support.

world renunciation in my initial fieldwork in Northern Gujarat. In the relation to the institution of renunciation, which is taken very seriously in Gujarat, diverse sets of followers establish divergent sets of practices to secure different sort of relationships to the same institution of renunciation. The more the devotee is able to give *of* himself, the less he has to give *himself*. In the context of a shrine in question, this meant that the wealthier land holders aspiring to a nobility others could not, religious gifts consisted of valuable goods, whereas in the case of those who were poor, family members would spend some time with the local Guru providing *seva*, a service implying an intimate attending to all the needs and wishes of the religious preceptor.

The charity and gifts that the *Sangh Parivar* receives, which sustains its myriad activities, is understood as donation following the logic of religious gift —*daana*-- in India. The logic of the unreciprocated gift holds true for Vedic sacrifice, contemporary *balidaan*, or the relation of *dunyadar* to the institution of world renunciation. As we have seen corruption (*laanch*), that is, an exchange that indebts the receiver, belongs to a different sphere, most often the sphere of the political. To bribe someone means to get something back, whereas following the sacrificial logic of the gift (*daana*), there is no symmetrical reciprocity expected in the register of religious gifting. The recipient is withdrawn from the world and ideally incorruptible. On the contrary, what the gift allows the giver is to establish a particular relationship to the institution. It partakes of the institution without having to become part of it completely.

We can see clearly now that the substitution of gift for self is an instantiation of the logic of ancient Vedic sacrifice where a plant or animal is substituted for the sacrificer, the *yajman*. The sacrificer commissions the sacrifice and hopes to reap its benefits by substituting a part of himself in order not to have to give his self completely. Every sacrificial victim is always a substitute for the self, or as Sylvain Lévi put it amply long ago, in India all proper sacrifice is really a suicide (Lévi 1966

[1898]). The cycle of substitution of animals, vegetable matter, or *seva*, is an escape from this imperative.

Giving to the RSS takes the place of *seva* (voluntary service) and in fact absolves the giver from having to make an even larger sacrifice for the nation. Giving to the RSS is thus an absolution (absolve-ment) of the need to serve in person. It is thus no coincidence that the many institutions associated with the Sangh carry *seva*, or the false transliteration *sewa*, in their title, like the Seva Vibhag, Sewa International, and Sewa Bharati.

In the case of the RSS, the monetary gift is only a substitute for the self-sacrifice of *seva*, not a bribe creating loyalty in the recipient, which would be called a *laanch*. Notwithstanding the stubborn insistence on *ahimsa* (non-violence) as core value, large parts of the middle class equally endorse *Sangh Parivar* institutions with donations and moral support even during the pogrom violence itself quite openly.

Herein then lies the act of delegation that allows the RSS to act with such impunity not only in legal terms, but more unsettling, within a silence that is not broken in the face of the fact that Gujaratis know what the organization is capable of. For the first time now we can now perhaps actually gauge a sacrificial logic in this secret act of delegation to the RSS that makes for the strange complicity during the pogroms, a complicity which is far from being understood.

By circumventing the secular state in the name of the nation, the RSS is a formidable sacrificer, whereby their supporters are structurally positioned as yajman (sacrifiers) who offer parts of themselves (*daana*), and at times even themselves completely providing *seva* (*karsevaks*, *swayamsevaks*, activists of diverse sorts). *Seva* for those who can't give only part of themselves includes such acts as traveling to Ayodhya as a *ramsevak* and risking their lives at the hands of Muslim terrorists in Godhra. This logic not only explains the constant deployment of sacrificial

terminology in booklets and pamphlets by the *Sangh Parivar* and the terrifying fervor with which some *karsevaks* do what they are told to do. Understanding this logic can also help to explain the very pervasiveness of a sacrificial terminology inundating the city within just a few hours as if expressing an unleashed collective imaginary traveling from mouth to mouth. The language of the *Sangh* always returns and bespeaks sacrifice. This does not astonish initially. After all the rhetoric of sacrifice, *Opfer*, *yagna* is part and parcel of nationalist movements worldwide. But it seems of a particular salience in the context of the RSS and its many extensions.

Most importantly, however, this insight may help to explain the silent act of delegation, which structures the division of (violent) labor during the pogroms between a large silent middle class and members of lower castes and classes, who appear on the streets in large numbers. To the utter bewilderment of many politically active grass roots peace activists in Gujarat, who regularly seek contact to leaders and members of lower caste groups and classes, these marginalized and oppressed groups, are all too often actively involved in great numbers in the pogrom violence.

Matuben, members of an “untouchable” caste, narrated how Bajrang Dal activists entered her neighborhood inspiring members of her neighborhood to attack local Muslims by offering chicken, alcohol, money, and the prospects of a religious service to the nation. Bharat and Pratab call the rioters in the first few days of violence “*sevako*” insisting on the term, which indicates a voluntary service, while the middle class absolves themselves from *seva* through donations to *Sangh Parivar* institutions.

9.3.3 Sacrifice and complicity

The secret complicity during the pogroms between RSS and the people like Bharat is based upon this act of delegation, which derives from the very core of the Vedic sacrifice and religious exchange at any temple or shrine. The RSS is not a

religious organization, but a self-consciously national one.⁷¹ The RSS's rhetoric and ritualized mode of pursuing the protection of the Indian nation, however, follows close in form and logic derived out of religious exchange in India. The perceived "purity" of the RSS, non-corrupt, non-equivocal, staunch, and thus its "religious" character is carefully created by its constantly performed entry and withdrawal from the sphere of everyday politics, by its executed in-transparency (secretiveness), while nonetheless claiming to speak in authority from the very center of the social as if the organization were society's very own anchor.

In India where everything is compromise, and corruption itself is often treated like a compromise, the RSS lends the air of purity as that institution which resists any compromise for the sake of Her, Mother India (Bharat Mata). The organization thus seems untainted and maintains an air of purity as long as the gifts the organization receives are understood in the register of *seva* and *daana*.

9.3.4 Member and dismembering

The unity (*ekta*) the RSS espouses is not one of mutual friendship and harmony. The organization does not claim to be fair and equal to all Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Sikhs like a secular state might. The RSS never claims equidistance to all ethnic or religious claims. Rather, it insists in seeing and supporting only that aspect in all of these groups, which is considered "Hindu." Indian Muslims and Indian Christians are "really" converted Hindus. Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are members of sects that emerged on Indian soil and thus anyway securely within the Hindu fold whatever their particularistic claim are. Parsis are not only Avestic fire worshippers, closely related to an ancient Vedic and Sanskrit

⁷¹The category "religious" is a confusing one as it conflates ritual with belief, magic with religion, and suspicion (as in *vahem*, superstition) with faith (*maanyata*). Especially if it concerns ritual killing, sacrifice in many ways precedes ethics and as legitimate killing can be understood as an automatic mechanism, expression of *karma*, not the positive belief of a group.

ancestry, but they also submitted themselves to Hindu Kings and begged for protection while fleeing from Muslim tyranny. In this way, Parsis have immersed themselves into the Hindu-fold “like sugar in milk,” as the popular saying about them goes. The RSS never criticizes, it stubbornly only affirms the “Hindu” in all, the *tatva* (essence) of the nation.

The same is true for caste. It is often said that within the RSS caste membership is eclipsed and all are the same. Perhaps one should rather say that caste hierarchy is transformed into a militaristic hierarchy, and cultural differences become institutional diversification, where the core RSS shelters members of Brahman origin and the Bajrand Dal is filled with members of lower castes. The RSS does not disavow the caste system as a cultural institution like a Marxist party might, or a Dalit movement. Rather, the RSS insists to see only that in all members of diverse castes, which is “Hindu,” and thus, equal to each other. The differences existing within Hindu society is neither considered of the organization’s making, nor are they directly affirmed or criticized.⁷² Dalits are not outside the pale of Hindu society but are part of it. In its insistence to speak only in the register of “Hindu” the RSS is able to avoid many an unpleasant conflict successfully.

Thus the racism of the RSS is of a specific kind. It does not simply deny the other as such. The organization has no direct qualms with “otherness,” as differences abound in India. Rather, it ignores the *Anspruch* (claim, challenge, address) of difference, its very address, its claim to significance and recognition. The *Anspruch* (claim, challenge, address) of difference is that difference, that chooses to opt out of a collective form into something that is not already contained within it, perceived as having been there since Vedic times. It is the *sovereignty* of the claim to

⁷²In fact rather the opposite. Ideal society is viewed as based on the varna system. Thus, Jaffrelot (1996:45) writes, “The RSS appears (...) as an egalitarian, nationalist sect that enshrines what will be the crucible of the Hindu Rashtra *in the long term*, whereas its immediate task seems to be to recover a lost hierarchical social structure.”

difference that the RSS cannot accept, not the many differences themselves, which it treats selectively and strategically.

To choose something else is a betrayal to which the RSS reacts with an Oedipal panic. The panic is Oedipal because any claim to sovereignty is understood as a betrayal of Mother. Christians, Muslims, Marxists and even secularists, are people influenced by something external to what the RSS considers “Mother India.” All these constituencies are corrupt because an external will possesses them. It is this departure into the new by those who feel smothered--the resistance to be just another part of the larger whole that is “Mother”--that the organization cannot bring itself to allow for.

It is thus a strange sort of racism, which as James Siegel has described for Indonesia, denies not the other but the other’s claim to difference, the very otherness of the other (1998). This racism insists that the other is nothing but a version of one’s own. It cannot accept the other’s emancipation from the indistinctness that is Her. Thus it is not entirely correct to say that the RSS lends no recognition to a Muslim, for example. Rather the organization chooses to accept as human only that part of a Muslim that it considers to be “Hindu.”

On February 28, 2002, the begin of the Gujarat pogrom, it was the Muslim’s flesh and body, which was re-appropriated, which was brought home as part of the “Hindu.” For the RSS the Muslim’s mind is perverted, as is the mind of the Indian Marxist or the Indian Christian. But the body can be purified: made to be fit for sacrifice. During the pogrom, and in the absence of being able to control their minds, the killers took control over the bodies of Muslims and destroyed them. The bodies were cut, penetrated, ripped apart, and burnt. The Muslim body was ruled over like it did not belong to its bearer, but to the RSS, the BD, and the VHP, the protectors of “Hindu.” As VHP international general secretary Pravin Togadia pointed out

repeatedly in talk shows and statements, there is a Hindu in every Indian Muslims. It is this Hindu in the Muslim that was to be extracted. The incredibly violent performance, which not only revealed the desire to annihilate, but also cared so much to sever, penetrate, and mutilate, seems to bespeak an act of symbolic re-appropriation.

Many survivors and eye-witnesses have reported that the professional killers at Naroda Patiya, Gulbarg society, Vatva, Kabadi market, Gomtipur, Behrampura, Naroda gam, Pandharvada, and elsewhere in the state, forced their victims, to utter the name of Hindu Gods before being killed. The God's name is also found written everywhere on walls and doors at sites of massacres (see Figure 61).



Figure 61. Incorporation of the Muslim into the Hindu. Part of a destroyed Muslim residence at Naroda Patia, a few days after the massacre. The coal scribbles say, “*Jai Shri Ram*” (Hail to God Ram) and the image of Goddess Ambaji has been attached to the wall.

The victims were told, “*tu Ram bol*” (speak Ram) and “*Jai Sri Ram*” (Hail Lord Ram) and “*Vande Mataram*” (I bow to thee, Mother) before being rapped, cut, and burnt. Why? Why were brutalized victims supposed to die with the name of a

Hindu divinity in their mouth? And how come the killers did not find it shameful to bring together the name of their God with the atrocities committed, the raping, the cutting and thrashing?

We have seen how in ancient Vedic sacrifice, where a ritual ahimsa initially originated, the sacrificial victim is “made to consent” before being killed in order to avoid revenge in the next world. In the Gujarat pogrom, too, the victims are made to consent before being killed by forcing them to utter a Hindu God’s name. Killing, here, is a form of incorporation, to which the demand to speak God’s name, is but a preliminary ritual act. Killing, raping, and cutting Muslims, is a way of taking from them what is anyway “Hindu,” their bodies, the soil of Bharat Mata. In this way the pogrom reverts back to a time before the ethicization of ahimsa.

