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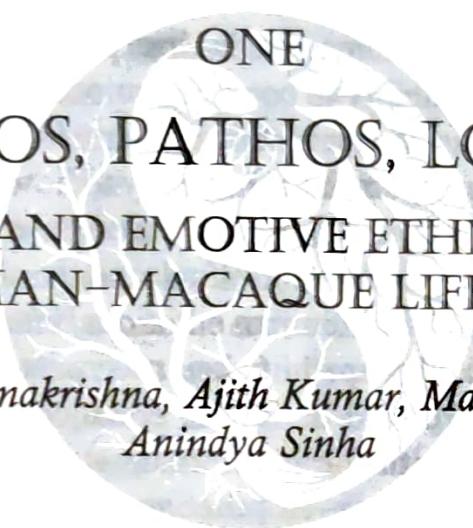
ECOLOGICAL ENTANGLEMENTS

Affect, Embodiment and
Ethics of Care

Edited by
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ETHOS, PATHOS, LOGOS

AFFECTIVE AND EMOTIVE ETHNOGRAPHIES OF HUMAN-MACAQUE LIFEWORLDS

*Ishika Ramakrishna, Ajith Kumar, Maan Barua &
Anindya Sinha*

There will always be some resentment', said Sanjay, a middle-aged farmer, one afternoon as one of us surveyed the damage the macaques had inflicted on his coconut plantation. His voice was calm. His body, initially tense while he calculated the losses faced due to the monkeys that frequented his land, was now relaxed. However, the statement—apparently simple—came from a place of repeated personal experience, cultural influences, familial history and an understanding of the macaques' needs. In one brief sentence, Sanjay had assessed the costs and benefits of a shared living space with macaques and adequately summed up how he felt.

The farmer and the Nicobar long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis umbrosus*), the subject of this discussion, both inhabit the island of Great Nicobar in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India. The accounts of several islanders like Sanjay made it evident to us that people's perceptions towards nonhuman primates—their emotions shaped by direct interactions, actual initiated behaviours towards the macaques, and their emergent affectual geographies—combine, often in strange and complex ways, to generate a unique individuality in every human–nonhuman relationship that develops.

EMBRACING VARIABILITY IN A RELATIONSHIP

Multispecies coexistence often demands that humans assign beliefs, emotions and affective responses to other species in order to predict their future actions, especially when they lack direct access to the thoughts of others (Ghuman et al.). This becomes a necessity, especially in cases

where non/humans find themselves in close proximity to one another in the everyday. Such an ability to construct minds, whether in oneself or in others—or what has been scientifically termed as a capacity to have a ‘theory of mind’—adds further complexity to how real-world human–nonhuman relationships develop over time (Premack and Woodruff; Ghuman et al.). This also lends itself to a certain level of subjectivity in people’s assessment of nonhuman emotions, internal states or causal drivers of behaviour, all shaped by their own personal biases.

This subjectivity could be further enhanced by a rather human tendency to identify with the nonhuman—to consider the other as being similar to oneself—or, in other words, to anthropomorphise wherein human-like qualities are attributed to nonhuman entities. Anthropomorphic tendencies appear to be highly amplified in human–nonhuman primate relationships owing possibly to their shared evolutionary histories, which may have in turn, led to apparent similarities in their morphological and behavioural features (Madden). Nonhuman primates (hereafter primates) thus often become literal and figurative kin to people, taking on important positions in the religious and cultural beliefs of human communities that share space and live with other primate species (Fuentes, “Ethnoprimatology”), although they may occasionally have overlapping and often conflicting interests with competitive interactions over food, space or other resources (Aureli and Smucny). It was however, immediately apparent to us during this study that anthropomorphism was not an invariable attribute, but a dynamic, emergent projection continually crafted in practice. It was also possible and, we believe, important to read this anthropomorphism in affective terms.

The spectrum of interactions between people and primates is extremely diverse and yet, there seems to be an overt focus on ‘conflict’ in defining these human–nonhuman relationships (see also Banerjee and Sinha in this volume). Predefining interactions in this manner biases our thinking, making it challenging to understand situational nuances that appear to be the norm (Gusset et al.). Furthermore, individual humans and primates show great diversity in their own behavioural responses to the other, principally stemming from their own experiences and personal adaptability and shaped by their intellectual capacities. Amidst rising levels of direct non/human interactions; rapid anthropogenic development and loss of natural habitats; and in the case of humans, the cultural significance of primates to particular communities, this diversity is further pronounced.

Both macaques and langurs, commonly distributed across the Indian subcontinent, are worshipped by Hindus and hold immense cultural significance—being revered due to the symbolism associated with the monkey god, Hanuman. This further complicates the nature of the interactions that occur between them, in turn influencing the future course of their relationships (Saraswat et al.). What often remains unrecognised, nevertheless, is the manner in which these relationships reflect an amalgamation of mutual tolerance, compassion, fear and occasionally, even an upsurge of violence (Gumert et al.).

