

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ

**MENACE AND MANAGEMENT: POWER IN THE HUMAN-MONKEY  
SOCIAL WORLDS OF DELHI AND SHIMLA**

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ANTHROPOLOGY

by

**Daniel Allen Solomon**

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The Dissertation of Daniel Allen Solomon is approved:

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Professor Susan Harding, chair

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Professor Donna Haraway

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Professor Andrew Mathews

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Professor Megan Moodie

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Professor Adrienne Zihlman

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Tyrus Miller,  
Vice Provost of Graduate Studies

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## **Abstract**

**Daniel Allen Solomon**

### **Menace and Management: Power in Human-Monkey Social Worlds of Delhi and Shimla**

This dissertation is based on ethnographic and textual research among the monkeys and humans of two Indian metropolises, mostly between 2006-2010. The monkeys are rhesus macaques, who have lived alongside humans in South Asia for thousands of years, make their livings in apparently anthropogenic material-symbolic environments. Rhesus participate in the shaping of the space of their interaction with humans; that is, they engage in multispecies world-building. In the context of their relationships with one another, humans and monkeys become capable of agency in multispecies contexts: members of the two species grant others' agency in contexts that might be otherwise unintelligible to them. Humans make monkeys into politically potent actors and speak for them in politics, and monkeys make humans into their subordinates, caretakers, and allies. I focus on government as an act of world-building, and I evaluate government attempts to manage monkeys in Delhi and Shimla. Governmentality can be considered as a part of monkeys' niche co-construction because the significances that government actors take into account are not wholly human in origin, and affections for monkeys play as important a role in government management calculations as the nuisance that the animals cause. My task here isn't to select the "best" government-built world, but to note how the specific styles of governmentality that have unfolded in Delhi and Shimla work upon the possibility of amenable interspecies relations. Delhi's management strategy performs the enforcement of an inviolate division between monkeys and urban spaces by translocating and keeping thousands of monkeys in a refuge to the south of the city, but in Shimla wildlife managers have opted for a sterilization program which allows the monkeys to return to their home site, thus minimally interfering in already-working situations of human-monkey interaction.



I dedicate this work to my parents, Alana Lee Solomon and Paul Daniel Solomon.



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Finally, I'd like to thank the Wenner-Gren Foundation, who funded this research.

***Part I – Introduction: From Menace to Multispecies***

**Foreword**

This dissertation is about the relationships that exist between humans and rhesus macaque in two Indian metropolises. These monkeys, who have lived alongside humans in South Asia for thousands of years, make their livings in material-symbolic environments that many will think of as anthropogenic, or strictly human in origin. The monkeys make their livings there through exercises of guile and cunning, through the application of brute force, and by manipulating human affections. This is not just to say that the monkeys subsist mainly by evading or resisting human power; and it is not to say that they make their livings mainly by taking advantage of human feelings and foibles like the religious sentiment that many Hindus feel for the monkeys who are the living incarnations or representatives of the god Hanuman. The monkeys also participate in the shaping of the material and social spaces of their interaction with humans. They engage in what scholar of science studies Donna Haraway has called world-building.

The monkeys aren't laying brick; nor are they actively politicking amongst their human associates for their rights; nor do they seem to have any special awareness of Hanuman's resemblance to them, nor of their other moral connotations. While monkeys do come equipped with many physical, mental, and emotional capacities that are similar to the ones that we have, it is instead in the context of their relationships with humans that either primate species becomes capable (as STS scholar Vinciane Despret might say) of agency in multispecies contexts.

Monkeys construct their world through processes like what the primatologist Agustín Fuentes has called niche co-construction. The buildings that humans erect, the affections that humans feel, and the political action that humans are willing to take on behalf of monkeys

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shape the world for monkeys. Humans and monkeys are each other's ecological and social actuators. They grant one another agency in contexts that might be otherwise unintelligible to them: humans make monkeys into politically potent actors and speak for them in politics, and monkeys make humans into their subordinates, caretakers, and allies.

Much of this dissertation is concerned with governmentality, the exercise of power by state authorities over the territory of the geographical state and its contents. Government is also an act of world-building. Insofar as monkeys and other wildlife become materially or symbolically significant to human political actors, who then act politically on the nonhumans' behalves, governance can also be considered a tool of niche co-construction. The worlds that emerge from the governance of monkeys are varied, ranging from landscapes hewn by a stark divide between human and monkey – Delhi – to landscapes where the two species get along together through active negotiations of power – Shimla.

In all cases, my job here is not to evaluate these worlds as better or worse in a universal sense that cuts across the specific situations which gave rise to the specific governmentalities that emerge in the two cities. Rather, I join with other authors who are writing and teaching towards the cultivation of a sensibility in my readers and students that is not just worldly, but multi-worldly. The task isn't to select the "best" world, but to learn something about what makes worlds amenable to the lives who compose them, and to apply those lessons to the work of building up, repairing, or re-imagining the significances that make living together possible.

This textual portions of this research has been ongoing since 2004 when I started reading the monkey news. The ethnographic portions of this research took place over three trips to India in 2006, 2007, and 2008-2010. For most of that time, I was on my own, but I was accompanied by my then-fiancée (now my wife) Teresa Gonsoski for one month late in 2008,

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and for the final few months of my 2008-2010 research period. I mention Teresa here because she appears in the text that follows, especially in Part III, and because she was a constant presence in the heart and periphery of the worlds that I have occupied for most of the Aughts.