The act of appropriation, preceded by a ritual preparation of the victims, was a sort of short purification ceremony (*shuddhi*): before the victim is killed, she or he was supposed to be purified by the name of their real God, their Hindu God, making them again into what they were all along, part of the “Hindu.” Becoming a Hindu again through death, they were supposed to be purified by speaking the name of God. Killing, here, means swallowing, eating, and incorporating.⁷³

Muslim bodies became the possession of the Indian nation, the divinity addressed in the killing. The Indian people, the “Hindu,” became the sacrificer in whose name the sacrifice was commissioned. It was executed by the ritual specialists of violence: the RSS. It was in the body of the Muslim that the deity (the nation) and the sacrificer (the people) coalesce into one. The Muslim body provided the symbolic

⁷³One of the prayer oaths (*prathrana*) that RSS members have to recite mentions the offering of the Hindu body. Alluded to by an informant, I found a translation on line, but was subsequently unable to retrace it on the Internet. It goes like this: “Affectionate Motherland, I eternally bow to you/O Land of Hindus, you have reared me in comfort/O Sacred Land, the Great Creator of Good, may this body of mine be dedicated to you/I again and again bow before You/O God [a]lmighty, we the integral part of the Hindu Rashtra salute you in reverence/For Your cause have we girded up our loins/Give us Your Blessings for its accomplishment.”

interface of Indian Nation and the Hindu people. The offering of Muslim bodies, part of oneself (of the “Hindu”), established and renewed the relation to the nation, thus renewing “*hindu raashtra*.”

The Gujarat pogrom has been termed a pre-genocidal violence. This is an apt term. Without the genuine need to eliminate all the Muslims of the state, these acts speak a warning, which Muslims can hear in every corner in Gujarat today, “You belong to us and look what we can do to you if we simply choose to...” (see Figure 62).



Figure 62. This board says “*Abhaar*,” which is formal Gujarati for “Thank You.” The board is signed by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal (BD). It appeared some time after the pogroms in 2002. Facing a poor residential ghetto (name withheld) it addresses also the traffic. The residents of the shantytown stretching beyond it partook in great numbers in the deadly first phase of pogrom violence.

9.4 Conclusion

Hindutva—the essence of Hindu—is only the logical continuation of an all-inclusive “Hinduism,” which the German Indologist Paul Hacker (1969) called “Neo-Hinduism” and traced to the reconstructions of the 19th century. If everything is

included, the vessel of Hindu is empty. During a sudden upsurge, then, the empty vessel Hindu can be filled with anger, that essence of the Hindu, which allows for the experience of unity, an awakening to one's sudden consciousness of power. It is when the vessel is filled that the "Hindu" has direction and form, something to oppose. In absence of the condition of possibility for anger, the vessel is empty and allows for disgust, a relation to something internal, which is to be expelled.

For Hacker, Neo-Hinduism is a phenomenon deeply imbedded in the experience of colonial humiliation, a reaction to the colonial claim of primitiveness of the "Hindoo," while simultaneously attempting to assimilate Western science. As we have seen in K.K. Shastree's statements in chapter four (but we could add many others), the comparison of Hinduism with Christianity is always disavowed while constantly desired at the same time.⁷⁴ Jaffrelot also points out how most early members of the RSS were not only from Brahman background, but moreover, were interested in modern science. Invested in "rationality," they held strong resentments against popular Hindu traditions (1996). If it is true, this would suggest an internalization of the orientalist's gaze. Despite this fact, the early leaders of the RSS were venerated as "Gurus," and admired for their disciplinary renunciation, a fact, which Jaffrelot misunderstands as a contradiction.

As I have shown above, *seva* for the nation is but the continuation of the logic of gift exchange in the context of world renunciation. There is no contradiction. The paradox appears only when one misunderstands the exchange as expression of "religiosity" and thus opposes it to something "secular." In India, relationships of ritual exchange express the act of delegation and absolve-ment that can be held to

⁷⁴On constructions of Neo-Hinduism see Hacker (1957, 1983) and the excellent volume of Sontheimer and Kulke (1989), especially the contributions of Stietencron, Frykenberg, and Thapar. On the two historical sources of the misconception of "Hindu tolerance," German philosophers (like Arthur Schopenhauer) and German Indologists (like Max Müller) on the one hand, and Hindu nationalists on the other, see also Embree (1990:19-37).

authorities of all kind, politicians, university professors, family members, or religious preceptors. It is a relationship of devotion that fuses intimacy with hierarchy, not something “religious” per se clearly demarcated from something “secular.”

Divergent forms of symbolic exchange allow for participation in that which the receiver stands for. It makes oneself part of the higher authority, which encompasses, swallows, part of oneself. If the middle class Vaniya offers some of their money to the RSS, Bharat and Pratab offer several years of their life to *Hindu raashtra* by providing *seva*, and thus participating in their own way in the nation. Withdrawal from this sort of exchange means not only non-participation, but also non-recognition of the claim to authority and supremacy. It is automatically agonistic as it opposes the symbolic swallowing that is hierarchy in India. That is why the non-participation by Muslims in the more mundane activities of the RSS and the BJP, is understood as “betrayal” by so many Gujaratis, a fact, which seems so absurd at first.⁷⁵

Swami Vivekananda’s answer to the British and German discovery and dissection of Indian religious traditions was what Dumont (1980) called the “encompassing of the contrary,” and what Hacker (1957) has identified as “Inclusivism” (a mechanism of devouring often misunderstood as “tolerance”), which is the claim that all religions to be somewhat “Hindu” since Hinduism allows for no boundaries (while, in fact, it is obsessed with them), the same way Vedanta’s conception of a formless God allows for all forms of divine essence. For the nationalist project of Hindutva, Christophe Jaffrelot has called this principle a strategy, one of “stigmatization and emulation” (1996).

Through Hindutva, Hinduism’s weakness, the lack of a systematic ethics, its opacity or inability to be seen as a whole, becomes its very strength. This is “Hindu tolerance,” a tolerance born out of a historically humiliating experience of Indian elites

⁷⁵There are reportedly those occasional Muslims who are indeed part of some local RSS *shakha*, though I have never met one.

in a colonial and continuing post-colonial encounter, an experience of weakness and lack. Thus it is a tolerance, which carries a heavy load of resentment. It is a tolerance that strangely lacks all generosity. It cannot challenge the real enemy anymore, which used to be the West, and it emerged against the backdrop of a Western humiliation that still continues to cause pain. Thus it finds the Muslim other, despite the fact that in Gujarat, more than in many other parts of the world, this very “Muslim” is fundamentally “Hindu” in character, a convert and so strangely familiar. It desires to view the Muslim from outside while claiming him as one’s own, the way the West is imagined as seeing, or having seen, the “Hindoo.” The Muslim has become *unheimlich*.

Chapter 10 Conclusion: A Return to Substitution?

Coinciding with the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, but delayed several weeks due to the violence, McDonald's opened a new franchise opposite the Shiv Cinema in a prominent middle-class district of Ahmedabad. My roommate Bharat, a strict vegetarian, asked me to take him to the restaurant, where he ate a vegetarian burger and I a chicken burger. This time he had no *alagi* attack and the presence of processed meat did not affect him.

This McDonald's outlet--the first of its kind in the world-- accomplished what many local non-vegetarian restaurants were never able to: offer two menus, vegetarian and meat, in the same place without one automatically contaminating the other. Its slightly Indianized American fare addressed openly a vegetarian middle class, without offending their sensibilities despite selling flesh foods. It collapsed the usual sharp demarcation in Ahmedabad's restaurant business between "pure vegetarian" (*shuddh shakahari*) and non-vegetarian. The mascot in the initial advertisements, "Mr. Shahkahari," literally Mr. Vegetarian, was depicted as a slightly overweight, good-natured man with a thin, civilized moustache (see Figure 63).



Figure 63. Mr. Shahkahari.

The term *shahkahari* includes a pun, suggested by the green color of *shah*. *Shah* is also one of the most common surnames amongst Vaniyas in the city, identified with the strict vegetarianism of Hindu Vaishnavas and Jains. One would think, looking at the advertisement, that the fast food restaurant offers a vegetarian fare. And, indeed, many residents in the city like Bharat spontaneously called the new establishment a “vegetarian McDonalds,” although factually this is not the case.

The Regal Restaurant, a small establishment just a few meters away, had turned vegetarian years ago just in order to attract a larger clientele in this part of the city. The usual reason given for restaurants to eliminate altogether the serving of meat and convert to a vegetarian fare is that strict vegetarian Gujaratis will not eat vegetarian food in a restaurant that also offers non-vegetarian food. No food will be eaten from a kitchen and from the hands of cooks that touch and handle putrefied flesh. Plates, utensils, and all cooking vessels, too, are potentially contaminated. And a restaurant owner that calls his establishment “vegetarian,” but dares to offer meat, could be facing as serious consequences as the mutton seller who is caught selling the flesh of cows.¹

Consumers of meat, on the other hand, have no qualms eating in a purely vegetarian establishment. Thus, in certain parts of the city, it is economically sound to offer a vegetarian fare to attract a larger pool of customers. Hence, ironically, in the

¹In older restaurants in Ahmedabad one can still find a classic message written on hand painted boards, always in Gujarati, which must have emerged in the aftermath of the Gandhian era. They made the idea of the modern urban restaurant possible in the first place: “*Ahiyaa bhedbhaav rakhto j nati.*” Translated it says, “In these premises separation will not be kept,” by which is meant, that the eating dishes are not distributed differentially by caste and an “untouchable” will drink from the same cup as a Vaniya, sit in the same corner, perhaps at the same table. Restaurants are spaces for all castes and classes to mix in a public space, which is the reason why some Gujaratis choose never to eat out. The rigid separation between vegetarian and non-vegetarian, the intimacy of cubicles, and the darkness in posh restaurants, is thus an expression of an uneasy solution to a problem: How to maintain boundaries when society is slowly divesting salience from them. The kitschy re-inscription of boundaries through the colors of green and red in Mc Donald’s offers a perfect solution to the problem.

West part of the city, all Muslim restaurants are strictly vegetarian. How, then, did the American fast food giant escape this predicament?

The new Mc Donald outlet is not a vegetarian restaurant in the sense of Regal Restaurant. It is not a typical high-end meat-eating establishment with darkened glass and private cubicles, either, however. A statue of Ronald McDonald, the pale clown who always fails to be funny, sits on a bench outside the entrance, inviting guests inside. Although twice the size of the uniformed guards standing around, he is usually ignored. In the new McDonald's color coding is a key. Products and utensils are separated by color. Burgers are neatly wrapped in green paper for "100% vegetarian," in a pale orange for non-vegetarian. "Meat" is a euphemism for the bland (to me, tasteless) substance of the McChicken burger, which has the same consistency and color as the vegetable mix in the McVeggie or McAloo Tikki burger. The restaurant serves 100% eggless mayonnaise, 100% eggless cheddar cheese, and 100% eggless milkshakes. The assembly lines of the restaurant, as well as the menu, are clearly separated into green and red sections. All crewmembers of the staff who cook vegetarian items wear green aprons and are forbidden to cross into the red section. Staff use separate equipment to prepare vegetarian and non-vegetarian items, and this is advertised on every menu card.

One could be strictly vegetarian, then, and nonetheless visit the outlet openly and without suspicion. In contrast to many posh restaurants in Ahmedabad, the McDonald's outlet heralds transparency. It lacks the darkened glass and intimacy of private cubicles. Hence the ambiguity of alcohol consumption that often accompanies meat eating cannot arise. No one is supposed to hide anything when eating at McDonald's.

The "Special Treat for Mister Shahkahari" advertised in the billboard describes an experience where being vegetarian no longer means to feel excluded through the

inscription of distinction by red and green colors. Following the typical American ethos, one can be a vegetarian, but it does not matter. Nothing exemplifies better the communicative aspect of meat eating than this wrenching away of the meat-ness of meat, through the color green, or for that matter, the pale orange. The clever marketing strategy of the fast food giant enables the middle class of Gujarat to enter a non-vegetarian restaurant without being contaminated by the meat eaten there. In fact, part of the enticement for customers is to enter a non-vegetarian restaurant *as* a vegetarian.

From the use of disposable packages to the visibility of the kitchen, the restaurant aligns itself well to local sensibilities, signifying the contemporary contradictions of Gujarati vegetarianism. It enables a demonstration of the moral superiority of vegetarianism while pretending to overcome its limitations as a doctrine. Ingesting America cannot be the same as eating death. But in the end all these measure taken together still cannot quite explain the peculiar easiness with which McDonald's can achieve what remains so difficult for others in the city. I cannot develop this point in length here, but I believe, this has to do with the externality that McDonald's represents despite the restaurant's staged osmosis of local culture. In the end, one is somehow not in Ahmedabad, not *of* the city, so to speak, when one enters the establishment.