India is home to approximately fourteen species of diurnal primates—largely macaques and langurs—that have had a long history of interactions with people owing to their close proximity to one another and their mutually high population densities across the country (Southwick and Siddiqi). Wildlife populations, like those of the bonnet macaque (*Macaca radiata*), rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) or the common or grey langur (*Semnopithecus* species), which have become increasingly urbanised over the past decades (Srinivasaiah et al.), have attracted much attention for their negative interactions with people across the subcontinent (Sinha and Mukhopadhyay; Saraswat et al.; Radhakrishna). Such negative perceptions have largely emerged due to the increasing practice of crop foraging by primate groups; their unwanted entry into gardens or kitchens in search of food; or the display of aggression by habituated troops in religious or tourist sites, resulting in almost constant clashes between people and primates (Hill, “Primate Conservation”; “Primate Crop Feeding”). While such negative interactions are generally encountered across the country, what remains largely ignored are the nuances of the prevalent relationships that are typical of particular human communities and primate species groups, which have coexisted over relatively long periods of time, further contextualised by specific local ecological regimes that often change over shorter time scales (Schilaci et al.; Fuentes, “Ethnoprimatology”; Baker et al.; Radhakrishna; Sinha et al.).

The subjectivity and individuality that contribute to the variation found in these interactive systems indicate the need to move away from approaches that have traditionally typified non/human interactions. Thus, this chapter celebrates this variation, as it is not only reflective of the remarkable behavioural plasticity and ecological adaptability of non/human primates that have shared their lives over centuries, but can also allow us to understand, interpret and contextualise human-primate interactions in the light of their historical, socioeconomic, ecological, cultural and temperamental influences.

EMOTIONAL AND AFFECTIVE ETHNOGRAPHIES

Interactions between people and nonhuman species often become emotionally charged. It has, in fact, been argued that the emotional relationships that people have with their environments shape their own societies by helping them *know* and *do* (Pile 6, emphasis added). This allows for a mechanistic approach to understanding people's behaviours and their underlying empathy, which contributes to how real-world interactions emerge in a shared landscape. It is also geographical in spirit, whether emotional, affective or socioecological. Such an approach, we believe, is of great heuristic value as the human condition and the worlds within which people reside are built up of their emotions; these could include love, grief, happiness, fear, anger and more complex admixtures of such feelings. Emotions, thus, potentiate behaviours and actions (de Waal; Kremer et al.).

The French poststructuralist thinker, Gilles Deleuze, whose work on affect has resonated across the social sciences, makes a number of important connections between affect and ethology. He argues, for example, that 'studies ... which define bodies, animals, or humans by the affects they are capable of, founded what is today called *ethology*'. The approach is no less valid for us, for human beings, than for animals, because no one knows ahead of time the affects one is capable of' (125). Affect, when understood in ethological terms, also implies bidirectionality. Animals can be thought of as experts at reading bodies, whether their own or those of other sentient beings but, importantly, they can also learn to be affected by their human counterparts (Despret). We thus examine ethology here as a study of affect—a means through which animals lead sentient lives—and through a comprehension of which we may be able to understand how human and other-than-human worlds are co-composed; where the animal is taken to be knowledgeable and even capable of producing outcomes (Barua and Sinha), although abilities to do so differ. Even though we might not entirely know what animals think and feel, an inquiry into affect may enable us to examine the 'everchanging processes human and nonhuman bodies undergo as they experience, encounter, and perform life among other bodies within material space' (O'Grady 1).

Affect is an 'intensity' (Massumi)—a sentient expression that is almost liberated from systems of representation. Affects swirl between and through bodies—both human and nonhuman—transcending the division between oneself and external interacting bodies: an ebb and

flow between an agent and its environment (Solomon). Affects are performed and felt and can be invented or engineered as they course through the rhythms of everyday life and experience. They can thus be distinguished from emotions in that they are non- or pre-cognitive in nature whereas emotions, as well as the treatment of affect within cognitivist literatures, can be considered objects of the mind (Pile). It is the former understanding of affect, as a transpersonal (Anderson) and trans-species capacity (Despret), that we refer to in this chapter.

Emotions, in contrast, are expressed feelings that are both conscious and bodily experienced (Pile). It has also been considered a multicomponent—subjective, physiological, behavioural and cognitive—response to a stimulus or event that is typically of importance to the individual, often valenced as pleasant or unpleasant and variable in activation/arousal and duration/persistence (Paul and Mendl; Kremer et al.). Emotion is clearly more tangible and communicable across individuals of the same or different species (Kremer et al.; Sinha et al.). This is of particular interest in the case of human–nonhuman primate interactions, as the flow and transfer of these states across species are likely to be (1) more compatible, though nuanced, owing to the evolutionary, physical and interpretative similarities between these species; and (2) easily observable in both people and nonhuman primates.

In this chapter, we argue for (1) the prime importance of conducting affectual and emotional ethnographies of human beings immersed in a multispecies existence, within which they interact with other-than-humans and co-construct their lifeworlds with them; and (2) the crucial necessity of invoking and documenting individuality in human–nonhuman primate relationships. We exemplify these endeavours with a case study of the complex interactions presented by diverse human communities on the island of Great Nicobar, part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, off the south-eastern coast of India, and the endemic Nicobar long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis umbrosus*) that lives amidst them. As part of a larger study that examined the nature and extent of these human–macaque interactions, we conducted open-ended interviews with 80 individuals—44 women and 36 men ranging in age from 21 to 72 years—residing across the 9 villages of the island. These interviews covered topics spanning people’s histories of interactions with the macaques; their vernacular knowledge of macaque ecology and behaviour; their present-day interactions with them; documentation of folklore and tales relevant to these interactions; and

any mitigation measures implemented to aid in the alleviation of losses sustained due to perceived conflict with the macaques.