## Chapter One: The Monkey Menace

Figure 1: A young adult near Jakhoo Mandir.



### Chapter One: The Monkey Menace

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, stories about conflict between humans and monkeys in India became a prominent news item in India and sometimes abroad. Mostly, the monkeys were blamed for stealing food – snatching bread and snacks from office workers and laborers, raiding refrigerators, ransacking gardens, and pillaging crops in the countryside – but the monkeys did not limit their predations to the pantries of the common man. Members of one troop prevented the minister of petroleum from moving into his new home; other monkeys wrecked an embassy; and others destroyed paperwork in the offices of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. Philp, "Ministry of Monkeys Takes over in Delhi," *The Times*, 2004; A. Wang, "Monkeys Terrorize India Workers, Tourists," *WTOP, Federal News Radio*, 2003; Associated Press,

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Inconveniences sometimes gave way to deadly encounters. One man died when a flowerpot knocked over by a monkey hit him on the head.<sup>2</sup> Then there was Kajal Pandey, a baby who was mauled to death by a monkey, and Delhi deputy mayor S.S. Bajwa, who apparently fell to his death after battling monkeys on his terrace.<sup>3</sup> Here and there in the stories I read, a policeman's ear would be torn off or a hapless citizen would be sent to the hospital after a monkey attack.<sup>4</sup> If not inflicting injury, the monkeys who figured in the news were bringing down the power lines,<sup>5</sup> defacing monuments,<sup>6</sup> disrupting transportation services,<sup>7</sup> or even creating havoc at polls.<sup>8</sup>

Most sources, especially stories appearing in international newspapers, mentioned that the simian hellions got away with their hijinx because they were sacred to worshipers of the Hindu god Hanuman, who is very monkey-like.<sup>9</sup> Hanuman is one of the most popular gods in Hinduism and other South Asian religious traditions, and many of his numerous mandirs serve as rendezvous points for the monkeys and their fans among religious Hindus on Tuesdays and Saturdays. These days are favored by Hanuman, and the monkeys know

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"Monkeys Invade Indian Embassy in Nepal," 2005; A. Venugopal, "Missions Sniff Monkey," *The Telegraph*, 2005.

2 D. Lak, "Monkeys Create Havoc in Delhi," *BBC News Online*, 2000.

3 I take both of these stories up in Part II.

4 A. Avijit, "Rage of the Rhesus," 2001; Agence France Presse, "Monkey Bites Off Policeman's Ear in Eastern India," 2004; Statesman News Service, "End to Monkey Menace," *The Statesman*, 2003; P.N. Phatarphekar and C.S. Dogra, "State in Monkey's Shadow – Without a Containment Plan, the Man-monkey Conflict Spreads Alarminglly," *Outlook India*, 2004, [http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname-20040927&fname=monkey+\(F\)&sid=1](http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname-20040927&fname=monkey+(F)&sid=1).

5 Asian News International, "Monkey Menace Leads to Power Outage in Central Delhi," *AndhraNews.net*, 2008.

6 "Monkey Brings down Vase Atop Taj Turret" (2006).

7 K. Ghosh, "Beggars' Turn Chasers in New Barrackpore," *The Statesman*, 2000; "Platforms Need a Monkey Patrol!," *Hindustan Times*, 2005.

8 Deutsche Presse-Agentur, "Too Much Monkey Business at Indian Election Office," 1996; R. Bedi, "Monkeys Mock Democracy," *South China Morning Post*, 1996.

9 Hanuman is customarily described as "the Hindu monkey god," but there is the sentiment among some Hindus that it is an insult to Hinduism to refer to Hanuman as a monkey or even a monkey god – the idea being that monkeys are not worth worshipping.

## Chapter One: The Monkey Menace

one way or the other that many of Hanuman's devotees, or bhakts, will come to the mandirs bearing edible gifts not just for Hanuman, but for the monkeys who resemble him. The monkeys have their supporters among more secular segments of society as well, as prominent proponents of animal rights and welfare also direct their resources to defend the monkeys. Hindu religion and secular modernism chart out different ways of expressing affection for monkeys, but both brands of advocacy were at times presented in journalistic stories as obstacles to the management of monkeys.

One phrase in particular grabbed my attention as a description for this state of affairs: *the monkey menace*. The term was ubiquitous among the hundreds of news stories I read or watched on the Internet.<sup>10</sup> Usually it summarized the commonplace misadventures that occurred between the species as well as the occasional outstanding acts of violence. Often it was used to indicate an ongoing situation, one which appeared to plague the nation of India as a whole. While monkeys were often presented as jokes in these stories, the tones and punchlines of the humor varied.

Sometimes in these stories the monkeys were leveling tricksters. They flouted class, caste, and religion; they disregarded social convention and treated everyone, from the government officials and the wealthy elites, to the aam aadami (the common man), in the same pushy, extractive manner. They were freeloaders, and they didn't care for politics or government schemes. Sometimes they were deployed in news stories for humorous impact; other times they were scripted as critics of government, pointing out the weaknesses in both

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<sup>10</sup> The oldest story in my collection that mentions a "monkey menace" is, "Monkey menace baffles officials" by Rahul Bedi from the January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1993 issue of the *South China Morning Post*. In 2009, Iqbal Malik remembered the term appearing in the 1980s.