This dissertation has argued that the 2002 pogrom in Gujarat is the expression of a sacrificial logic in which ahimsa, the doctrine of nonviolence, is implicated in the production of violence. Accordingly, the relation between sacrificer, sacrificer, and victim are redressed in the ritualization of violence in the pogrom. In contemporary Gujarat, *ahimsa* has many incarnations—diverse forms of vegetarianism, disgust, animal protectionism, prohibition of animal sacrifice—and it has the power to interpellate all individuals, even those who do not traditionally adhere to the concept. With the steady loss of caste complementarity that followed Independence and the

consolidation of the nation form, ahimsa has come into its own, now claiming to address all individuals, not merely those associated with specific occupations and their corresponding value regimes.

The current totalization of ahimsa increases the salience of the *himsa* taboo, the taboo of violence, and thereby enables its deployment for the very purposes it ostensibly repudiates. As I suggested in chapter one, this is not an entirely new phenomenon but has been part and parcel of ahimsa since Vedic times. What is new, however, is exactly *how* the ideal of ahimsa is deployed in the context of the Hindutva movement and caste upward mobility. In the context of Hindutva, vegetarianism and ahimsa allow for the cultural stigmatization of the minority other by cultivating disgust as a form of identification with animals against Muslims.

Today there is no legitimate intellectual ground from which one could securely attack a concept such as non-violence. Hindutva ideology inherits this tradition simultaneously with the political success of Hindu nationalism. Hindutva awakens the Hindu in anger, and uses ahimsa as a bridge to its opposite. For this, Hindutva needs access to the collective (un)consciousness of the Hindu. The symbolic investment of the imaginary grid, described in chapter three, prepares the Hindu for an eruption of lustful anger. Outside of ritualized violence the Hindu is to remain identified with ahimsa. In order to grasp the complicity of Gujaratis in the face of a violence that stands in stark contrast to its purported ideals, one must understand the symbolic division of labor between the Hindu organizations and the larger public in which many individual Hindus distance and differentiate themselves from the criminal potential of Hindutva organizations.

My focus has been less on the deployment of ahimsa by communal organizations, than on its contribution to the understanding of self of the average middle-class Gujarati. To escape ahimsa's call would be to deny one's position with

regard to how India is perceived in the West, in particular to the nation's embodiment in Mahatma Gandhi, the ascetic Father of the nation.

Ahimsa in contemporary Gujarat, always espoused sternly as a typical tradition of Gujarat, is caught in the gaze of the West: how Gujaratis feel others perceive them. It cannot be understood outside of the perceived gaze of the West. Thus ahimsa, although bridged, has to be held on to. Gandhi remains integral because in him the West becomes internal to India. This is why Gandhi's murder has become a sacrifice, in the classical sense, and is to be explained in terms of a sacrificial logic that also signifies ambivalent emotions towards the West. In other words, Gandhi is important not because of a widespread, collective belief in his ideals, but because the West has affirmed them. The power of the West is *in* Gandhi, and his murder draws the Hindu closer to the West while at the same time enacting an aggression against the nation's father. Whether his murder was understood at the time of his death as self-sacrifice or political assassination, today Gandhi's death has become emplotted as a necessary sacrifice. Gandhi power has been absorbed into the people.

Today in Gujarat, ahimsa stands for the culture of "Hinduism," a religion that does not proselytize, conquer, or kill--as Hegel might say, purged of all negativity--whereas *himsa*, by contrast, has come to stand solely for Muslims. It is significant that ahimsa comes to stand for Hinduism precisely at the moment when Hindutva rhetoric departs radically from it. Again, as in many prior times, the deployment of ahimsa is itself the means for a departure into its opposite.² But whereas all through time

²Note that according to Noorani (2000) and Nandy (et.al.1995: 84) until very recently the RSS did not care for Gandhi and his emphasis on ahimsa at all. Today, as we have seen in the case study of Ramesh (chapter five), Gandhi's thoughts have even become part of the teachings in RSS *shakhas*. For example, a few days before the Godhra incident the Muslim scientist and reform activist Dr. J. S. Bandukwala, Professor for Physics at Baroda University, was invited to an RSS function to lecture on the differences between Gandhian nationalism and the ideas of Savarkar. Despite his reception by the RSS, and the offer of placing two police guards in front of his house, it was attacked and burned to the ground on the following days of pogrom violence. He and his daughter closely escaped certain death only through the courageous help of friends living in the neighborhood. The crowd had specifically targeted his house, the only Muslim house in an all-Hindu middle-class area. Mr. Bandukwala

violence was identified with nature and ahimsa offered the departure from it, today, “Hindu nature” is non-violent. In contrast to what I have argued, most scholars interpret the violence of communalism without reference to either its form or adopted rhetoric, avoiding its pogrom-nature and its sacrificial logic. What distinguishes my own contribution is my reliance on ethnographic encounters and analysis of the evocative imagery of a language that signifies foremost itself.

Stanley Tambiah (1996), for example, has written insightfully on the ritual aspect of rites of violence, and he offers a general explanation for the violence of riots in terms of crowd behavior. But whereas he stresses that vulnerability is the reverse aspect of the omnipotence experienced in crowds during riots, in the context of an asymmetrical power relationships between the groups in a pogrom, such as the Gujarati pogrom of 2002, fear and vulnerability are not sustained through collective crowd experiences alone, but must be nurtured through other means also. By focusing on the crowd, Tambiah leaves out those who are only tangentially related to crowd violence, their complicities in the violent events. Tambiah’s detailed elaborations nonetheless remain to me one of the strongest and most convincing attempts for an overall discussion of ethnic violence in South Asia.

Veena Das (1983, 1990, 1995), who has written separately on both sacrifice and violent events, does not, as I do, link the two in an analysis of the sacrificial logic of the pogrom, but instead interprets its deployment in Sikh militant discourse. She eludes to the rhetorical transformation of murder into “beatific sacrificial death” in the context of Partition, or the relation between the figure of the effeminate Hindu, the marauding Muslim, and the martyr Sikh. Taking off from Nietzsche and Claude Levi-Strauss she stresses how women become object of memory and the matrimonial

confided to me that he had no doubts about who was responsible for this attempted murder (personal communication).

dialogue between men in the context of Partition. Thus female bodies become the debtor (*Schuldner*) onto which punishment is transferred.

But whereas her analysis seeks to understand the forging of a violent community identification against the “narcotic” effects of non-violence, I am interested in how a community can stress its identification with non-violence in the very moment when it allows for its reversal, the legitimate meting out of violence. Her work focuses on the status of victims, on their suffering and her own inability to speak and represent the violence done to them. She arrives at the formulation of an Anthropology of pain, that seeks to alleviate the alienation of the victim from her pain through professional transformation, be it through a psychiatrist (e.g. post traumatic stress disorders) or an Anthropologist (e.g. cultural construction), well intended perhaps, but both complicit in silencing a pain that dares not speak its name. By understanding the expression of pain as an invitation to share, she intends to restore speech and thus move closer to the creation of a moral community.

On the other hand, Paul Brass (2003) does try to explain specifically the endemic communal violence in Northern India, what he dubs an “institutionalized riot system.” He argues that a set of specialized actors are engaged in roles, which tend to be reenacted, especially but not exclusively in the context of political mobilization for elections. In these “dramatic productions” the directors of the riots are never in complete control but nonetheless calculate strategically the political gains of violent clashes. Brass focuses on how diverse actors organize violence, and uses a terminology influenced by psychology--like (blame) displacement, persecutory fantasies. But he dismisses genuinely psychoanalytic insights about processes of identification and crowd behavior, about the role of language and the unconscious, and thus fails to understand why so many people beyond the sets of actors strategically plotting and engaged in the riots are complicit in collective violence (28-29).

My own focus has been on degrees of complicity, delegation, the role of language, and the circulation of an evocative imagery. It is much in agreement with Sudhir Kakar's (1995) psychoanalytically informed approach, which is sensitive to questions of mimesis, ingestion and identification. He also tries to understand the element of narcissistic rage frequently encountered in violent youth (1990).

Bruce Kapferer (1988) rightly stresses the strong religious undercurrent of nationalisms, which in the case of Sinhalese nationalism asserts and incorporates Buddhism, changing its practices and interpretation from those in the Hindu Indian context. As Kapferer has it, "Acting through the logic of myth and rite, the religion of nationalism can (...) reconstitute the meaning of ontologies in daily life, forcing a consistency upon them, and expanding the conceptual relevance of ontology" (1988:19). In this way, "the religion of nationalism is in nationalism per se and not in the religious ideas it may incorporate" (5). He asserts that, "the violence, destruction, and prejudice of Sinhalese and Australian nationalisms are not to be reduced to an essential Buddhism or Christianity, for example, which exists outside the import and significance they achieve within nationalism" (6).

But while Kapferer posits a sharp distinction between a Sinhalese Buddhism of nationalist practice and a Buddhism, or Buddhist ideas, outside of nationalist import, I would insist on the continuity of ahimsa with violence within Indian religious traditions, as I have elaborated in chapter one. What realizes itself in Hindu nationalism is precisely *not* a radical departure from a Vedic pre-ethical ahimsa, an axiological Shramanic ahimsa, or a vegetarian Vaishnavaita ahimsa at all.

On the contrary, it seems that in Gujarat ahimsa does not undergo what Kapferer calls the distortion of nationalism, but instead the concept comes into its very own through Hindu nationalism. The nation form allows for the universalization of an ethic, and a uniting under the flag of various formerly divided groups, which before

had been inflected through the principle of complementarity of caste and community. It is in the very moment when ahimsa becomes that which it, according to Schmidt (1968), always sought to be, a universal value, that it demands most stringently the departure into its opposite.

In sum, the nation form—accompanied by the ethos of equality, simultaneity (*Gleichzeitigkeit*), modern individualism, and state projects in cultural homogenization--does not distort a prior unsullied religious tradition, but rather facilitates an unfettered unfolding of its full *Gestalt*. Hindu religion is not so much, in its national appropriation, distorted in essence, but enlarges its scale and scope, offering the simultaneity of all religious traditions in a unified “Hinduism.” And it relies on a historical subject perceived as moving steadily down history through time (Anderson 1983). Hinduism is not only spread over a territory, but stands in opposition to Christianity and Islam. Its formal inclusiveness can easily be equated with an all-inclusive tolerance.

At the base of most, if not all, South Asian religious traditions lies the sacrificial exchange of death, the concern with immortality, of which an ethical ahimsa is simply one possible transformation. At the cultural roots of the modern nation, too, lies death, and the desire to transform fatality into continuity (Anderson 1983:11). In the Indian context, ahimsa and nation thus supplement one another.

Moreover, Kapferer appears driven by an understandable anthropological desire to immunize people’s religious and cultural practices from their ugly reflection in violent religious nationalism. But religion has made its singular contributions to violence long before the emergence of the modern nation state. In fact in the case of Buddhism, violence has been the central theme out of which it emerged. In the violence of nationalism, then, speaks an older violence of religion, not vice versa.

Collective violence is compatible with an ethics of ahimsa not because the interpretation and practice of ahimsa has become “nationalist,” but because in the sphere of blood sacrifice an ethical ahimsa does not apply, and never has. The radical axiological formulation of the ahimsa doctrine changed the symbolic location of the legitimate production of violence. The blood sacrifice ontogenetically precedes ahimsa as an externalized ethic for the protection of a victim. In the classic ritual of Vedic sacrifice *ahimsayai* only protected the one who commissioned the sacrifice (the one who is responsible for the violence) and served to undo the consequent reciprocal violence that any killing entailed in the first place.

In the context of the modern nation, the principle of *karma* is no longer “merely” a cosmic principal, but has become embodied in the people, who, becoming unconscious of their own malevolent intent for three hours, three days, or three weeks, act collectively as anger incarnate. When Narendra Modi lent his authority to the process, he called it “reaction” (*pratikriya*), that action that always follows automatically a preceding action. He thus invoked this cruel “cosmic justice.” Through the secularization of violence it is the people who become the means of cosmic retribution, and its form is sacrifice, that form of violence, which preceded the emergence of an ethical ahimsa. After “justice” is done, things can return to normalcy, and thus, Narendra Modi, after his re-election in December 2002, promises the Gujarati people “*abhaya*” (fearlessness) in the tradition of a *brahmacharya* renouncing violence.

Today, in the context of Hindu nationalism, the quality of ahimsa protects the Hindu from the violence he commits. By extension, ahimsa also protects the minority Muslim from the angry majority Hindu. And in the case the Hindu majority withdraws its protection, as during the pogrom, —ahimsa can easily invert to its logical opposite, to violence. But even in its inversion the concept remains stable, or

part of a stable binary, because the unconsciousness of the crowd makes it possible to act without accountability. This is the reason why BJP politicians and *Sangh Parivar* spokesmen insisted after the pogrom that the Indian Muslim live “under the shadow of goodwill of the majority Hindu,” an oft repeated phrase, which some commentators have failed to understand as what it is, a not-so subtle veiled threat. In national sacrifice, too, ahimsa in fact comes onto its own by unfolding all its inherent possibilities.