HUMANS AND MACAQUES ON THE GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND

In countries like India, as previously established, langurs and macaques have historical, cultural and religious significance across human communities (Gumert; Saraswat et al.). While in many cases the relationship between the species is commensal (Fuentes, "Human-Nonhuman Primate"; Gumert et al.), they can take on many other forms and derive from a broad spectrum of interactions ranging from the mutualistic to the parasitic. Our current understanding of these relationships, unfortunately, revolves around the outcomes of studies that have principally recorded events of nonhuman primate crop-foraging and their resultant losses (Hill, "Primate Conservation"; "Primate Crop Feeding"). This focus on crop-foraging (or *crop-raiding*) behaviour and on people's perceptions of primates as 'vermin' or 'pests' does not, however, entirely speak of the nuances of how these species are understood or viewed by the local communities (Hill and Webber). Moreover, human perceptions of other primate species tend to depend on a multitude of factors, including the history of the focal area, the socioeconomic status of the people concerned, their religious and cultural inclinations, past experiences with wildlife or the concerned species, and the nature and extent of the current interactions among them (Arroyo-Rodriguez and Dias).

The Nicobar long-tailed macaque is an endemic subspecies found on the Katchal, Little Nicobar and Great Nicobar islands. These three islands are home to ~5,000 individuals of this primate with most of their subpopulations residing within human inhabited areas (Umapathy et al.).

On the largest of these islands, Great Nicobar, the macaque now occurs amidst several human communities along the south-eastern strip of the island. Several linguistically, culturally and socioeconomically distinct communities from the Indian mainland—Punjabi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayali, Bihari, Telugu and Maharashtrian—have occupied land and houses (segregated in status) across the nine villages of the island since the 1970s, apart from settlements of the Indigenous Nicobarese and Shompen people. The social divide between the

Indigenous and settler communities, however, has become less apparent in the years that followed the destructive tsunami of December 2004—a natural calamity that appears to have also majorly shaped the evolution of interactions between the local people and the macaques on the island (Mishra et al.).

The human settler communities and the macaques were both adversely affected by the tsunami of 2004, suffering losses of resources and habitats (Velankar et al.). The people were forced further inland while rebuilding their living spaces, encroaching into forested areas in the process. The macaques' staple *Pandanus* fruits—which occurred abundantly all along the coastal areas—were destroyed as well, leaving behind very few surviving individual trees (Porwal et al.). While there was a certain degree of human–macaque interactions even before 2004—usually manifest as occasional crop foraging by the macaques (Umapathy et al.)—the post-tsunami settlement patterns significantly enhanced their frequency and intensity. Moreover, two comparative surveys conducted across the three islands in 2006 and 2014 showed that the encounter rate of macaque troops increased from 0.23 troop/km (recorded in an earlier survey in 2003) to 0.30 troop/km subsequently (Umapathy et al.; Velankar et al.). This, we believe, could have triggered the increasing animosity expressed by the local human communities towards the macaques coupled with a reduction in tolerance of their constant presence, which we discuss later.

Studies from other parts of mainland India and regions of Southeast Asia describe cases of high-intensity ‘conflict’ between primate species like the rhesus macaque, bonnet macaque or other subspecies of the long-tailed macaque (Marchal and Hill; Singh and Thakur; Saraswat et al.; Singh). In most of these cases, such conflict has led to significant levels of financial losses, negatively affecting people’s livelihoods. This has also been accompanied by a shift in their attitudes towards monkeys, from one of positivity to that of often intense antagonism (Richard et al; Manral et al.). While the current situation on the island of Great Nicobar is far from dire, it shares key milestones in the development and manifestation of negative interactions between people and primates from other parts of the world. Our study, therefore, hoped to provide fine-grained descriptions of human–primate relationships in order to understand the interplay of the multitude of factors affecting interactions between people and the Nicobar long-tailed macaque.

Following the tsunami, the social hierarchy of the human communities—which had been painstakingly established since the 1970s

when people first began migrating from the mainland—was broken down. All the communities now found themselves living together under similar conditions and with comparable resources at their disposal, resulting in the beginning of novel, shared cultures and changes in the original social dynamic that persists even today. We were thus able to identify how people's changing circumstances, emotional and affective states and religious affiliations influenced the manner in which they responded to interactions with macaques and to the environment they lived in.

In the final section of the chapter, we choose to interpret the variability in people's emotive and affective states in response to their interactions with macaques, in terms of Aristotle's three methods of persuasion—*ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Whilst the personal arguments constructed internally by individuals, often unconsciously and verbally expressed on occasion, could represent a spectrum varying from logical reasoning to pure sentiment with shades in between, we analyse them in retrospect by examining the motivations behind why people *feel* and *behave* in certain ways that they do. Understanding these cognition-based emotive and pre- or non-cognitive affective drivers behind people's perceptions, beliefs or actions towards macaques could also potentially help, we believe, in determining context-specific mitigation measures to minimise negative interspecies interactions in the future.