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Figures 2 through 6. Rhesus macaques are diverse in appearance across sexual, geographic, and age phenotypes, and the faces and bodies of individual rhesus are unique expressions of life history and personality. Shimla's monkeys, like the adult female (one of the Step Sisters, see chapter eight) in the top left, tended to have denser, longer fur than their counterparts in Delhi (top center, top right, bottom right). As rhesus reach sexual maturity their facial skin and genital-anal regions begin to periodically swell and redden: Note the pinkish faces of the females (top center, bottom right), and the especially bright facial markings and reddened testicles of two males from Sundarbans Tiger Camp in West Bengal. Like us, the bodies of older macaques show the wear and tear of their life histories (top right, bottom right).



## Chapter One: The Monkey Menace

the bureaucratic and material infrastructures of cities.

Monkeys were cast as a crucible for government competence, and I read monkey menace narratives as proposals for a modern society that posits the efficacy of a rational, secular government over nature as a prerequisite to proper urban modernity. As they made life inconvenient for the elites, the monkeys helped to assure news readers that the consequences of ineffective governance would sometimes afflict the governors, and in this way, the monkeys were scripted as ciphers for India's accession to modernity. The monkey menace of the popular media was a mediating discourse that was deployed to sort out the modern from the anti-modern. But the narrative singularity of the monkey menace runs in contrast with the variety of locales in which it occurred. On the ground, on the rooves, in the trees, and in the fields, the actual situation of human-monkey relations was varied, and "menace" was not always the name of the game.

### Urban Monkeys

The villains in menace narratives were most often the kind of monkey known in English as rhesus macaques, in Latin as *Macaca mulatta*,<sup>11</sup> and in Hindi as bandar or lal

11 *Macaca mulatta* is a provocative name in the contemporary American English context. In 2006 Virginia state senator George Allen was filmed taunting one of his Democratic rival's interns with the slur "macaca." The intern, S.R. Sidarth was of Indian descent. The term "macaca" is by no means prevalent in Virginia, and few of Allen's constituents recognized the term as anything but generic gibberish deployed to mock the young man's name, or (as Allen claimed) his Mohawk-like hairstyle. Liberal sources quickly pointed out that the term was a racial slur native to north Africa, and that Allen conceivably could have acquired the term from his mother, who is partially of north African descent. It was a decisive moment in the election campaign, which Allen lost. Sidarth claimed the name for himself, writing an essay published in the Washington Post and titled, "I Am Macaca." As for mulatta, the species name for rhesus is well-known in North America, where it or its masculine counterpart, "mulatto," is still sometimes used to describe someone of mixed black and white ancestry. S.R. Sidarth, "I Am Macaca," *The Washington Post*, November 12, 2006, sec. Outlook & Opinions, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/10/AR2006111001381.html>.

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bandar – “red monkeys.”<sup>12</sup> They are not quite red. The pelage of a typical rhesus is actually dark brown to gray around the head and fades into orange on the hindquarters. They have light, pinkish to tan skin on their hairless faces, fingers, ears, and toes, but during the breeding season, the sexual skin on their faces and rumps swells and brightens – this is when they become red monkeys. Females also exhibit marked seasonal swellings of their genitals and anus, and around the base of their tails, which, after many seasons, can leave them with bald, wrinkled rear ends.<sup>13</sup>

While there are plenty of animals in the suburban American ecologies with which I am most familiar, the experience of encountering monkeys in the city was something different. Urban monkeys could be compared to rock doves, another South Asian native who has spread around the world. Like rhesus macaques, the pigeons are “preadapted”<sup>14</sup> in a sense to human cities. Rock doves are specialized cliff dwellers, and human cities have unfolded before them as sprawling galleries of nesting sites. Monkeys' own aptitudes for climbing – not to mention their curiosity, mostly opposable thumbs, and arboreal dexterity – turns the vertical surfaces of buildings into escape routes and playgrounds that are often inaccessible to the cities' own builders.

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12 *Bandar* is a general term for monkeys and other nonhuman primates in Hindi, but it also refers more specifically to macaques, of which there are several species in India. In contrast, the larger leaf-eating monkeys *Presbytis entellus* are known as *langur*, which many Hindi speakers translate into English as “ape,” though they are not apes, but rather a kind of monkey separate from the macaques.

13 J. Fooden, “Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780),” *Fieldiana: Zoology, New Series* no. 96 (2000): 1-180; F.B. Bercovitch and M.A. Huffman, “The Macaques,” in *The Nonhuman Primates*, ed. P. Dolhinow and A. Fuentes (London and Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999), 77-85.

14 *Exaptation* is Gould and Lewontin's term, and *preadaptation* comes from G.G. Simpson, but they both indicate an organization of traits that appears to predispose an organism to a situation which could not have possibly exerted selective pressure on its ancestry. S.J. Gould and E. Vrba, “Exaptation – a Missing Term in the Science of Form,” *Paleobiology* 8 (1982): 4-15; S.J. Gould, “The Exaptive Excellence of Spandrels as a Term and Prototype,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 95 (1997): 10750-55; G.G. Simpson, *Tempo and Mode in Evolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944).