Perhaps most helpful to distinguish my contribution from others would be to contrast it with the work of the leading political scientist, Ashutosh Varshney on communal violence in India. I agree with Varshney (2002) that even if we grant that ethnic identity was created through a colonial master narrative, a starting point of many postcolonial scholars, that this historical fact itself explains at most only the identities brought into play and not ethnic violence itself (2002:35). Varshney, goes too far, however, in implicitly dismissing processes of identifications, and instead assuming that the single most important factor responsible for communal violence is the failure of civic institutions to unite Hindus and Muslims in a common cause. Implicit in this suggestion is that civic institutions will produce a sociality that is conducive to communal peace. But there is little reason to believe that amicability will automatically result from civic interaction, especially in the face of so much organized activism against such interaction. In any case, in the comparative anthropological literature, economic relationships and ritualized exchange never exclude violent relationships (Douglas 1966:147).

Behind Varshney’s idea lies the assumption that Hindus and Muslims, if united in institutions whose goals are shared, will automatically develop a kind of interactive sociality that translates into communal harmony. In a society where the face of caste and community is changing rapidly, Hindu or Muslim identifications are not fixed

statuses but dynamic processes of becoming, which include interiorizing attributes and externalizing others. In these processes, identifications are inclusive of redefining relationships to other communities, and hence cannot be ignored in analysis.

Most importantly, however, Varshney ignores the communicative aspects of sacrifice, ahimsa, and especially meat consumption, which reveal desires that are implicated not only consciously. Busy quantifying and classifying the occurrences of “communal violence” in geographical space, he never actually asks himself what this violence consists of, and how its perpetrators and witnesses not only bare to face it repeatedly, but at times desire it and ultimately legitimate it. Varshney never asks what being an identity, a Hindu or Muslim, in a particular social or geographical location consists of, what desire has to be renounced and what has to be embraced.

In terms of methodology, Varshney uses the Times of India, as I do in a comparison with Gujarati-language newspapers in chapter three, but he relies solely on this English-language newspaper as a data set to quantify the occurrence of violence. That said, he is neither interested in what language does in the articles he cites, nor in the popular reception of what is said or printed. By prioritizing “identity” over identification, he makes violence appear to be the absence of communication. Language is therefore transparent, simply communicating a content controlled by its speaker and expressive of the speaker’s intent. That violence itself might be a form of language, an intent to communicate something meaningful, and that language expresses itself *through* itself, was perhaps most succinctly put forth by Benjamin (1977).

It is important to understand how newspapers actually say what they communicate, and how this content is immanent in people’s actions and identifications. Varshney’s analysis instead confuses what is perhaps the expression of alienation--the lack of a civic institution uniting Hindus and Muslims--with its

cause. In short, the contagious power of violence can only be understood with respect to its expressive form, that is, how Gujarati society speaks to itself in the very moment it reverts to a violence that it claims to have renounced in the name of the father.

My ethnographic work demonstrates that through the calibration of behavior, silences and gaps in-between polite exchanges can structure an interaction in the service of avoidance. To be sure, civic institutions can provide, beyond religion and group membership, one of the conditions of possibility for interaction between opposed groups. But it is well established that people can interact closely without fundamentally altering their stereotypes, suspicions, resentments, or hatreds. Distinguishing everyday civic engagement from associational engagement, or even intra-communal from intra-ethnic, does little to clarify the violence of the pogrom. As hierarchies can freeze violence into social stratification, so can civic interaction delay and displace expressions of violent opposition into external actors as well as into spaces.

The ritualistic and repetitive nature of communal conflict in Gujarat suggests that it is not amicable peace that characterizes the absence of communal violence, but mobilization and preparation, if only latent and unconscious, for the next round of violence, and often in a pogrom. This mobilization is not only material but also psychological. Many of the tropes, clichés, and stigmas that erupted in the newspapers on the first day of violence in 2002 were present even before the pogrom. They were neither invented by newspapers, nor solely voiced by communal organizations. But it is with their mobilization and distribution in the media that they become a veritable script that could be inhabited in simultaneity.

The displacement of violence into the ritual time of the pogrom could be seen quite clearly on February 27, 2002, after the Godhra incident, when everyone in Ahmedabad was discussing and waiting for what would happen next. One day later,

both newspapers and people on the street explained all violence as an eruption of “Hindu anger,” an anger that I personally did not see when I walked the old city until late the previous night. The displacement of violence is also indexed by the division of labor, for communal organizations are financed and morally supported for a violent labor from which others absolve themselves through symbolic acts of delegation. The blame goes to certain activist groups while many more sections of society are implicated in their activities. The displacement of violence into space is indexed when street clashes migrate to and condense in specific locations and the communal conflict is acted out--as in the later phases of the 2002 violence in Ahmedabad. All these forms of displaced violence suggest a more complicated structure and form than in Varshney’s writing, which has been elucidate by many other authors (Blom Hansen 1999, Tambiah 1996, Brass 2003, Kakar 1995, Juergensmeyer 2000).

Varshney’s argument resembles that of Heidegger’s optimistic engineer, mentioned in my introduction, who claims that upon building a bridge unity will realize itself. This model will preclude an understanding that bridges might actually lead to social separation by the very act of bridging physical space. Along these lines, Gregory Bateson (1934) long ago argued convincingly how intimacy and closeness, as in marital relations for example, can lead to forms of alienation through processes of internal and external schismogenesis made possible only through that which is shared.

If Hindus and Muslims already interact daily in many contexts in a city like Ahmedabad, then the immediate cause for the violence cannot be located in the absence of civic interaction. It might be better to look at activist institutions themselves, like the RSS (and their many extensions in religious and cultural institutions), and their responsibility for mobilizing a communal violence that is already latent in the structure and logic of action.

The coexistence of distinct communities always exists alongside communal tensions; group boundaries do not maintain themselves but are sustained, reproduced, and policed. The symbolic labor of the *Sangh Parivar* focuses systematically on these boundaries by mobilizing all agonistic moments of fear, betrayal, and victimization and channeling them onto the borders between communities. A view of the preferred sites of agitation in Gujarat gives ample evidence of this: conversion, inter-caste and inter-confessional marriage, cow- and bull slaughter, sexual morality, meat eating and vegetarianism, identifying Hindu religious structures beneath Muslim religious structures, and divisions of city space. Through all these aspects, there runs one common thread, the concentration on that which threatens the collapse of boundaries, that is, between one community and the other, and thus threatens the idea of community itself.

It is for this the reason that religious conservatives, even if openly opposed to Hindutva activism, so often resemble extremists when voicing their goals and fears, be it Gandhi's insistence on cow protection and *varnasharmadharma*, or Muslim insistence on in-group marriages. At base they also are uncomfortable with the threat to lose the means to sustain community boundaries; this insecurity appears all the more contradictory when formulated within a nationalist discourse that pretends to bridge all division into *hindu raashtra*, Hindu Nation.

To be sure, Varshney acknowledges some role for civic institutions in promoting violence, but he relegates this significant insight into one paragraph of a foreword, a sure form of disclaiming its relevance in his overall scheme (2002:X). In fact, the so-called tolerance of "Hinduism" propounded by Hindu nationalist organizations is itself, paradoxically, an element of Hindu domination. Varshney argues that the claim of Hindu nationalists is only a "political," and not a "cultural unity," because Hinduism has no correct form and knows no heresy (2002:71). While

true on the surface, Hindu “tolerance” obtains its specific meaning by a lack of tolerance of religious traditions permanently outside the category “Hindu,” that is, Christian and Muslim, but which are nonetheless part of the political unity that is India and affirm the sovereignty of their own religion.

With this in mind, it is strange that Varshney fails to mention that the Hindu nationalist project of political unity of all Hindus is explicitly expressed in *cultural* and *religious* terms and is committed to forms of Sanskritization, tribal conversion, and religious re-conversion to Hinduism reminiscent of other aggressively proselytizing religious traditions. One might instead distinguish between the myriad “Hindu traditions,” which taken individually might be “tolerant” or not, depending on how one defines the term, and the practice of Hindu nationalist organizations. As we have seen, part of the process of identification selectively instrumentalizes these traditions to express an exclusivist ideology that compels the Hindu to identify with his essence, the *tatva* of Hindu, Hindutva, against competing claims over the nation. That essence unifies all those who are included in the label “Hindu,” but externalizes those that stand outside of it, who can only become part of the category through symbolic submission.

Summary of chapters

The first three chapters establish the link between a sacrificial logic, the Gujarati pogrom of 2002, and the imaginary grid that motivates and makes sense of the pogrom. Chapter one is primarily theoretical; the second begins the presentation of ethnographic encounters and the experience of the pogrom; the third demonstrates how the imaginary grid in media accounts that informs the violence is constructed through mimesis in the attempt to represent.

In chapter one, I traced a structural analysis of the historical displacements and counter-conceptual inversions of ahimsa by focusing on three processes--substitution, complementarity, and identification. I arrived at a six-fold transformation of sacrifice: from I) agonistic circulation and ingestion of death II) to substitution of words and animals in the classic ritual, III) to renunciation and *Asceticism*, IV) to complementarity of purity and pollution, V) to Gandhi's active ahimsa in the context of anti-colonial struggle, VI) to breakdown of complementarity, emergence of disgust, and identification *with* an animal victim against Muslims.

In chapter two, I offered an ethnographic description of the pogroms that focuses mostly on the first day in the city of Ahmedabad. In chapter three, I explicated the imaginary grid, drawn from film and media reportage, that motivated, justified, and made sense of the violence of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom to its participants, Hindu and Muslim alike.

Following this, I offered five chapters of thick description of five interlocutors, three men and two women, whose life histories reveal their relative complicity and reactions to the violence. They are each expressive of a certain difference among upwardly mobile social groups aspiring to belong to the new meanings of "Hindu." Naturally, given the large number of distinctions within the category Hindu, I could have included many more examples. In these sections, I also include ethnographic descriptions of city spaces, experience of neighborhoods, as well as visitations to spaces where violence occurred.

In chapters four and five, I explicated the lives of two farmers now living in the city from an upwardly mobile "other backward class," who openly endorse and are complicitous with the violence in the city. Both have been members of the RSS, and show an ambivalent relation to Mahatma Gandhi. Chapter six depicted a former Dalit, now member of the middle class, who stands in a much different relation to Hindutva

ideology than the other four. Despite the volatility of being Hindu Dalit, and the fact that some of his family members are involved in violent neighborhood clashes, he distances himself from Hindutva ideology. Chapter seven concentrated on a Maharashtrian Brahmin, born and raised in Gujarat, and the issue of meat eating and sexuality in marriage; chapter eight on a Jain who although standing in opposition to Hindutva ideology remains securely within it. This penultimate ethnographic chapter described the city of Ahmedabad during the Muslim festival of Bakri-Id, as well as the inscription of city space and its relation to communal division through temples, police posts, bird feeders, and magical remains in in-between spaces. Chapter nine focused on ahimsa activism of religious and social institutions as well as the government of Gujarat. It elucidates how transformations of vegetarianism and animal sacrifice are implicated in the psychological preparation for and the aftermath of the 2002 violence.

APPENDIX A: Examples of circulated imagery in Sandesh newspaper



Figure A.1. Sandesh February 28, 2002, “In Godhra 60 Hindus burnt alive,” front page. Note that the victims are explicitly identified as “Hindu.”



Figure A.2. Sandesh February 28, 2002, page 6. Depiction of Godhra incident. In the photography in the center, a compartment is depicted with bodily remains of victims.



Figure A.3. Sandesh March 2, 2002, "...200 sacrificed in violence," front page. The verb used is homaayaa (offered into the fire). Identity of victims not mentioned.



Figure A.4. Sandesh March 2, 2002, page 5. Charred remains of bodies depicted lying in a hospital. Note how the very same corpses are photographed from different angles (right and left picture respectively).



Figure A.5. Sandesh March 3, 2002, "...300 sacrificed in violence" front page. The verb used is homai gaya (sacrificed into fire). Identity of victims not mentioned.



Figure A.6. Sandesh, April 23, 2002, front page.

Depiction of a stabbing incident of a victim—marked as Hindu through the red armband on his right wrist. Note how the stab victim lies on a doctor’s operation table as if on a butcher’s board, the horrific fascination expressed through the red circle around the knife stuck in his back. The red circle is to guide the viewer’s eye to the exact spot where the knife penetrates the body of the victim.