Experience: The History of a Relationship

The Great Nicobar Island is home to two Indigenous communities, the Nicobarese and the Shompen (Elanchezhian et al.). In April 1969, 23 families of ex-army personnel from Punjab were offered 11 to 14 acres of agricultural land each on the island—the primary motivation behind this being the perceived necessity to have Indian occupants settled in this border area. The island's first settlement was formally established in 1971 (Saini). Subsequently, a steady inflow of people from the mainland and the Andaman Islands began to occupy the island, either as government employees, farmers and plantation owners, or as labourers to aid with development. Over the next three decades, the south-eastern strip of the island that ran along the coastline was developed extensively to accommodate all those settled and their needs, with most of the initial settlers engaged in agricultural activities alone. They maintained paddy fields, coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) and areca nut (*Areca catechu*) plantations, and developed mango (*Mangifera indica*), guava (*Psidium guajava*) and chikoo/sapota (*Manilkara zapota*) orchards.

Historically, from 1970 to 2000, the Nicobar long-tailed macaques were reported to only rarely venture out of the neighbouring forested areas. The macaques would enter paddy fields, plantations or orchards usually in the absence of humans. There was mutual fear between the two species. Most agrarian families kept domestic dogs that would chase monkeys, occasionally killing them.

The macaques were not typically fed by people on the island—with the exception of a few families and priests who lived in the main Campbell Bay area near some temples. The first sign of losses due to crop foraging, however, appeared when macaques began to venture into unattended paddy fields—which did not expect such depredation—to feed on rice grains. Precise quantification of these losses had never been attempted and our respondents were unable to recollect the monetary or other losses that they had sustained. With the exception of a minor 6 per cent of the households, people felt that the extent of crop damage—in both paddy fields and vegetable farms—was minimal during the initial stages of their settlement.

On 26 December 2004, a massive earthquake caused a tsunami that was felt all over the island of Great Nicobar. Many families lost several acres of land or were left with uncultivable land due to waterlogging (Malik et al.). It took seven to nine years of redevelopment and relief provisioning to resettle the surviving local people into tsunami shelters; a large number of people began to live in camps in the Campbell Bay area, abandoning their fields and weathered homes. These shelters were clustered into nine villages, as opposed to the more spread out distribution of homes laid within farmland, prior to the tsunami. The macaques were further disadvantaged by the extensive forests being ‘torn’, ‘broken’, ‘cleaned’ and ‘destroyed’ to make room for more human habitations above sea level.

With the rapid establishment of new human settlements on the island, people began to notice an increase in macaque populations, along with the frequency of their visits. Moreover, while the monkeys had tended to fear people earlier, they no longer kept a cautious distance from human settlements. There were also changes in their foraging strategies that attracted attention. They had learnt to process coconuts and ‘steal’ chicken eggs from coops and had increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Over time, the macaques increased their extent and duration of foraging within coconut plantations, occasionally visiting 60 to 80 per cent of the palms, as opposed to feeding on no more than 10 per cent of the trees in the past. Most respondents believed that

there were fewer food trees and fruits available to the macaques in the forest, due to which they had learnt to forage in farms and plantations. Some claimed that the macaques had gradually learnt to consume, process and 'enjoy' human-origin foods, which they preferred to the resources available in the forest.

In general, a large majority of our respondents had come to believe that the macaques were currently consuming significantly more human-origin foods, as opposed to 20 to 30 years ago, primarily due to the gradual reduction in forest cover where they once occurred—the macaques thus had no place to go to and were forced to live with people. And, as could be expected, they had to now take recourse to 'scaring' and 'threatening' people and to committing 'crimes' that had begun to seriously affect the local populace.

The people's perspectives on macaques, we found, could be broadly categorised into positive, negative or neutral, although they were far more nuanced than these labels convey. More importantly, they were based on a wide array of their experiences and knowledge of the species—from their distinctive appearance to their intriguing behaviour.

As these macaques were dark grey to black in colour, some respondents had derogatory connotations to offer while referring to their general appearance and, thereby, implied intentions. They were often considered to be 'greedy' or 'lazy', as they repeatedly visited areas where they could easily find food, such as unattended gardens or coconut trees. Certain experiences that the people claimed to have had or heard about, including macaques pursuing women with flowing clothing, pulling on their dress or 'harassing' them by bared teeth displays, led them to believe that they could be 'perverts'. People also thought of them as 'opportunistic' creatures who utilised every possibility to take food from people, just as 'thieves' would. Interestingly, they were also thought of being 'rebellious' as they could clearly learn fast and use their new-found knowledge to upturn human order and disrupt well-established practices in order to create an environment that was to their advantage.

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was that of 'pity'—in a way reflective of a sense of empathy—towards the monkeys, leading several families to tolerate their foraging in gardens as they clearly needed the food to survive. Three male respondents recounted tales of other humans stealing coconuts from their collection piles, making them question how people were any different from macaques, with respect to the 'crimes they commit'. Anthropomorphism surfaced in

several interviews, with up to 41 per cent of the respondents drawing evolutionary, behavioural and physical parallels between human beings and the macaques. Several people even thought of them as being 'smart', 'intelligent' or 'creative' beings, who could carry out nearly any task that a human being could.

The negativity expressed by certain respondents primarily concerned a resentment against *their* land being occupied by the macaques, thus depriving the locals of the ability to lead 'normal lives', reminiscent of a sense of longing and personal geography. Some felt that living in such close proximity to macaques or other wild animals was highly 'unnatural' and in urgent need of amendment. Some of the most recurrent words, evocative of the complex, largely negative emotions experienced and used to describe the macaques' actions included 'crime', 'destruction', 'ruination', 'dance', 'uprooting', 'chaos', 'thievery', 'hiding', 'sneaking' and 'messing up'.