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But unlike pigeons, rhesus are relatively large animals – adult males are around 53 centimeters long, measured from the head to the base of the tail, and weigh about 7.7 kg; adult females are about 47 cm long and weigh around 5.3 kg.<sup>15</sup> They can range from cat-sized to toddler-sized, but they are more mobile in three dimensions than most unskilled humans, and are better than cats at manipulating devices made for human hands – like handles, windows, and faucets. The largest common urban wildlife in North America are probably coyotes and black bears, both of whom prefer to conduct their foraging operations under cover of darkness, and neither of whom have quite the same locomotor potential of monkeys. Monkeys' hijinks are multiplied by their range of motion, up and down buildings, across ledges, in and out of windows.

Like many urban animals, rhesus macaques' diet and environmental tolerances are flexible. Rhesus eat a wide range of food, including stems, shoots, leaves, grasses, eggs, insects, other invertebrates, soil, and fruit. Their diet varies from locale to locale and with the seasons.<sup>16</sup> According to some authors, their reproductive cycle is timed to the availability of food in their environment, and in regions where there is a rainy season most infants are born at its end.<sup>17</sup> Rhesus are thus well suited for seasonal climates, but may be found in cold,

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15 Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780)."

16 Ibid.; D.V. Kapil, "Depredation on Cultivated Crops by Rhesus Macaque and Its Control," *Journal of Tropical Forestry* 11, no. 3 (1995): 238-243; S.C. Makwana, "Field Ecology and Behaviour of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta*. II. Food, Feeding and Drinking in Dehra Dun Forests," *Indian Journal of Forestry* 2, no. 3 (1979): 242-253; M.F. Siddiqi and C.H. Southwick, "Food Habits of Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta*) in the North Indian Plains," in *Ecology and Behavior of Food-Enhanced Primate Groups*, ed. J.E. Fa and C.H. Southwick, Monographs in Primatology (New York: Alan R. Liss, Inc., 1977), 113-124.

17 Wenyuan Qu et al., "Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta*) in the Taihang Mountains, Jiyuan County, Henan, China," *International Journal of Primatology* 14, no. 4 (1993): 607-621; Donald G. Lindburg, "The Rhesus Monkey in North India: An Ecological and Behavioral Study," in *Primate Behavior: Developments in Field and Laboratory Research*, vol. 2 (New York City: Academic Press, 1971), 1-106.

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mountainous regions like Himachal Pradesh, arid zones like Western Rajasthan, and marshes like the jungles of West Bengal. They also often exist in agricultural areas, where they make ample use of cultigenic plant foods, and in urban areas, where they are commonly provisioned by pious Hindus and other monkey lovers, and where they have access to human food refuse.<sup>18</sup>

Noting the geographical extent of human-monkey sympatry – throughout South and Southeast Asia, essentially – primatologist Alison Richard has suggested that rhesus and a few other macaque species be included in an ecological taxon known as the “weed macaques.” Weed macaques would be united by their professions as marginal specialists who subsist on the caloric bounties made available by human dumps, agriculture, and kindness.<sup>19</sup> About half of the rhesus macaques in the world live in India, and most of these monkeys (as many as 85%) live in close proximity to human settlements.<sup>20</sup> It's possible that

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- 18 Kapil, “Depredation on Cultivated Crops by Rhesus Macaque and Its Control”; R.S. Pirta, M. Gadgil, and A.V. Kharshikar, “Management of the Rhesus Monkey *Macaca Mulatta* and Hanuman Langur *Presbytis Entellus* in Himachal Pradesh, India,” *Biological Conservation* 79 (1997): 97-106; C.H. Southwick, M.F. Siddiqi, and J.R. Oppenheimer, “Twenty-Year Changes in Rhesus Monkey Populations in Agricultural Areas of Northern India,” *Ecology* 64, no. 3 (1983): 434-439; I. Malik and R.L. Johnson, “Commensal Rhesus in India,” *Review of Ecology (Terre Vie)* 49 (1994): 233-243; I. Malik and C.H. Southwick, “Feeding Behavior and Activity Patterns of Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta*) at Tughlaqabad, India,” in *Ecology and Behavior of Food-Enhanced Primate Groups*, ed. J.E. Fa and C.H. Southwick, Monographs in Primatology (New York: Alan R. Liss, Inc., 1977); C.H. Southwick, M.A. Beg, and M.R. Siddiqi, “Rhesus Monkeys in North India,” in *Primate Behavior*, ed. I. DeVore (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 111-159.
- 19 While all of the monkeys in the genus *Macaca* are closely related, the story that Richard, Goldsmith, and Dewar tell about rhesus evolution is one in which the monkeys' behavioral proclivities were shaped by natural selection. In this case, more distantly related populations of *Macaca* spp. would have undergone positive selection pressure caused by the encounter with anthropogenic calories and converged behaviorally in spite of the genetic diversity in the genus. A.F. Richard, S.J. Goldstein, and R.E. Dewar, “Weed Macaques: The Evolutionary Implications of Macaque Feeding Ecology,” *International Journal of Primatology* 10, no. 6 (1989): 569-594.
- 20 C.H. Southwick and M.F. Siddiqi, “Population Status of Nonhuman Primates in Asia, with Emphasis on Rhesus Macaques in India,” *American Journal of Primatology* 34 (1994): 51-59.