APPENDIX B: Short Glossary of German terms

Aberglaube

Superstition. *Aber* means “but” or “still,” and shows traces of “again,” “back,” “after” (*wieder, zurück, danach*). According to Kluge (1999) the *aber* in *Aberglaube* has moved semantically from “behind” to “worse” (from *hinter* to *schlechter*) resulting in the negative connotation. *Glaube* is “belief” as well as “faith.”

Angst

Anxiety in opposition to *Furcht* (fear), an objectless fear which swells from deep inside, like the fear of the unknown. A fear of which one sometimes cannot perceive why one should be afraid of “it.” Used in English it stresses a formless anxiety that can easily attach itself well to external objects.

Anspruch

Challenge, demand, call, and simultaneously address. *Spruch* is the noun of the verb *sprechen* (to speak), *ansprechen* means to address. Unlike in English, however, *ein Spruch* does not mean a speech, which would be *Rede* or *Vortrag* (talk, lecture). A *Spruch* is closer to a proverb, a saying, and can also mean a spell, as in “*ein Zauberspruch*” (a magic spell). The term *Einspruch* used in court means “objection.” It carries some weight. The term *Anspruch* is important as it describes an address, which is also a demand, a call. *Hohe Ansprüche* are high expectations (high standards, high demands), and *anspruchlos* means without demands, or even without quality. The call of *Anspruch* can be from one person addressing another person.

More abstractly, however, it describes that which is between two entities, which is precisely *not* being spoken. *Anspruch* can be an address not spoken. In this

case, *Anspruch* does not directly address me: It can be a thing, an idea, or an object that usually does not speak, a presence of something, I might even feel indifferent about. But through *Anspruch*, “it” nonetheless has effects on me. Something addresses part of oneself and makes one react to it. Building on many thinkers before him (from Hegel and Rousseau all the way to Derrida and Lacan), the German phenomenologist Bernhard Waldenfels (1991), for example, calls the encounter with the an Other (an other that is truly other and not just a another version of the same) only possible because of the *Transdiskursivität* established through the very “*Anspruch des Fremden*” (the address of the Other, the demand for recognition), which allows for an interface of that which never directly meets. Otherness is an excellent example for an address, without ever being directly explicit, where one is called without being called, one feels challenged without a word spoken or exchanged. It is the difference between me and “it,” an “it” that can be a person, an idea, or an imagination, which makes me feel addressed, challenged, called upon. “It” brings one in contact not only with a concrete otherness out there, but with an intimate otherness inside.

In India, I believe, one can perceive this sort of *Anspruch* quite clearly today in the interface between groups whose interactions have traditionally been regulated more severely through commensality rules and marriage. In a national and democratic context, these controls have altered if not disappeared. In Gujarat, there always seems to lurk an *Anspruch* when members of different groups interact, and the actions of one another perceived in each other’s awareness, seem often over-determined. Even if groups do not interact at all, they feel called upon by one another.

My use of the German *Anspruch*, of course, is also reminiscent of the being-seen by the Goddess, which I have attempted to describe for Dasharath and Iqbal in

chapter four. You can feel being seen even if you do not look, and though you do not feel it, She always looks at you.

Entgrenzung

Grenze means border, the suffix *ent* puts it in the reverse, thus a de-bordering, limitless-ness, boundlessness. *Entgrenzung* describes an expansive movement of a desire, whose circumference is broken. It expands endlessly.

Schadenfreude

German for “joy of injury;” the joy when someone else is injured or harmed.

Zwangslage

Location of tension, position of constraint, tense situation, coercion.

APPENDIX C: Glossary of terms used in Gujarati

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have simplified transliteration from Gujarati to English, omitting diacritical marks in the glossary while retaining some indication of inassimilable linguistic differences where they help to avoid more severe misunderstandings. Usually, I use a large letter to indicate the position of the retroflex consonants (as for example in nariyeL), to caution the reader on pronunciation. Transliteration presents a particular difficulty for me, as my fieldnotes are in three languages: Gujarati, English, and German, and transliteration into the two European languages differs. I have completely omitted diacritics in words usually transliterated without them in scholarly publications (e.g. Vaniya instead of VaaNiyaa). However, I make one exception to this: I am more adamant about leaving the doubling of vowels for the long “a” in the text itself, because misunderstandings are much more certain to occur without them, while I mostly omit them in the glossary.

Abhaya--fearlessness, non-violence; the quality that a Brahman offers to the world in the first stage (ashraama) of life.

Adivasi--tribals; literally old population. Most Adivasi claim to be the original inhabitant of the region and are classified as “scheduled tribe.”

Ahimsa--non-violence; harmlessness; absence of desire to kill; non-desire to do any harm.

akasmat--accident, coincidence.

Allaahu akbar--allah is great.

Alagi--allergy, repulsive reaction mostly to specific food substances.

Asamaajik tatvo--anti-social elements.

Atak--lineage, surname, sub-caste.

Bandh--closure, standstill, strike.

Beti vyavahaar--inter-marriage system, rules of marriage and marital exchange; literally “daughter transaction.”

Bhagwan-god.

Bhakti--adoration, devotion, worship; usually to a personal God.

Bhai--brother, friend, cousin; also used as a suffix added to proper names, like in Shamalbhai, for example, indicating respect, politeness, and distance.

Omitting the suffix can indicate inferiority or intimacy.

Bharat mata--mother India.

Bharatiya--Indian national.

Bhut--ghost; past, gone by, elapsed; any one of the five fundamental elements; an animate being; an animal.

Bidi--Indian-made cigarettes rolled in leaf.

Brahma--god, creator of the universe; supreme being that is impersonal and divested of all qualities or actions; universal principle.

Brahmin, brahman, brahmana--priest, priestly class, the highest varna.

Brahmacharya--celibacy, continence; traditionally the term signified one who is observing the rules of the first stage (ashrama) of life, a period devoted to study. In Gujarat this notion of celibacy is intimately connected to teatotalism as well as food taboos.

Chudel--particular type of female ghost.

Darbar--literally court; dwelling of a King, or a “spiritual King” (saint, Pir).

Designation of an aristocratic class: in contemporary Gujarat the term darbar is also used to identify groups considered of low social status (shudra), who attempt to classify themselves as descendents of an earlier aristocratic class (kshatriya).

Dargah--Muslim shrine, tomb of a Muslim saint (vali, Pir). At most tombs the saint is considered still alive (jaagta vali) and is often visited by many worshippers, Hindu, Jain, and Muslim alike.

Darshan--a seeing; seeing and being seen by the divine (Guru, Pir, or an idol) or a great personage. In everyday parlance the term is often used in mundane contexts in the sense of “visit,” that is, coming into the presence of something or someone.

Dayaa--mercy, compassion, sympathy.

Dushan--vice, pollution, abuse, fault, defect, corruption.

Gadar--traitor.

Ghatnaa—an incident, a happening, an occurrence, a hand-made thing, an event.

Gaushala--home for cattle.

Goonda--criminal.

Gujarezi--mixture of English (*angrezi*) and Gujarati.

Hatyakand--massacre, slaughter of humans.

Hijra--“transvestite;” community of ritual specialists, whose members are considered neither men nor women.

Hindutva--literally “Hindu-ness,” the tatva (essence) of the Hindu; the ideology of Hindu nationalism, a form of cultural nationalism in which all religious traditions of the Indian subcontinent are subsumed and subjugated under the label “Hindu.”

Ishwar--god.

Jati--caste, race, tribe, gender.

Jay shri ram--Victory to Lord Ram, Praise Lord Ram.

Jinn--particular type of ghost. Within the Muslim context there are good and bad jinns.

Jivdayaa--compassion for all life, jiv is live (or insect), daya is compassion.

Katleaam--a slaughter without control, without discrimination, massacre.

Karsevak--religious-activist for the building of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Karseva--the voluntary service offered by these religious activist.

Karma--action; automatic consequence, result, or effect, for a preceding action performed, e.g. in a previous existence.

Kasaai--butcher.

Katalkhana--slaughterhouse

Khaatki--butcher; cruel, merciless.

Khaatkivado--the place of animals slaughter, slaughterhouse; place of quarrels and cruelty.

Komvaad--communalism.

Kriya--action, execution, rite, ritual action.

Kshatriya--member of the kshatriya varna, warrior, second to Brahmin.

Kuldevi--lineage or family goddess.

Laaj--shame, modesty, decorum, deference, honor, reputation.

Mandir--temple.

Maryada--limitation, boundary, courtesy, decorum, modesty.

Masahari--meat eater, non-vegetarian; in Gujarat the word carries a pejorative tint.

Masjid--mosque.

Mataji--mother goddess.

Navratri--the nine nights, festival of the mother goddess for nine days. The festival is often associated with sexual love, and implied traditionally expenditure of life in animal sacrifice.

Nirdayaa--without compassion, merciless.

Paan--betel-leaf. Paan is eaten extensively in Gujarat. The leaves are filled in many combinations with different masalas and eaten after at road shops as well as after sumptuous dinners.

Parivar--family.

Parishad--meeting, assembly.

Patel--farmer, headman; dominant caste in Gujarat; surname.

Pishaach--particular type of ghost.

Pracharak--preacher, propagandist of the RSS.

Prasaad--the food remainders after a god has eaten; food distributed after it has been offered to a god; blessing, favor, grace.

Pratikriya--reaction, remedy, counteraction (automatically follows kriya).

Puja--worship ritual.

Qom--community, in everyday parlance sometimes used in the sense of caste.

Qurbani--auspicious Muslim festival (Bakri Id); sacrifice, overjoyed; sacrificial meat; slaughter.

Rajput--members of a warrior, kingly caste, a kshatriya; the term is ambivalent today as it is used for many members of lower castes, like darbar, because members of lower groups have come to associate themselves with this category.

Rakshas--demon, ghost.

Rashtra--nation, state.

Rickshaw, auto-rickshaw--three-wheeler taxi.

Rickshawalla--taxi-driver.

Roti vyavahaar--system of food exchange, commensality, system or rules of inter-dining; literally "bread transaction."

Sabhaa--association, assembly.

Sadhu--ascetic, holy man.

Samaaj--society, caste, community.

Sambandh--relation; connection, affinity; matrimonial alliance.

Sambandhi--relatives; affines.

Sampradayaa--tradition, sect, order, doctrine; custom, practice.

Sangh--association.

Sangh parivar--family of organizations associated with the RSS.

Saniassin--ascetic, renouncer; often used interchangeably with sadhu; one who has been initiated into the fourth stage of life, renunciation.

Sant--ascetic, saint.

Saatvik--cool, pure, true; quality of ideal Brahmin; quality of food substances; quality of eaters who eat only the bare minimum of that which they need to survive; often used for food that neither arouses the passions in the eater nor has caused any harm when procured.

Satyagraha--truth (satya) and striving (graha), a striving for truth.

Savarnas--upper class, upper castes mostly Hindu Vaishnava and Jain (Vaniyas), as well as Brahmin. In recent decades the Patels have also come to occupy the term.

Seva--voluntary service.

Shakahari--vegetarian.

Shakha--branch of tree, branch division, local unit; party, sect.

Shakti--strength, power (feminine).

Shaktipuja--worship of divine shakti (power).

Shuddh--pure, clean, holy; consciousness, awareness, knowledge.

Shuddhi--purity, cleanliness, holiness; reconversion by purificatory rite; awareness, awakening.

Shuddhikaaran—purification, reconversion, self-reformation.

Shudra--ritually lowest varna; sometimes used to designate members of OBC groups as well as other backward groups.

Swaminarayan--a Vaishnavite sect.

Tev--habit, addiction.

Traasvaad--terrorism.

Ujliyat loko--radiant people, upper class, savarnas.

Ujliyat--of a high class or caste; literally “bright” or “radiant” people.”

Untouchable--term used for members of scheduled castes as bearers of ritual pollution. In the varna system Untouchables remain outside of Hindu society.

Upvaas--fast; a fast that often implies not complete abstinence from eating, but a severe abstinence from certain foods.

Utaar--spirit exorcism, often associated with meli vidhya (practices of black magic).

Vande mataram--“I bow to thee Mother,” a salute to the mother/nation.

Vaniya--merchant communities (also Bania, vepari, shahukar); castes of mostly Hindu Vaishnavas and Jains, but at times inclusive also of Muslim merchant groups.

Varna--the four classes of ancient Indian society; Hindu ritual status rank. The first three, highest varnas (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya) are sometimes called twice-born. The fourth varna is the Shudra. In this scheme, the Untouchables (Harijan, Dalit) are considered below even the lowest of the Shudra, remaining outside of Hindu society proper.