Finally, there was a distinct sense of disappointment palpably expressed by many respondents and which manifested occasionally as anger, fear or emotional distance from the government-run Department of Environment and Forests in Campbell Bay. People visualised the Forest Department as being a dominating, authoritative body far removed and occasionally alien to them, with individual department members—with whom attempts were made to establish rapport—being transferred out of the island before any solutions could be put in place.

ETHOS: PILLARS OF WISDOM

Human social attitudes and behaviour are coded but they are also based on written and tacit rules. The ethos of people's arguments for how they perceive macaques are thus often grounded in the authoritative pillars that have been laid down and acknowledged at various scales—from the individually determined or personal to the community level—including culture, religion or government laws. Ethos, however, could also be read as the cultivation of habits and behaviours (Guattari). We were thus able to discover unique ways in which people understood and appreciated macaques, emerging from interactions with one another at the individual level and manifesting, in this particular situation, when our respondents reported on (1) their knowledge of the species' ecology and behaviour; (2) direct observations of species behaviour; and (3) their past experiences or historicity in the spaces shared with macaques.

Vasanti, a fisherwoman and a mother in her thirties, said, 'These really large monkeys would come right in front of me sometimes, as though saying, "If you cause harm to us, we're going to bite you badly". But now I've started praying to Hanuman so much that they could never harm me. Ever since I've been devoted to Hanuman, nothing untoward has happened to me and I'm sure nothing bad will happen in the future either.' Her beliefs and insights are of interest here, as she not only associated the macaques with Hanuman but also extended her faith in the monkey god to keep her safe from his own kind. Furthermore, she had given up on any mitigation measures to keep the macaques away from her kitchen garden and instead, sought refuge in prayer to keep herself and her children safe. Another respondent, Jai, a male farmer, reported, 'You should see the monkeys eating coconuts! They drink coconut water so fantastically and then throw them down! The other day, one of the coconuts was about to fall on my head, I just about escaped. God saved me that day. I was standing there [pointing into his field] and the coconut fell, just missing me.' Jai's words show not only how a potentially negative experience was ameliorated by a sense of wonder and gratitude owing to his religious faith, but also the affects that an encounter with macaques sparked.

Religion appeared to serve as a moral compass by which people determined whether their actions, directed at the monkeys, were justified or could be frowned upon. It must be remembered however, that religion does not always specify predetermined categories of belief but is reiterated through repeated performance and practice. It could, nevertheless, work as a filter of empathy in the real world—which it did on the island—allowing people to draw from the cultural or religious importance of the macaques and relate those beliefs to the events unfolding in their backyards. The population on Great Nicobar is predominantly Hindu (69.45 per cent), followed by Christian (21.28 per cent), Muslim (8.52 per cent) and Sikh (0.34 per cent) as per the 2011 Census of India. The island houses several temples—of which three are dedicated to the monkey god Hanuman—one gurudwara, one mosque and three churches. The predominance of Hinduism and Christianity on the island was evident from the observation that the festivities at the local temples and churches were the primary social events for people of all religions. This seems to have instilled a secular collective culture on the island, whereby every community was both sensitive and aware of the other religious affiliations on the island.

The presence of primates in Hindu mythology, with people—both Hindu and non-Hindu—having been brought up on tales of Hanuman, often strongly influences the outlook that many community members have towards macaques (Chauhan and Pirta, “Agnostic Interactions”). Such beliefs additionally determine how extreme a household’s mitigation measures against the macaques could potentially be (Chauhan and Pirta, “Socio-Ecology of Two Species”). A similar comparison of the local long-tailed macaques to Hanuman was a common feature in several of our interviews. Some individuals thus staunchly believed that all monkeys were Hanuman incarnate and that they should be treated with due respect and protected, irrespective of the losses they caused. Others, while being reverential to the godly macaques, were not averse to mitigating their losses by pelting an occasional stone or aiming a catapult at a macaque, although they would never advocate the killing of monkeys. These accounts once again reiterated our belief that religious scriptures may not often directly dictate people’s actions. On the contrary, such scriptures are practically rewritten by the performances drawn out of people by the prevailing conditions. For instance, one of our female reporters, Surekha, whose family subsisted on agriculture, reflected, ‘No one has ever killed a monkey here. This whole place, Shastri Nagar, is a Hindu area. Hindu people don’t kill monkeys. If we are angry, we just chase and throw stones at them at the most.’ On certain occasions, religious sentiments were employed as per convenience or conditionally while in a small subset of interviews, people turned to their family gods to keep themselves and their assets safe rather than directly viewing the macaques as sacred.

A comparable number of respondents, however, logically concluded that the Nicobar long-tailed macaques in particular, could not be manifestations of Hanuman as they clearly did not possess the ‘pious’ qualities that a god was meant to have. These macaques were despicably ‘non-vegetarian’, as they consumed eggs, young chickens, fish or crabs. They were also vastly different in their appearance from the stately mythological depictions of the monkey god, leading individuals to extend little allowance for the losses they suffered at the hands of the macaques. In other words, there were contradictions between the usual anthropomorphic projections and what macaques did in actual practice.