## Chapter One: The Monkey Menace

*Macaca mulatta*, like *Homo sapiens*, excel in the marginalized, de-centralized world of the modern cities just as well as they do on the margins of agricultural resource pools.



Figures 7 and 8. Most rhesus macaques subsist on human-origin hand-outs, garbage, or crops. Left, The Tulsi Grove where the divine lovers Krishna and Radha romped, Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. Below, dumpster diving on Ridge Road, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

The weed macaques' common lifestyles has its advantages and disadvantages.

Some monkeys, like the macaques and langurs who frequent “monkey temples” throughout India and Asia, flourish on the hand-outs of tourists and pious animal lovers, but others suffer the effects of humans' vengeance, competition, or even malicious boredom. These are often the same monkeys. Even those living at the monkey temples I visited in Delhi and Himachal Pradesh (as well as Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) were chased or warded off with stones and sticks by temple personnel or visitors. Once I stood in Hanuman Park in Delhi and watched a man lean bodily out of his third storey window to fire a BB gun at the monkeys who

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were enjoying the park – and this in spite of the fact that the building and park were directly adjacent to one of Delhi's most active Hanuman mandirs. Things are even more serious in agricultural zones, and farmers in Himachal Pradesh take monkeys' depredations upon their crops seriously enough to agitate en masse for licenses to kill monkeys. In other places, vigilantes took the removal of troublesome monkeys into their own hands; among the menace narratives I consumed, there were reports of mass poisonings of monkeys, which local police or wildlife authorities vowed to resolve.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile city and state governments, unwillingly cajoled into the expensive and politically sensitive work of managing the sacred monkeys while keeping them alive (usually) and unharmed (mostly), were beginning to make moves towards the management regimes that I discuss in the following sections and chapters.

### **On the Use of the Monkey Menace**

Rather than thinking of the “monkey menace” as a monolithic crisis facing the humans and macaques of India, and rather than taking species as the crucial term in defining human-monkey relations, we might think of the “monkey menace” as one proposed variation upon the social situation known as modernity. Modernity, as Anthony Giddens has written, can be thought of as a kind of sociality that is “post-traditional” in its attitude towards knowledge. Post-traditional societies do not give special regard to the conventions of their ancestors as they apply technology and the rational sciences to define and resolve

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21 Press Trust of India, “43 Monkeys Poisoned to Death in Uttar Pradesh; 7 Held,” *Daily News & Analysis*, 2010, [http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report\\_43-monkeys-poisoned-to-death-in-uttar-pradesh-7-held\\_1420504](http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_43-monkeys-poisoned-to-death-in-uttar-pradesh-7-held_1420504); Asian News International, “Mystery Shrouds Killing of 20 Monkeys, Hindus up in Arms in UP,” *Thaindian News*, 2009; Indo-Asian News Service, “Monkey Killing Triggers Protests,” *Thaindian News*, 2010, [http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/monkey-killing-triggers-protests\\_100336876.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/monkey-killing-triggers-protests_100336876.html).

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problems.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes the desire to be post-traditional is quite explicit in Indian public discourses because many Indians understand their country to be in the process of “developing” into a modern state, and many besides opine that it is the ignorance and backwardness of those citizens who adhere to the mores of caste, dogma, and greed that is to blame for India's as-yet incomplete accession to modernity. Both those who care for monkeys and the misbehaving monkeys themselves are sometimes pegged as potential disruptors of Indian civil society. But actual social relations between monkeys and humans are too broad to be captured by the notion of backwardness, religion, or tradition – or any terminology that is meant to signify an outside to an unrealized better society. Monkey menace narratives selectively latch onto and amplify some kinds of association while ignoring or even obfuscating others in the range of actual associations, effectively smoothing over the variety and complexity of extant relationships, including alternatives to the conflicts posited in mass media itself.

In his book, *Racial Situations*, John Hartigan notes that race relations in the United States, like the interspecies conflicts I am writing about here, are often presented on the national political stage and in mass media as a spectacular conflict that takes place between two monolithic categories of person. That is, following James Clifford's critique of anthropological narratives of culture, race in the US plays out in the media as an allegory that glosses over the material and social specificities of the actual relationships that unfold between people. Hartigan's own work focuses on white people in Detroit. He argues that the range of factors that whites take into consideration when assessing or interacting with one another and their black neighbors undermines the overarching racial categories posited in the

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22 A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

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racial spectacles of the mass media.<sup>23</sup>

Social studies of human-wildlife conflict in India have made related points. Surveys carried out by psychologist Raghubir S. Pirta and ecological historian Madhav Gadgil revealed that the attitudes of hill farmers near Shimla in Himachal Pradesh towards monkeys depended more on the content of their material relationships with the monkeys than on their religious preconceptions. Despite widespread acceptance of monkeys' sacred status, farmers still hoped that the government would remove or otherwise manage the monkeys who raided their crops. And though they did not associate langurs with Hanuman as closely as they did the macaques, they felt more positively about the langurs, who did not raid their crops as often as the rhesus. The attitudes expressed by the farmers were shaped by face-to-face encounters, not by the cultural construct of the sacred monkey.<sup>24</sup>

The violent interspecies spectacles that continue to echo into mass media may be true-to-life, but they also miss out on how interspecies relationships can unfold across social and ecological situations. In fact, it is not abnormal for there to be violence between the species, but “monkey menace” narratives gloss over the actual diversity of human-monkey encounters and the range of techniques that the two species have for interacting with one another. Narratives of competition, violence, and irrational affection proliferate because they identify a potential threat to the modernity of the Indian polity, and confirm the need for intervention by a rationally-guided, scientifically-minded state.