Varnashrama--four divisions of society and the four divisions of life as well as the social organization based on these.

Varnashramadharm--the dharma that is appropriate for each stage of life for everyone in Hindu society.

Varnavyavastha--Hindu social organization based on the four varnas (classes).

Veda--knowledge; most ancient Sanskrit texts concerning mostly ritual. There are four Veda, Rigved, Ajuved, Samved, Atharvaved. In everyday parlance people often refer without discrimination to all Hindu scriptures--religious texts of different periods and kind--as Vedic texts.

Vaishnava--Followers of Vishnu, particularly in his incarnation as Krishna, for example, in Sri Nathji.

Vallabhacharya--a Vaisnavite sect.

Vishva—world.

Vidi--ritual, particular ritual action.

Yagna--sacrifice, sacrificial site, self-sacrifice.

Zamindar--landlord, landowner; under British rule a landlord entrusted with tax collection.

APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY of Abbreviations used in this Dissertation

AIADMK--All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, political party in Tamil Nadu.

DMK--Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, political party in Tamil Nadu.

BC--backward caste

BJP--Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), part of Sangh Parivar

BD--Bajrang Dal, militant youth wing of the VHP, part of Sangh Parivar

KHAM--political alliance of Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, and Muslims.

ISI--Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence.

OBC--other backward classes

RSS--Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, "Association of National Volunteers," militant youth organization, part of Sangh Parivar.

SEWA--"Self-Employed Woman's Association," NGO based in Ahmedabad.

SS--Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army), Hindu Party of Maharashtra, but also active in Gujarat, part of Sangh Parivar

SC--schedules caste

ST--scheduled tribe

VHP--Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), organization of religious leaders part of Sangh Parivar. Hinduism's largest transnational movement with headquarters in London.

Bibliography

Aggarwal, Gopinath

1991 Vegetarian or Non Vegetarian. Choose yourself. 5th edition. New Delhi: Jain Book Agency.

Ahmad, Imtiaz

1978 [1973] Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India. Delhi: Manohar.

1985 Ritual and Religion among Muslims of the Subcontinent. Lahore: Vanguard Books.

Alsdorf Ludwig

1962 Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien. In Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, pp. 559-625. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Nr. 6. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Alter, Joseph S.

1992 The Wrestler's Body. Identity and Ideology of North India. Berkeley: University of California Press.

1997 Seminal Truth: A Modern science of Male Seminal Celibacy in North India. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 11(3): 275-298.

1996 Gandhi's Body, Gandhi's Truth: Nonviolence and the Biomoral Imperative of Public Health. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.55, No.2, 301-322.

Appadurai, Arjun

1981 Gastro-politics in Hindu South Asia. *American Ethnologist*, Vol.8, no.3.

1988 How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 30, No.1.

Ambedkar, B.R.

1948 The Untouchables. Who were they and why they became Untouchables. New Delhi: Amrit Book Corporation.

Anderson, Benedict,

1983 Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.

Babb, Lawrence A.

1975 The Divine Hierarchy. Popular Hinduism in Central India. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barthes, Roland

1975 Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption. *In* European Diet from Pre-Industrial to Modern Times. E. Forster and R. Forster (eds.). New York: Harper & Row.

Basham, A.L.

1954 The Wonder that was India. A Survey of the culture of the Indian Sub-Continent Before the Coming of the Muslims. New York: Grove Press.
1989 The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism. Kenneth G. Zysk (edited and completed). New York: Oxford University Press.

Basu Amrita, Atul Kohli (eds.)

1998 Community Conflicts and the State in India. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Basu, Helene

1994 Habshi-Sklaven, Sidi Fakire: Muslimische Heiligenverehrung im westlichen Indien. Prof. Georg Pfeffer (Hrsg.). Institut für Ethnologie der Freien Universität Berlin. Berlin: Das Arabische Buch (Indus 1).

Bataille, George

1991 [1967] The Accursed Share. An Essay on General Economy. Vol.1
New York: Zone Books
1992 [1973] Theory of Religion. New York: Zone Books

Batra, S.M.

1981 Cows and Cow-slaughter in India: religious, political and social aspects. Institute of social studies. ISS Occasional Papers. The Hague-The Netherlands. University of Delhi.

Bateson, Gregory

1958 Naven. A Survey of the Problems suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea drawn from Three Points of View. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Beck, Brenda E.F.

1969 Colour and Heat in South Indian Ritual. *Man*, Nr.4, pp. 553-72.

Benjamin, Walter

1977 Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen. Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge. *In* Gesammelte Schriften, Band II, 1. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

- Berger, Anne-Emmanuelle
1992 *Le Banquet de Rimbaud. Recherches Sur l'Oralité.* Seyssel: Editions Champ Vallon.
- Berkeley-Hill, Owen
1925 Hindu-Muslim Unity. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 6: 282-287.
- Berreman, Gerald D.
1979 *Caste and Other Inequities: Essays in Inequality.* Meerut: Folklore Institute.
- Biardeau, Madeleine
1989[1981] *Hinduism. The Anthropology of a Civilization.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2003 [1994] Ancient Brahmanism, or Impossible Non-Violence. *In* Violence/Non-Violence. Some Hindu Perspectives. Vidal et. al. (eds.).
- Biardeau, Madeleine and Charles Malamoud
1976 *Le sacrifice dans l'Inde ancienne.* Paris: PUF and Bibliothéke de l'École des Hautes Études—Sciences religieuses LXXIX.
- Blank, Jonah
2001 *Mullahs on the Mainframe. Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Blom-Hansen, Thomas
1999 *The Saffron Wave. Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2001 *Wages of Violence. Naming and Identity in Post-colonial Bombay.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bloch, Maurice
1992 *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Borman, William
1986 *Gandhi and Non-violence.* State University of New York Press.
- Booth, Wayne C.
1974 *A Rhetoric of Irony.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bondurant, Joan V.
1958 *Conquest of Violence. The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Brass, Paul R.
 2003 *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*.
 Seattle: University of Washington Press.
 1997 *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective
 Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Briggs, Geo. W.
 1920 *The Chamars*. In: *The Religious Life of India*. Oxford University
 Calcutta: Associative Press.
- Burghart, Richard
 1978 Hierarchical Models of the Hindu Social System. *Man*, Vol. 13, No.4,
 519-36.
- Clémentin-Ojha, Catherine
 2003 [1994] *The Initiation of the Devi: Violence and Non-Violence in a
 Vaishnavite Tale*. In *Violence/Non-Violence. Some Hindu Perspectives*. Vidal
 et al. (eds.).
- Cohen, Lawrence
 1998 *No Aging in India. Alzheimer's, the Bad Family, and the Other
 Modern Things*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cohn, Bernard
 1996 *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*.
 Princeton University Press.
- Commissariat, M.S.
 1957 *A History of Gujarat. With a survey of its Monuments and
 Inscriptions*. 2 Volumes. Bombay: Orient Longmans
- Dalmia, Jaidayal (ed.)
 1971 *Review of Beef in Ancient India*. Compiled by Jaidayal Dalmia.
 Gorakhpur: Gita Press.
- Dalmia, Vasudha and Heinrich Stietencron (eds.)
 1995 *Representing Hinduism. The Construction of Religious Traditions and
 National Identity*. Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Daniel, Valentine E.
 1984 *Fluid Signs. Being a Person the Tamil Way*. Berkeley: University of
 California Press.
 1996 *Charred Lullabies. Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*.
 Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Das, Veena

- 1983 Language of Sacrifice. *Man* (18): 445-62.
 1984 For a folk-theology and theological anthropology of Islam. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. VIII, pp. 85-99.
 1990 (ed.) Mirrors of Violence. Communities, Riots, and Survivors in South Asia. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
 1995 Critical Events. An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India. Delhi: Oxford University Press

Daya, Dalpatram

- 1849 Bhut Nibandh. An Essay, Descriptive of the Demonology and other Popular Superstitions of Guzerat. Translated by Alexander Kinloch Forbes. Bombay.

D' Costa, Wilfred

- 2002 In the Cauldron of Communal Conflicts: Shrinking Political Space and Vulnerability of the Minorities. In Ahmedabad. Poverty and Vulnerability in a Globalising Metropolis. Amitabh Kundu, Darshini Mahadevia (eds.). Delhi: Manak Publications.

Derrida, Jacques

- 1975 Economimesis. In *Mimesis: Des articulations*. Agacinski (ed.), 57-93, Paris: Aubier Flammarion.
 1995 The Gift of Death. Translated by David Willis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dirks, Nicholas B.

- 1987 The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 2001 Castes of Mind. Colonialism and the Making of Modern India. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Doniger, Wendy and Smith, Brian K.

- 1991 The Laws of Manu. With an Introduction and Notes Translated by Wendy Doniger with Brian K. Smith. Kolkata: Penguin Classics.

Douglas, Mary

- 1966 Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. London: Ark Paperbacks.

Dumont, Louis

- 1980 Homo Hierarchicus. The Caste System and Its Implications. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Eck, Diana L.
1996 [1981] *Darsan, seeing the divine image in India*. Reprint, Chambersberg, PA.: Anima books.
- Eghigian, Greg and Mathew Paul Berg (eds.)
2002 *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany*. Texas: A&M University Press.
- Embree, Ainslie T.
1990 *Utopias in Conflict. Religion and Nationalism in Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Engineer, Ali Asghar
1989a *Communalism and Communal Violence in India*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications.
1989b *The Muslim Communities of Gujarat. An Exploratory Study of Bohras, Khojas and Memons*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications.
- Engineer, Ali Asghar, Shama Dalwai, Sandhya Mhatre
2002 *Sowing Hate and Reaping Violence. The Case of Gujarat Communal Carnage*. Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai.
- Enthoven R.E.
1922 *The Tribes and Castes Of Bombay*. 3 Volumes. New Delhi: Low Price Publications, Reprint 1997.
- Erikson, Erik H.
1969 *Gandhi's Truth. On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence*. New York: Norton.
- Farquhar, J.N.
1993 [1904] *A Primer of Hinduism*. Madras: Asian Educational Services
1998 [1915] *Modern Religious Reform Movements in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
- Fiddes, Nick
1991 *Meat. A Natural Symbol*. London: Routledge.
- Forbes, Alexander Kinloch
1878 [1924] *Râs Mâla. Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*. 2 Volumes. New Delhi: Low Price Publications. Reprint 1997.

Freitag, Sandria

1980 Sacred Symbol as mobilizing Ideology: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 22, No.4, 597-625.

1996 Contesting in Public: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Communalism. *In* Contesting the Nation. David Ludden (ed.).

Freud, Sigmund

1995 [1912/13] Totem und Tabu. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker. First published as a book in 1940. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch.

Frykenberg, Robert E.

1989 The emergence of modern 'Hinduism' as a concept and as an institution: A reappraisal with special reference to South Asia. *In* Hinduism Reconsidered. Sontheimer, Günter-Dietz, Herman Kulke (eds.).

Fuller, Chris

1992 The Camphor Flame. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fuss, Diana

1995 Identification Papers. London: Routledge.

Gandhi, Manubehn

1949 Bapu—My Mother. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.

Gandhi, Mohandas K.

1921 My Meaning Of Sanatana Hinduism. *Young India*, 6-10-'21, p. 317. Reprinted in *The Essence of Hinduism*. V.B. Kheer, (ed.), 1987 Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust.

1994 What is Hinduism? New Delhi: Navjivan Trust.

1927 An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments with Truth. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust.

Gandhi, Nilotpala (ed.)

2002 Aanandghar ni Vaatsalyamurti. Yogendra Vyas Vidhyarti Parivar and Nilotpala Gandhi (eds.). Ahmedabad: Bhikhalal Bhavsar Sri Swaminarayan Mudran Mandir, Vijay House (Nava Vadaj).

Ghassem-Fachandi, Parvis

1998 Muslimische Heiligenverehrung in Gujarat, Indien. M.A. Thesis. *Magister Artium* in Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaften II, Institut für Ethnologie, Freie Universität Berlin. Unpublished.