Hints of righteous environmentalism could be seen in about 24 per cent of the respondents, who showed explicit awareness of how people

had manipulated natural spaces through developmental activities. Their outlook towards macaques and their plight was reflected in their responses to the mitigation measures adopted. George, a person working with the government Electricity Department in the main town of Great Nicobar, said, 'The monkeys have been here from before we arrived. They were here long before man, you may have read about this in books as well. People say that the monkeys are Hanuman, which is absolutely right—we won't kill them.' At times, this awareness was combined with people's knowledge of macaque ecology and needs, obtained through regular observations. To this effect, Alka, a female nurse from the island's medical centre, said, 'We made our house in the jungle. Where will the monkeys go? This is their place too. They will keep on coming here. They eat eggs, vegetables, young chicks. People used to say earlier that this monkey is like god, it will not eat anything here. But what will they do if they are hungry?' In this interview, the nurse further rationalised that while she had always revered Hanuman and believed that all life was sacred, she would not consider the macaques to be manifestations of god. To her, they were inconvenient wildlife—years of experience had seasoned her religious outlook towards these primates. Shades of empathetic environmentalism possibly also led certain individuals to feed macaques—even though this encouraged them to repeatedly visit their homes and farms—or simply chase the macaques away, although they regularly caused significant financial losses to these families.

Considerations of legality constituted, perhaps, the most straightforward of reasons why people chose not to harm the macaques despite feelings of resentment, frustration or annoyance towards them. Adherence to the law, which deemed it illegal to harm/kill/capture individuals of this species—protected by the Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972—came across as purely obligatory rather than as an internalised fact that the people morally agreed with. By extension, several people felt that the Forest Department 'owned' the monkeys and it was their 'duty' to protect them. A male islander, Vijay's thoughts on this matter succinctly demonstrated the predominant reasoning behind why people followed the law:

What would anyone do after catching the monkeys? The forest people will come after them. If a dog kills a monkey and the forest people hear about it, they immediately come with the police. Raja's dog killed a monkey and a fine of 20000 was imposed on him. We should be compensated then for all the damage we incur because of the monkeys. Instead, the

Forest Department will come immediately to impose fines. Why don't they tie up their monkeys? But they won't do that.

Beyond the legal and the religious, certain individuals took recourse to their lived experiences to establish baseline expectations of their interactions with macaques. Their detailed observations—noted out of necessity, habit, wonder, joy, or simply an overlap in space and constituting local ethologies of the macaques—contributed to a particular *ethos* (Guattari) and provided them with underlying motivations that guided their feelings, perceptions or actions. We suggest that these individual variations in lived experience led to the formation of unique affective states in people, predisposing them to certain kinds of positive or negative behaviours.

Time was another factor that played into perceptions and pre-mediated behaviours directed towards the monkeys. For those who have resided on the island for several decades, early memories of interactions and the gradual acknowledgement of how the landscape has evolved appeared to determine both their opinions and actions. Susheela, a middle-aged mother of three and wife of a coconut plantation owner, firmly stated, 'Living in conjunction with the monkeys was the norm before the tsunami, which is why we'd never even utter the idea of killing them. It may have changed for a lot of people now, but that's not how I remember things being.' Similarly, Noel, a Christian man, who claimed to be fascinated by macaque behaviour, begrudgingly said,

Earlier, nearly every day or once in two days, I'd feed the monkeys near the open graveyard. But these days if I were to feed them here inside the village, they'd develop the habit of coming here. Instead, we all chase them away. But then again, it's not like they run away; they'll just sit at a slight distance and stay put. Knowing that we don't catch them, they don't stray too far or run either.

PATHOS: VOICES OF PASSION

While the ethos basically provided a baseline framework upon which people's perceptions, emotions and affective states resided, the pathos underlying their individual arguments was often stronger. The role of pure sentiment, drawn from personal experience, was arguably the most significant driver of how and why people formed specific perceptions or opinions of the macaques.

During the course of inductive coding for the qualitative analysis of people's accounts, we found an incredible array of emotive states being expressed including wonder, horror, desire, amusement, defeat, fear, sympathy, admiration, exclamation, exasperation, anthropomorphism, curiosity, disappointment, sadness, anger, indignation, denial, anxiety, exaggeration, expectation, amazement, frustration, romanticism, aspiration, indifference, annoyance, neutrality, power, fascination, judgement, ambition, disbelief, joy, compassion and care.

Malati, a young woman, who had moved to the island of Great Nicobar only two years prior to our conversation, exclaimed, 'I really wish sometimes to just catch one baby monkey and take care of it at home! I think it would be wonderful to have a little monkey climbing over things in the house! It would probably always sit on my shoulder or hold onto me all day.' A maternal tendency towards the species was also recorded in a few female villagers, who had either heard of cases where infants were 'adopted' by people or envisioned a possibility in which they could care for one. Feelings of compassion emerged indirectly through observations made by women, such as Sita, 'Small monkeys that cling to their mothers are also seen. Sometimes if the young monkeys are left behind, the group will come back for them. I have seen this in my old house. Four to five dogs went after a young monkey but the whole group came and saved it. It felt good to see that.'