The social scholar of science Bruno Latour has offered another definition of

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23 John Hartigan, *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1999).

24 Pirta, Gadgil, and Kharshikar, “Management of the Rhesus Monkey *Macaca Mulatta* and Hanuman Langur *Presbytis Entellus* in Himachal Pradesh, India”; A. Chauhan and R.S. Pirta, “Agonistic Interactions Between Humans and Two Species of Monkeys (Rhesus Monkey *Macaca Mulatta* and Hanuman Langur *Semnopithecus Entellus*) in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh,” *Journal of Psychology* 1, no. 1 (2010): 9-14.



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modernity that is helpful for understanding how the process of using monkeys as figures for defining modernity might unfold. Per Latour, moderns are persons who produce knowledge through practices of “purification” and “translation,”<sup>25</sup> which is to say that moderns are people who first make order out of the world and then read that order for signs. Monkey menace narratives and much of the rhetoric around the management of urban macaques call for the imposition of a definite separation between human and natural orders. By documenting the failures of this allegorical barrier, journalists and the media divined the weaknesses of the Indian state and Indian modernity itself. I interpret the practices of monkey management – e.g., in Delhi, where they are captured and translocated into the discursive and material jungles outside the city – as a way of marking out a baseline of order that is assumed to be implicit in a functioning modern society, checking the extant situation against that model for errors and paradoxes, and finally progressively improving either the categories or the material situation itself. Therefore, while the monkeys of the monkey menace narratives reveal weak points in an idealized Indian modernity, they are also made into a discursive and political resource, to be exploited as a source of legitimacy for governance.<sup>26</sup>

### Delhi and Shimla

The specific societies or ecologies which concern these essays are the metropolises of Delhi and Shimla. As the state capital and as a tourist destination, Shimla is the largest

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25 B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

26 Cf. Susan Buck-Morss's notion of a "wild zone," a scripted topography or politically produced outside to modernity, the taming of which legitimates the exercise of state power. S. Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). Also Cf. Farquhar and Zhang who describe China's political violence-filled past as a kind of wild zone. J. Farquhar and Q. Zhang, "Biopolitical Being: Pleasure, Sovereignty, and Self-Cultivation in China's Capital," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2005): 303-327.

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urban agglomeration in Himachal Pradesh, drawing in permanent and temporary residents from all over northern India and beyond. The estimated resident human population of the city itself was put at about 171,000 in 2011.<sup>27</sup> Hundreds of monkeys live around the town, many of them at Jakhoo Hill, where reputedly "good" macaques daily carry out an extortion racket. I present Jakhoo Hill and the temple to Hanuman at its summit as the example of what politics are like when monkeys occupy privileged positions of power.

The monkeys of Jakhoo Mandir in Shimla are known for putting humans into disadvantageous situations and then exerting what Rebecca Lewis has called "leverage."<sup>28</sup> The monkeys steal pilgrims' and tourists' glasses, scarves, shoes, or cell phones from them, and literally hold them for ransom by fleeing into a tree or other high spot just out of reach. There the thief will wait patiently with the item, only dropping it when a ransom of food is offered. While there is certainly a component of training insofar as the nearby prasad vendors (who know the monkeys better than any visitor) are often involved in effecting the exchange of food for goods, these relationships are more along the lines of a voluntary conspiracy than the anthropogenic disciplining usually invoked by the term, "training." Jakhoo is an important economic and symbolic presence in Shimla town, and so the relationships between monkeys and humans on the hill have significant echoes into the economic and cultural life of the city and surrounding district.

Delhi has its monkey temples, too, like Pracheen Hanuman Mandir, but the monkeys do not carry so much weight in Delhi as they do in Shimla. You can go days without seeing one, and the monkey temples have been partially converted into organs of the state-run

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27 "Urban Agglomerations/Cities Having Population 1 Lakh and Above," *Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011*, n.d., [www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data\\_files/India2/Table\\_3\\_PR\\_UA\\_Cities\\_1Lakh\\_and\\_Above.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data_files/India2/Table_3_PR_UA_Cities_1Lakh_and_Above.pdf).

28 R.J. Lewis, "Beyond Dominance: The Importance of Leverage," *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 77, no. 2 (2002): 149-164.

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monkey-feeding scheme meant to aid in managing the trouble-making simians. Delhi feels the burden of population in ways that Shimla does not, and its functionaries work hard to effect literally solid barriers between monkeys' jungles and humans' cities. Defined as the National Capital Territory, Delhi supports more than sixteen million human residents crammed into an area of about 1500 square kilometers. Defined as the National Capital Region, which would include Delhi's suburbs in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh states, the city's population swells to over 22 million. The number of monkeys in the mix is on the order of thousands, but this can never be certain – monkeys are not passive participants in state enterprises and they do not allow themselves to be counted easily.