- Girard, René
1977 *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Glaserapp, Helmuth von
1999 [1925] *Jainism. An Indian Religion of Salvation*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. English translation of "Der Jainismus. Eine Indische Erlösungsreligion," Berlin 1925.
- Gold, Daniel
1991 *Organized Hinduism: From Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation*. In *Fundamentalisms Observed*. M.E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1991 *Rational Action and Uncontrolled Violence: Explaining Hindu Communalism*. *Religion*, 21, pp. 357-370.
- Gonda, Jan
1959 *Why are ahimsa and similar concepts often expressed in a negative form? In Four Studies in the Language of the Veda*. The Hague: Mouton & Co Publishers.
1983 *Vedic Gods and the Sacrifice*. *Numen*, Vol. XXX:1 (30), pp.1-34.
- Gupta, Akhil
1998 *Postcolonial Developments. Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*. London: Duke University Press.
- Hacker, Paul
1957 *Religiöse Toleranz und Intoleranz im Hinduismus*. *Saeculum* 8, pp. 167-79.
1978 *Kleine Schriften*. Lambert Schmithausen (Hrsg), Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
1983 *Inklusivismus*. In *Inklusivismus: Eine Indische Denkform*. Gerhard Oberhammer (ed.). Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien.
- Hammoudi, Abdellah
1993 [1988] *The Victim and its Mask. An Essay on Sacrifice and Masquerade in the Maghreb*. Translated by Wissing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hardiman, David
1996 *Feeding the Baniya. Peasants and Usurers in Western India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1987 *The Coming of the Devi. Adivasi Assertion in Western India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1988 Class Base of Swaminarayan Sect. *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW), pp.1907-1912.

Harris, Marvin

1966 The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle. *Current Anthropology* (CA), 7, 2.

Heesterman, J.C.

1993 The Broken World of Sacrifice. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1984 Non-violence and Sacrifice. *Indologica Taurinensia*, XII 1984, pp.119-27.

1985 The Inner Conflict of Tradition. Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

1965-66 (Review of) Ludwig Alsdorf. Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien. *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. IX, No.2.

1964 Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-und Ostasiens*, Vol. VIII, pp.1-31.

1962 Vratya and Sacrifice. *Indo-Iranian Journal*, VI, p. 1-37.

Heidegger, Martin

1954 Vorträge und Aufsätze. Stuttgart: Günther Neske Verlag.

Heston, Alan

1971 An Approach to the Sacred Cow of India. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 191-209.

Hirway, Indira

2002 Dynamics of Development in Gujarat, some issues. *In Dynamics of Development in Gujarat*. Indira Hirway, S.P. Kashyap, Amita Shah (editors). Ahmedabad: Center For Development Alternatives.

Holmberg, David

1989 Order in Paradox. Myth, Ritual, and Exchange among Nepal's Tamang. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hubert, Henri and Mauss, Marcel

1964 Sacrifice. Nature and Function. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Izard, Michel, Pierre Smith (eds.)

1982 Between Belief and Transgression. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jaffrelot, Christophe

1996 [1993] *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

2003 *India's Silent Revolution. The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jaspers, Karl

1949 *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. Zürich: Artemis Verlag.

Jha, Dwijendra Narayan

2002 *The Myth of the Holy Cow*. New York: Verso.

Jhaveri, Krishanlal Mohanlal (ed.)

2003 *The Gujaratis. The People, their History, their Culture*. Vol. 1-5, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.

Juergensmeyer, Mark

1993 *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

2003 *Terror in the Mind of God. The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kakar, Sudhir

1978 *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*. In *The Essential Writings of Sudhir Kakar, 2001*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1990a *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1990b *Some Unconscious Aspects of Ethnic Violence in India*. In *Mirrors of Violence*, Veena Das (ed.).

1995 *The Colours of Violence*. New Delhi: Viking Penguin India.

Kapadia, H.R.

1933 *Prohibition of Flesh-Eating in Jainism*. *Review of Philosophy and Religion IV*, vol. 4 (1933), pp. 232-239.

Kapferer, Bruce

1988 *Legends of People. Myths of State*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Kane, P.V.

1941 *History of the Dharmashastras*. Poona:

Khare, R.S.

1966 A Case of Anomalous Values in Indian Civilization: Meat-Eating among the Kanya-Kubja Brahmans of Katyayan Gotra. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.25

1976 *The Hindu Hearth and Home*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Kierkegaard, Søren

2003 *Fear and Trembling*. Translated by Alastair Hannay. London: Penguin Classics.

Kohli, Atul (ed.)

1988 *India's Democracy. An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

1998 Can Democracies Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism? The Rise and Decline of Self-Determination Movements in India. *In Community Conflicts and the State in India*. Basu and Kohli (eds.).

Koselleck, Reinhart

1985 *The Historical-Political Semantics of Asymmetrical Counterconcepts. In Future's Past: On the semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kothari, Rajni

1970 *Politics in India*. Boston: Little Brown.

Kristeva, Julia

1982 *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kundu, Amitabh and Darshini Mahadevia (eds.)

2002 *Ahmedabad. Poverty and Vulnerability in a Globalising Metropolis*. Delhi: Manak Publications.

Kurin, Richard

1984 *Morality, Personhood, and the Exemplary Life: Popular Conceptions of Muslims in Paradise. In Moral Conduct and Authority. The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*. Daly Metcalf (ed.).

Laidlaw, James

1995 *Riches and Renunciation. Religion, Economy, and Society among the Jains*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lal, Mukandi

1967 *The Cow cult in India. In Cow-Slaughter. Horns of a Dilemma*. Shah, A.B. (ed.). Indian Renaissance Institute. Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House.

- Laporte, Dominique
 2000 [1978] *History of Shit*. Translated by Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khoury. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lelyveld, David
 2002 *Words as Deeds: Gandhi and Language*. *In* *Competing Nationalism in South Asia*. Paul Brass and Achin Vanaik (eds.). New Delhi: Orient Longman
- Lévi, Sylvain
 1966[1898] *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brahmanas*, 130. Paris: PUF (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Science religieuse LXXIII).
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude
 1997[1966] *The Culinary Triangle*. *In* *Food and Culture. A Reader*. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (eds.). London: Routledge.
 1969 [1949] *The Elementary Forms of Kinship*. Boston: Beacon Press.
 1966 *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lodrick, Deryck O.
 1981 *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places. Origins and Survival of Animal Homes in India*
 Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ludden, David (ed.)
 1996 *Contesting the Nation. Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*. University of Pennsylvania Press
- Majmudar, M.R.
 1965 *Cultural History of Gujarat. From the earliest times to Pre-British period*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Makawana (ed.),
 2002 *Gusso kem avyo. Ek krodh Hindu In Godhra Hatyakand, Kalam no Dharma ane Adharma*. Kishor Rajkot: Pravin Prakashan
- Malabari, B.M.
 1880 [2000] *Gujarat and the Gujaratis*. E.B.Eastwick (ed.). New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.
- Mallison, Françoise
 1974 *La Secte Krichnaïte des Svami-Narayani au Gujarat*. *Journal Asiatique*, 262, 3-4:437-71.

Marriott, McKim

1976 Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism. *In Transactions and Meanings. Directions in the Anthropology of Exchange and Symbolic Behavior.* Bruce Kapferer (ed.). Philadelphia: Institute of Human Issues: 109-142.

1978 Intimacy and Rank in Food. Presented at the Xth International Conference of Anthropology.

Marcel Mauss

1975[1950] Die Gabe. Form und Funktion des Austauschs in archaischen Gesellschaften. *In Soziologie und Anthropologie.* Gabentausch, Todesvorstellungen, Körpertechniken. Band II, Ulstein Taschenbuch.

Mayaram, Shail

1997 Resisting Regimes. Myth, Memory, and the Shaping of Muslim Identity. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Mayer, Adrian C.

1960 Caste and Kinship in Central India. A Village and its Region. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mayos, Katherine

1927 Mother India. London: Jonathan Cape.

McKean, Lise

1996[1998] Bharat Mata. Mother India and Her Militant Matriots. *In Devi Goddesses of India.* John Stratton Hawley and Donna Maria Wulff (eds.). 1998, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Metcalf, Thomas

1995 Ideologies of the Raj. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mintz, Sidney W.

1985 Sweetness and Power. The Place of Sugar in Modern History. New York: Penguin Books.

Misra, Satish C.

1985 Muslim Communities in Gujarat. Preliminary Studies in their History and Social Organization. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.

Mitra, Raja Rajendra Lala

1872 Beef in Ancient India. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol.41, pp. 174-196. Reprinted *in Indo-Aryans: Contributions to the Elucidation of Ancient and Medieval history*, 2 vols., Varanasi.

- Moore, Sally Falk
1987 Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography. *American Ethnologist* 14(4):727-736.
- Nandy, Ashis, Shikha Trivedy, Shail Mayaram and Achut Yagnik
1995 Creating a Nationality. The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and the Fear of the Self. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, Ashis
1990 The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance. In: *Mirrors of Violence*. Veena Das (ed.).
1998 [1980] At the Edge of Psychology. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2002 Time Warps. Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Noorani, A.G.
2000 The RSS and the BJP. A Division of Labor. New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Nora, Pierre
1996 Realms of Memory. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath
1976 The Impact of Ayurvedic Ideas on the Culture and Individual in Sri Lanka. In *Asian Medical Systems: A Comparative Study*. Leslie Charles (ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
2002 Imagining Karma. Ethical Transformation in Amerindian, Buddhist, and Greek Rebirth. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Oguibénine, Boris
2003 [1994] On the Rhetoric of Violence
In *Violence/Non-Violence*. Vidal, Tarabout, Meyer (eds.).
- O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger
1973 Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva. Oxford University Press.
1985 Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, Sacrifice, and Danger in the Jaiminya Brahmana. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
1976 The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pandey, Gyanendra
1990 The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1992 In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today. *Representations*, No.37, Special Issue: Imperial fantasies and Postcolonial Histories, 27-55.

1983 Rallying Round the Cow: Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c.1880-1917. *In Subaltern Studies II*, Ranajit Guha (ed.).

Parikh, C. D.

1998 Welfare of Other Backward Classes in Gujarat State [*"Anya Pachhat Vargo-nu Kalyan"*]. Ahmedabad: Navbharat Sahitya Mandir.

Parry, Jonathan

1985 Death and Digestion: The Symbolism of Food and eating in North Indian Mortuary rites. *Man* No. 20.4:612-29.

1986 The Gift, The Indian Gift and the "Indian Gift." *In Man*, No. 21, 453-473.

Pinch, William R.

2000 Killing Ascetics in Indian History. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* (Polar), Vol.23, no 2.

Pocock, David F.

1973 Mind, Body, Wealth. A Study of Belief and Practice in an Indian Village. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

1972 Kanbi and Patidar. A Study of the Patidar Community of Gujarat. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.

1955 The Movement of Castes, *Man*, Vol. 55, 71-72.

1957 Inclusion and Exclusion: A Process in the Caste System of Gujarat. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol.13, pp.19-31.

1960 Caste and 'Varna,' *Man*, Vol. 60, 140-141.

Proudfoot, I.

1987 Ahimsa and a Mahabharata Story. The Development of the Story of Tuladhara in the Mahabharata in connection with Non-Violence, Cow-Protection and Sacrifice. Asian Studies Monographs, new Series No.9, Faculty of Asian Studies. Canberra Australian National University.

Punwani, Jyoti

2002 "The Carnage at Godhra." *In Gujarat. The Making of a Tragedy.* Siddharth Varadarajan (ed.). New Delhi: Penguin.

Quigley, Declan

1993 The Interpretation of Caste. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Raheja, Gloria
1988 *The Poison in the Gift: Ritual, Prestation, and the Dominant Caste in a North Indian Village.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ram, Sundara L.L.
1927 *Cow-Protection in India.* Madras: The South Indian Humanitarian League.
- Ramanujan, A.K.
1999 *Food for Thought: Towards an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images.* In *The Collected Essays of A.K. Ramanujan.* Vinay Dharwadker (ed.). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Rangarajan, Haripriya
1990 *Spread of Vaishnavism in Gujarat up to 1600 A.D. A Study with special reference to the Iconic form of Vishnu.* Bombay: Somaiya Publications PVT. LTD.
- Roy, Beth
1994 *Some Trouble with Cows. Making Sense of Social Conflict.* New Delhi: Vistaar Publications.
- Roy, Parama
1998 *Indian Traffic. Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rudolph, Lloyd and Suzanne Hoerber Rudolph
1968 *The Modernity of Tradition* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Shastree, Keshavram Kashiram
2000 *A Few Notable Articles.* Ahmedabad: Gujarat Research Society, Ahmedabad Branch.
- Sanghavi, Nagindas
1996 *Gujarat. A Political Analysis.* Surat Center for Social Studies. Surat: South Gujarat University.
- Schmidt, Hanns-Peter
1968 *The Origin of Ahimsa. Mélanges d'Indianisme a la mémoire de Louis Renou,* Publications de L'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, serie In-8 Fascicule 28, pp. 625-655. Paris: Editions E. de Bocard.

Schnepel, Burkhard

1995 Durga and the King: Ethnohistorical Aspects of Politico-Ritual Life in a South Orissan Kingdom. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 1, No.1, 145-166.