Kanthu, a young policeman, was enamoured with the monkeys' skills, being part of the approximate 40 per cent of the people who anthropomorphised the species. He said, the monkey enters the kitchen, with expertise opens the fridge door and takes away some eggs. The monkeys do all this fantastically! Even our brains won't work as well as this. Their minds are very sharp.' Another statement, made by a neighbour of Kanthu's, also belonged to a series of incredulous descriptions of the macaques' behaviour hinting at some disbelief in their proclaimed similarities to human mannerisms. He said, 'The monkeys tear the skin of the coconut and eat it despite the skin being so hard. How they are able to do so, I don't know. Their hands do not pain. They also throw the coconut to break it open and then eat it. They drink water from the coconut just like a human being.' While this description revealed a sense of wonder and fascination at a proximal level, it also harboured underlying feelings of awe and fear for what the macaques appeared to be capable of.

Anthropomorphism, however, could be threatening for the macaques when it involved certain human sentiments and expectations.

While the words of Sita, Kanthu or Malati largely revealed positive perceptions of the monkeys, relating to the macaques closely could also result in having human-like expectations of them—those that would obviously not be met. When the macaques failed to live up to such human conduct and courtesy, people's opinions of them fell lower still. Preeti, a newly married woman in her twenties, claimed, 'They cause damage. They make us cry. They won't leave anything for us to eat.' Her words rang of utter disappointment at the agency she had assumed the macaques had. Having also imparted intentionality to the monkeys (Sinha et al.), Preeti's sense of loss was not just for the material but, more importantly, it was emotional: wrought by the macaques having failed to meet her expectations.

Beyond anthropomorphism and the imposition of human expectations on these nonhuman beings, people also seemed to preferentially hold on to the memories of negative interactions over those more neutral or positive. These tended to create a negatively biased foundation on which their imagined future interactions rested. Bhupender, a Punjabi farmer, who had been cultivating coconuts for two decades on the island, warned us,

The monkeys are quite dangerous. You should never venture into a group of monkeys. If even one starts calling, the whole gang will come forward. I get extremely scared. Once a big group chased me for a short distance! I get even more scared thinking of all the things that they could have done to me, like scratch me, tear at my skin or bite me. And now I simply run away in such situations!

The documentation of the unusual combinations of emotions that led to each individual's unique perceptions of the macaques made us wonder how such deeply positive and negative feelings could seamlessly coexist in the daily lives of the islanders. While it would appear contradictory to feel empathetic towards the monkeys and yet pelt stones at them in anger, such interactions did seem to be in harmony if we considered a real-time rationalisation of one's personal principles, experiences and emotions, driven simultaneously by a sense of identification with the macaques on the one hand and by feelings of being deprived of one's precious resources on the other.

LOGOS: ARGUMENTS OF REASON

A final angle that explained how people's emotive states could translate into action was that of rational thought driven by logical reasoning.

While a rationalisation of one's beliefs and actions appeared to bridge the ethos (the foundations of such beliefs) and pathos (the ways in which people justified their actions), this transition was also reinforced by aesthesia—the innate capacity of individuals *to affect and be affected*. The lived experiences of the people combined with their perceptions, emotions or temperament and guided by their sociocultural and religious principles, often manifested themselves in certain attitudinal positions and on-ground action. It thus appeared, in these instances, that the final decision of how one should actually behave towards the macaques was taken after a careful consideration all the different influencing factors—whether consciously or subconsciously—in an apparently logical and rational manner.

Suman, an areca nut plantation owner, thus said, 'In my experience, I've learned that we can walk through any number of monkeys, as long as we don't look at them. I've noticed that if you look around you constantly, make eye contact with them or stare at them, they start reacting to you. If we simply walk straight through them, they won't look at us or take notice either.' Suman's learnings were drawn from a spirit of curiosity and experimentation that was particularly common amongst the farmers who were interviewed. Certain forms of hypothesis testing, we argue, were also evident in the way people attempted variations of interaction with the macaques in order to arrive at the most effective manner of behaving towards them. Tacit and coded in practice, it appeared to us that individuals like Suman were unconsciously learning to be affected by the macaques, developing the capacity to read macaque bodies and let himself be read by them—Guattari's ethico-aesthetics in action.

Apart from being able to rationalise their own behaviours towards the macaques, several people also provided logical explanations for why macaques behaved in certain ways, thereby dissociating anthropomorphic expectations from the actual actions that they had observed—fine examples, once again, of vernacular ethologies. An account from Philmon, a seventy-two-year-old fisherwoman, for example, went thus, 'Once the monkeys had got into the neighbours' house and damaged everything! No one was at home. When they do things like this, it's obvious that people will feel anger towards the monkeys. But that's also their fault, right? If you leave things open and leave the house empty, something like this is bound to happen.'

Hermon, an aged man from the same fishing village, recounted,

An old lady used to go out carrying her food items on her head, and the monkeys would just come and eat up all the food. They didn't do anything to the old lady though. They never really harm anyone. Since they're hungry, at times they'll scare or threaten people, but they don't mean any harm. If they wanted to bite people, can you imagine how many people would've been bitten until now?

Through these conversations, we gathered that much of the *logos* of people's arguments tended to exonerate the macaques, the Forest Department, as well as various deities from blame for negative interactions between people and macaques. The people themselves were held accountable for the roles they played in shaping how these interactions transpired, lending equal agency to both parties.