I never visited the monkey sanctuary of Ashola that was established to afford a home to Delhi's errant monkeys. Nevertheless, conversations about it figure significantly in the debates in Delhi's courts about the fate of the city's monkeys, and in my interactions with Delhi's pro-monkey advocates. The idea that sustains Ashola is that monkeys do not belong in the city and should be removed for everyone's safety, including their own. But monkeys may not be harmed because of their connections with Hanuman and because of the support secular animal advocates offer them. Beholden to popular interest in monkeys, the government of Delhi cannot simply kill offensive monkeys, and may not put them to work in laboratories, as their ancestors were in the middle of the Twentieth Century. (More on this later.) And so, the monkeys must be moved elsewhere, beyond the city limits, and into the state-run, walled jungle of Ashola. But, of course, monkeys can climb walls: Sahim Salim, reporting for *The Indian Express* in 2007 wrote that residents of the area outside the wildlife sanctuary were being harassed by monkeys who "scale the mandatory 13-foot fiberglass wall around the sanctuary, and attack villagers."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, other forms of excess creep into the

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<sup>29</sup> Salim's choice of the word "mandatory" indicates the purely ritual function of the wall around the sanctuary – just something else for the monkeys to not give a damn about.

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state's and municipalities' efforts to control monkeys – for instance, there is the problem of feeding the sanctuary's 13,000 or more captives.<sup>30</sup>

Though farmers in Himachal Pradesh demand that government assert its dedication to the “common man” over “jungle animals,” and though these demands articulate a concern with modernity similar to the ones delineated in monkey menace narratives, the situation in HP's capital, Shimla, is different than that of Delhi. Governance on Jakhoo Hill in Shimla aspires to the purification of neither the monkey temple nor the city, for now. Interspecies power in Shimla is not a priori unidirectional; that is, it does not assume that human dominance is the order of the day. The extortive situation at Jakhoo is a hybrid articulation of power and affection that emerges from human politics, religious affections, and exchange conventions as well as from the native social structures and communicative capacities of monkeys. The ahimsik or nonviolent atmosphere of the temple grounds, which ideally protects all living things from violence, is not the substrate that makes the human-monkey economy on the hill possible, but itself emerges from the material relations that exist between real macaques and real people.<sup>31</sup> Rather, it is the economic and spiritual ties that the monkeys have to the landscape, history, and people of Shimla, and the monkeys' own conviviality that keeps things working. For the same reasons, wildlife governance in Himachal Pradesh is accountable to the monkeys' claims on the spaces they inhabit, even if those are also spaces inhabited by humans.

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Sahim Salim, “Relocated Simians Pose Problems for Residents of Bhatti Mines,” *ExpressIndia.com*, November 12, 2007; Shivam Vij, “Monkey Business,” *Motherland*, January 2012, <http://www.motherlandmagazine.com/prisons/monkey-business>.

<sup>30</sup> This number comes from Delhi state veterinarians – more on this in Chapter Six.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Marvin Harris's piece on cows and ahimsa. For Harris, ahimsa was secondary to the extant ecological relationships, and was not responsible for the production of those relations. M. Harris, “The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle,” *Current Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1966): 51-54, 55-66.

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Figure 9. Males walking the Mall in Shimla.



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Simply because modernity has been marked by humans' heightened impact on the world environment – simply because modernity is to some significant degree anthropogenic – does not mean that humans are necessarily the "dominant" species. Humans are numerous on this planet, but they are not always numerically preeminent, even in modern ecologies – at least not compared to the populations, biomass, or total carbon atoms tied up in the bodies of chickens, insects, bacteria, krill, et cetera. Nor are modern humans effectively dominant over other earthly life forms in the sense of political control or technical mastery. Like Australian meat ants,<sup>32</sup> humans do manage to exert effectively consistent control over some nonhuman populations and species in specific situations, but this notion of dominance as control or management fails to capture the variety of relationships that actually do entail between

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32 Andersen et al. present meat ants, *Iridomyrmex sanguineus*, as "dominant" rather than as a "keystone" species. In this case, the meat ants' keystone effect on colonies of other ant species is effected by actively intercepting those colonies' foragers – which is to say that the meat ants compete with other ants by actively oppressing them! A.N. Andersen and A.D. Patel, "Meat Ants as Dominant Members of Australian Ant Communities: An Experimental Test of Their Influence on the Foraging Success and Forager Abundance of Other Species," *Oecologia* 98, no. 1 (1994): 15-24.

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humans and their compatriots on planet Earth.

Simply, there is no purely human world, no world where the desires, ways, and means of humans are the only thing that matters. Not even human bodies are purely human, for they cannot function without support from the hordes of bacteria, fungus, and other critters who dwell within – so we can just forget about sterilized visions of modernity utterly separated from the natural world! Modernity, like race and species, fails to mark a discrete kind of society in the world, which is to say that, at the least, modernity is not monolithic. There are varieties of modernity, local to the (material and cultural) situations that produce them.

If human domination is not the de facto starting point of our description of human-monkey relations, then how are we to come to account for the complexity and depth of the relationships that occur between the species? The following sections discuss some of the approaches primatologists, ecologists, and scholars of science and society have taken towards theorizing multispecies – especially human-monkey – sociality.