Schwab, Julius

1886 Das altindische Thieropfer. Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert

Selvanyagam, Israel

1996 Vedic Sacrifice. Challenge and Response. New Delhi: Manohar.

Shah, A. M.

1982 Division and hierarchy: An overview of caste in Gujarat. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, NS, Vol. 16/1:1-33.

1955 Caste Economy and Territory in the Central Panchmahals. *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda*, Vol.4, Issue 1, pp.69-95.

1964 Political System in Eighteenth Century Gujarat. *In Enquiry* (n.s.), v.1, 83-95.

Shah, A.M. and Shroff, R.G.

1958 The Vahivanca Barots of Gujarat: A Caste of Genealogists and Mythographers. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 71, No.281, Traditional India: Structure and Change, 246-276.

Shah, Ghanshyam

2002 Direct Action in India: A Study of Gujarat and Bihar Agitations *In Social Movements and the State*. Readings in Indian Government and Politics--4, Ghanshyam Shah (ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publications.

1975 Caste association and Political process in Gujarat. A Study of the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

2004 [1994] The BJP and Backward Castes in Gujarat. *In Caste and Democratic Politics in India*. Ghanshyam Shah (ed.). London: Anthem Press.

Sharma, Ram Nath

2002 Gujarat Holocaust. Communalism in the Land of Gandhi. Delhi: Shubhi Publications.

Sheth Pravin and Ramesh Menon

1986 Caste and Communal Time Bomb. Ahmedabad: Hetvarsha Prakashan.

Sheth, Pravin

1998 Political Development in Gujarat. Ahmenabad: Karnavati Publications.

- Siegel, James T.
 1998 A New Criminal Type in Jakarta. *Counter-Revolution Today*. Durham: Duke University Press.
 1986 Solo and the New Order. Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City. Princeton: Princeton University Press
 2003 The Truth of Sorcery, *Cultural Anthropology* 18:2, pp. 135-155.
- Smith, K. Brian
 1990 Eaters, Food, and Social Hierarchy in Ancient India: A Dietary Guide to a Revolution of Values. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LVIII, no.2, pp. 177-205.
- Smith, Brian K and Wendy Doniger,
 1989 Sacrifice and Substitution: Ritual Mystification and Mythical Demystification. *Numen*, Vol. XXXVI: 2, pp. 189-224.
- Smith, Robertson William
 1889 Religion of the Semites. London.
- Sondhi, M.L. and Apratim Mukarji (eds.)
 2002 The Black Book of Gujarat. New Delhi: Manak Publications.
- Sontheimer, Günter-Dietz/Kulke Herman
 1989 Hinduism Reconsidered. Delhi: Manohar Publishers.
- Spodek, Howard
 1971 On the Origins of Gandhi's Political Methodology: The Heritage of Kathiawad and Gujarat. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXX, No. 2
 1989 From Gandhi to Violence: Ahmedabad's 1985 Riots in historical perspective. *Modern Asian Studies* 23, 4.
- Srinivas, M.N.
 1953 Prospects of sociological research in Gujarat. *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda*, 2 (1): 21-35.
 1956 A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization, *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol.15, No.4, 481-496.
 1962 Caste in Modern India and Other Essays. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Staal, Frits J.
 1963 Sanskrit and Sanskritization, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 33, 261-275
 1983 The Agnicayana Project, *In Agni: The vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, Vol. 2, Staal (ed.), Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press.

- Talbott, Rick Franklin.
1995 *Sacred Sacrifice: Ritual Paradigms in Vedic Religion and Early Christianity*. American University Studies. Series IX, History. New York: Peter Lang.
- Tambs-Lyche, Harald
1992 *Power and Devotion. Religion and Society in Saurashtra*. Bergen: University of Bergen.
- Tambiah, Stanley J.
1996 *Levelling Crowds. Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tardeusz, Margul
1968 Present-day worship of the cow in India. *Numen*, Vol.XV: 1, pp. 63-80.
- Tähtinen, Undo
1976 *Ahimsa. Non-Violence in Indian Tradition*. London: Rider and Company.
1979 *The Core of Gandhi's Philosophy*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
- Thakkar, Hirabhai
2001 [1996] *Theory of Karma*. Hemant M. Shah. Ahmedabad: Kusum Prakashan.
- Thite, Ganesh Umakant
1970 Animal-Sacrifice in the Brahmanatexts. *Numen*, Vol. XVII: 2, pp. 143-158.
- Tull, Herman W.
1996 The Killing that is not killing: Men, Cattle, and the Origins of Non-violence (Ahimsa) in the Vedic Sacrifice. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 39, 1996, pp.223-44.
- Van der Veer, Peter
1996 *Religious Nationalism. Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1996 *Writing Violence. In Contesting the Nation*. David Ludden (ed.).
1997 *The Victim's Tale: Memory and Forgetting in the Story of Violence. In Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*. De Vries and Weber (eds.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Vanaik, Achin
1997 *The Furies of Indian Communalism: religion, modernity, and secularization*. London: Verso.

- Varadarajan, Siddharth (ed.)
2002 Gujarat. *The Making of a Tragedy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Varma, Pavan K.
1998 *The Great Indian Middle Class*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Varshney, Ashutosh
2002 *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life. Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Vidal, Denis, Gilles Tarabout, Eric Meyer (eds.)
2003 [1994] *Violence/Non-Violence. Some Hindu Perspectives*. Centre de Sciences Humaines. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Von Stietencron, Heinrich
1989 *Hinduism: On the proper use of a deceptive term*
In Hinduism Reconsidered. Sontheimer, Günter-Dietz/Kulke Herman (eds.).
1995 *Religious Configurations in pre-Muslim India and the Modern Concept of Hinduism. In Representing Hinduism*. Dalmia, Vasudha/von Stietencron, Heinrich (eds.).
- Waldenfels, Bernhard
1991 *Der Stachel des Fremden*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Werth, Lukas
1996 *Von Göttinnen und Ihren Menschen: Die Vagri, Vaganten Südindiens*. Prof. Georg Pfeffer (Hrsg.). Institut für Ethnologie der Freien Universität Berlin. Berlin: Das Arabische Buch (Indus 2).
- Westphal-Hellbusch, Sigrid and Heinz Westphal
1968 *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Jat. Forschungen zur Ethnologie und Sozialpsychologie, Band 7*. Hilde Thurnwald (Hrsg.). Berlin: Duncker&Humblot.
1976 *Hinduistische Viehzüchter im nord-westlichen Indien. II. Die Bharvad und die Charan. Forschungen zur Ethnologie und Sozialpsychologie, Band 7*. Hilde Thurnwald (Hrsg.). Berlin: Duncker&Humblot.
- Williams, Raymond Brady
2001 *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, John R.
1987 *Reservations in Doubt: The Backlash against Affirmative Action in Gujarat. Pacific Affairs* 60, no.3 (Fall): 408-30.

Yagnik, Achyut

2002 The pathology of Gujarat. *In* Society under siege.
A symposium on the breakdown of civil society in Gujarat. See
<http://www.India-seminar.com/2002/513.htm>, viewed August 8, 2005.

Yagnik, Achyut and Suchitra Sheth

2005 The Shaping of Modern Gujarat. Plurality, Hindutva and Beyond. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Yalman, Nur

1972/7 On the meaning of Food Offerings in Ceylon. *Social Compass* XX, pp. 287-302.

Zimmerman, Francis

1987 The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dictionaries used:

Gujarati-English Dictionary (*Gujarati-Angreji Kosh*), GED

Pandurang Ganesh Deshpande 1974, Amdavad (Ahmedabad), University Book Production Board, Gujarat State.

Gala's Universal Combined Dictionary, GUCD

L.R. Gala 2001, Ahmedabad (Memnagar), Navneet House.

The Modern Gujarati-English Dictionary, TMGED

B.N. Mehta and B. B. Mehta 1989 (1925), Director of Languages, Gandhinagar, Gujarat State.

Concise English-Gujarati Dictionary, CEGD

Pandurang Ganesh Deshpande 1986 (1977), Bombay, Oxford University Press.

The Student's Little Dictionary, SLD

Shantilal Sarabhai Oza & Ramanbhai G. Bhatt 2000 (1940), Ahmedabad, Pravin Printery.

Ankur Smart Dictionary, ASD

N.T. Varma 2001, Ahmedabad, Ankur Prakashan

Sarth Gujarati Jodnikosh, SGJ

Ramlal Dayabhai Parikh 1967, Ahmedabad, Gujarat Vidhyapit, Navjivan Press

Trilingual Administrative Dictionary (English-Gujarati-Hindi), TAD

Director of Languages 1988, Gandhinagar, Patel Printing Press, Gujarat State.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, WTNID
Philip Babcock Gove 1971 (1909), Springfield, Massachusetts, G.&C. Merriam
Company Publishers.

Oxford English Dictionary, OED
1987, New York, Oxford University Press.

A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion. Geography, History,
Literature. John Dowson, 1982, Calcutta: Rupa & Co.

Kluge Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache. Bearbeitet von Elmar
Seebold,
1999, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.

Fact Finding Reports:

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Vadodara and Vadodara Shanti Abhiyan,
2002 Violence in Vadodara: A Report. Bajwada, Vadodara: Bharti Printers,
May 2002.

Editors Guild Fact Finding Mission Report (RW)
2002 Rights and Wrongs. Ordeal by Fire in the Killing Fields of Gujarat.
By Aakar Patel, Dileep Padgaonkar, B.G. Verghese
New Delhi, May 3.
<http://www.sabrang.com/gujarat/statement/report.htm>, viewed July 8, 2004.

Concerned Citizen's Tribunal (CCT)
2002 Crime Against Humanity. An Inquiry into the Carnage in Gujarat.
Vol. I-II, Mumbai: Anil Dharkar.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)
2002 "We have no orders to save you." State Participation and Complicity in
Communal Violence in Gujarat, 14 (3) (C), April 2002.

Communalism Combat (GG)
2002 Genocide Gujarat. Year 8, No. 77-78, Mumbai: Sabrang
Communications. March-April 2002.

Forum Against the Oppression of Women and Aawaaz-E-Niswan (FAOW)
2002 Genocide in Rural Gujarat: The Experience in Dahod District. A
Report.

Hameed, Syeda, et. al. (*The Survivor's Speak*)

2002 The Survivors Speak. How has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority

Women?" Fact Finding by a Women's Panel. Muslim Women's Forum Delhi, National Alliance of Women Bangalore, Nirantar Delhi, Sahrwaru Ahmedabad, Accord Tamil Nadu, and Farah Naqvi Delhi. New Delhi: Sponsored by Citizen's Initiative, Ahmedabad April 16, 2002.

Sabrang Communications (FEH)

2005 The Foreign Exchange of Hate. IDRF and the American Funding of Hindutva." November 20, 2002.

<http://cac.ektaonline.org/resources/reports/sacw/> accessed April 27, 2005.

Quami Ektra Trust, Communalism Combat, Dakshin Gujarat Adivasi Sangh, Vikas Adhyan Kendra, SAMVAD, INSAF, IFIE, SAHRWARU, VOTE and The People's Union for Human Rights

2000 Saffron On the Rampage. Gujarat's Muslims pay for Lashkar's Deeds. Collective Investigation into the Aug. 3-10, 2000 post bandh violence. Collectively Published. Mumbai: Sabrang Communications.

All India Federation of Organisation for Democratic Rights (AIFOFR)

1998 Then they came for the Christians—a report to the nation. Mumbai: Rajani Desai, April 1999.

Punwani, Jyoti

2002 Dateline Godhra (DG)

Mumbai: Nirbhay Bano Andolan.

Gujarati Vernacular Newspapers

Sandesh

Gujarat Samachar

Western Times

English Language Newspapers

Asian Age

Times of India

Indian Express

The Hindu

English Newspaper Magazines

India Today

Frontline magazine [from The Hindu]

Video Material, Documentaries, and Movies

Videotaped Public Debate:

“Is non-vegetarian food permitted or prohibited for a human being? “

Dr. Zakir Naik of the Mumbai Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) in public debate with Mr. Rashmibhai Zaveri of the Indian Vegetarian Congress, 1999.

Documentaries:

Final Solution, directed by Rakesh Sharma, 2004.

Godhra Tak: The Terror Trail, directed by Subhaadeep Chakravorty, 2003.

Boy in the Branch, directed by Lalit Vachani, 1993.

The Men in the Tree, by Lalit Vachani, 2002.

Father, Son, and Holy War, directed by Anand Patwardhan, 1994.

Feature Films:

Gadar. Ek prem katha. Directed by Anil Sharma, 2001.

Lagaan. Directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001.