A third thread of reasoning was that of people having clarity on *why* they have positive or negative biases towards the macaques. They were able to reflect on past lived experiences and identify the event/s that may have resulted in their particular perceptions of and feelings towards the monkeys. Gyandev, a farmer who moved to the island fairly recently, found that he could trace his seemingly innate fear of the monkeys to two separate incidents when he was surrounded by large male macaques in the forest patch near his house. A woman, Vyjayanti, found that she despised the macaques after she was witness to them pulling off a draped saree that her neighbour was wearing while trying to chase them off her farm. On the other hand, Abdul found that he loved watching the macaques play after he was forced to keep watch over his father's farm one afternoon as a teenager. These memorable instances appeared to have predetermined their long-term outlook towards the macaques they later interacted with. Mapping such events in an individual's life could help us better understand their affective geographies and, by extension, the nature of behaviours they are likely to exhibit in the future.

Finally, we found that *logos* was, at times, invoked by people as a last resort to make sense of the as yet unexplained. While hypothesising why the macaques seemed to enjoy foraging in his field, for example, Kumaraswami said,

In my opinion, humankind's knowledge and intelligence has reached extremely high levels. We've accomplished feats up to the moon. People are now beginning to explore newer worlds and avenues. If people can achieve so much, why wouldn't the monkeys make progress of their own too? We are people with desires—if we want to taste and eat fruits

that come in from America or China, why won't the monkeys want to try new things as well?

Kailash Ram, another farmer, arguing along similar lines, felt that monkeys may inevitably overtake human beings in their intelligence, development and progress, of course at the will of the gods. There were, however, times when even *logos* fell short. As Ranjana, an *anganwadi* (a centre providing care for mothers and young children in a rural area) worker, said, 'People think that we should rid this place of the monkeys, since we don't know what they're thinking. But the monkeys must feel similarly about us, we'll never know.'

A Meeting of Minds

In conclusion, it appears to us that the rationales that drove the diverse settler communities of the Great Nicobar Island to perceive the long-tailed macaque in certain ways were expansive and usually internally coherent. They ranged from reasons of obligation, legality and religion to sentiment and rationality, and occasionally, combinations of these. Equally important were tacit codes and rules formed through practice. Lurking under the surface were emotive states, individual temperaments and lived experiences. But finally, rather importantly, what connected much of the interspecies interactions that we observed, was affect.

In other words, one way to understand this dynamic ecology was through the notion of ethico-aesthetics (Guattari). Here, ethos would refer to the habits cultivated by people, and perhaps by macaques, as they responded and corresponded to one another. The aesthetics, in turn, would pertain to the different capacities—innate or acquired—to affect and be affected. People then learnt to respond to macaques, just as the macaques learnt to respond to them. The religious attitudes and dispositions of the people contributed to these lifeworlds as well but were more often cultivated in practice rather than being drawn unthinkingly from the scriptures. They worked as durations, emerging in the nick of time to regulate which encounters were acceptable and which were not. Such understandings of attitudes as being tacit, dynamic and arising in practice have important implications for rethinking human-wildlife encounters beyond the typical survey instruments drawn from the quantitative social sciences and applied, often unthinkingly, to conservation.

Our arguments about affect and practice, and which forces acquire significance in any given situation or circumstance could potentially

be expanded further. An important force influencing and altering the wider ecological assemblage of the island, in this case, was the tsunami. Such earthly forces as the tsunami could have had enormous affective powers (Deleuze and Guattari), materialising in different ways, within both the human and simian communities and determining the course of their subsequent interactions in profound ways. In a broader, perhaps more speculative sense, we might then turn to affect not only in ethological terms (Deleuze), but as a wider ecology cutting across bodies, populations and assemblages. Can we, therefore, now conceptualise political geology as a geographical force that originally began the process of shaping, in this instance, human–macaque lifeworlds, only to culminate later in their political ecologies?

Affect thus remains, in our opinion, the most challenging of factors to observe and document in both humans and nonhumans alike: especially in their co-constructed lifeworlds. As it is both precognitive and non-cognitive, it cannot be sought conversationally or through ethnographies alone. It would appear almost impossible for one to articulate the immediate affective states of any being; any attempt at identifying them through interviews, in the case of humans, may thus be at best, the first step. It is, nevertheless, critically important to make all efforts to capture people's and macaques' affectual geographies as a means to cut through the cloud of influencing factors and to understand them for who they are, as they *are*. And as we have speculated above, affect can also emanate from earthly forces with bearings on both ethos and aesthetics. Emotive states too can be confusing, to both researchers and to those who possess them. Yet, human–nonhuman interactions are fundamentally complex and emotionally heavy, making it imperative to understand the emotional motivations that drive and influence them as well.

Finally, it is important to remember that while it may be possible to disentangle the *ethos*, *pathos* or *logos* from people's independent accounts of their experiences of living with macaques—as we have attempted to do rather preliminarily—they do not seem to separate from one another as easily in the minds of the people in the everyday. They coexist and interact—remaining entangled in often undecipherable ways—just as humans and nonhumans alike struggle to make sense of the complex world of interspecies interactions and communication within which they remain, often helplessly and inextricably, embedded.

Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the Internal Human Ethics Review Board of the Centre for Wildlife Studies—Wildlife Conservation Society, in association with that of the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru. The names of all the respondents, mentioned in this chapter, have been altered to protect their anonymity.

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