### **Eating Together: Weed Macaques, Commensalism**

One way to approach human-macaque relationships is through the ecological and evolutionary story told by Alison Richard et al. about “weed” macaques. “Weeds” are monkeys who specialize in making their livings in the margins around human camps. Weeds are characterized by their situation vis-à-vis the other organisms around them, and not by their evolutionary lineage. The weed macaques, in fact, are a polyphyletic group, meaning that their anthropophilic tendencies are probably not inherited from a common weedy ancestor, but are rather convergent after the evolutionary fact of living on the boundaries of

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human agriculture; *post festum*, so to speak.<sup>33</sup> For the weed macaques, the originary feast was provided by early South Asian agriculturalists. Following Ardith Eudey, Alison Richard et al. hypothesized that the proliferation of rhesus macaques' immediate ancestors occurred concomitantly with the appearance of savannah mosaic type environments as the glaciers retreated from Gangetic Plains of India 18,000 years ago. The change in the landscape would have favored flora that preferred forest edges and broken environments.<sup>34,35</sup> The researchers suggest that the spread of human agriculture in India over the past 10,000 years would have also promoted these marginal plant varieties, elevating some of them to the roles of cultivar and crop. According to Richard et al., it is these marginal, broken environments which produce the plants that rhesus prefer to feed on. And so macaques like the rhesus, who could tolerate close proximity to human-disturbed environments and flourish on the bounty of food provided agriculturalists, would have likely enjoyed an advantage that other macaque groups, better suited to the forested Ice Age ecology that preceded this situation, could not.<sup>36</sup>

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- 33 George Gaylord Simpson described the phenomenon of "convergence": "The independent rise of the same complex type of structure in animals of widely different relationships." E.g., dolphins, sharks, and ichthyosaurs are examples of only very distantly related oceanic animals – a mammal, a cartilaginous fish, and a reptile – whose body designs have "converged" evolutionarily due to their exposure to similar selective pressures. George Gaylord Simpson, "The 'Plagiaulacoid' Type of Mammalian Dentition: A Study of Convergence," *Journal of Mammalogy* 14, no. 2 (May 1933): 97.
- 34 A.A. Eudey, "Pleistocene Glacial Phenomena and the Evolution of Asian Macaques," in *The Macaques: Studies in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution*, ed. D.G. Lindburg (New York, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Dallas, San Francisco, London, Toronto, Melbourne: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1980), 52-83.
- 35 This is something that humans and rhesus macaques have in common: The evolution of bipedality in human ancestors since the human-chimp common ancestor lived around five million or so years ago occurred in the context of the savannah mosaic environment of the Great Rift Valley in eastern Africa. The shift from a forested African landscape (populated by knuckle-walking arboreal apes) to a broken landscape of grasslands, woodlands, and wetlands (populated by bipedal hominin apes and others) was also brought about by climatic and geographic shifts comparable in scale to the recession of the glaciers from South Asia. Cf. L.F. Laporte and A.L. Zihlman, "Plates, Climate and Hominoid Evolution," *South African Journal of Science* 79 (1983): 96–110.
- 36 Richard, Goldstein, and Dewar, "Weed Macaques: The Evolutionary Implications of Macaque Feeding Ecology."

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Figure 10. This young male from Jakhoo Hill may think that he's getting away with something, but the channa on the table has been spread by the proprietor of the canteen at which this photograph was taken, just for his consumption and our entertainment. Mister Verma often would draw guests to his canteen by showing them how to feed monkeys. Though the interests of the actors engaged in eating together may be disparate, the act of bringing an other to the table can set the stage for the unfolding of material-semiotic relations in evolutionary, economic, social, and sacred worlds.

Rhesus macaques are human commensals, meaning that they eat from the same resource pools that humans do. Raymond and Lorna Coppinger have suggested that a similar instance of commensalism might have been the first steps in the ongoing relationship between humans and dogs. Their narrative has much in common with Richard's weed macaque hypothesis. The Coppingers write that human-tolerant wolves feeding on the leftovers and refuse at the "dumps" of prehistoric humans would have garnered a benefit that wolves who were less nerved could not have enjoyed. Noting that the ability of silver foxes to tolerate human proximity emerges from heritable factors as well as from the individual animal's habituation to human presence,<sup>37</sup> they hypothesized that the wolves who eventually

<sup>37</sup> D.K. Belyaev, "Destabilizing Selection as a Factor in Domestication," *The Journal of*



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gave rise to the dogs we know today were in fact self-domesticating. "It is in . . . one trait, flight distance" – the ability to tolerate humans, measured in meters<sup>38</sup> – "that the hypothesis for the self-domestication of dogs by natural selection rests. The wild wolf, *Canis lupus*, began to separate into populations that could make a living at the dumps and those that couldn't."<sup>39</sup> Wolves who could tolerate proximity to humans eventually underwent a positive selection process, producing more offspring and adapting behaviorally and anatomically to their new human context. They flourished in other ways as well, engendering a broad range of social, affectionate relationships with their human compatriots.<sup>40</sup>

### **Participation: Domestication and Synergy**

In his 2007 essay, "Monkey and Human Interconnections: The Wild, the Captive, and the In-between", Agustín Fuentes drew upon the Coppingers and others in an attempt to theorize human-monkey relations at Hindu temples as a kind of domestication. Fuentes opposed the "relatively traditional domesticatory practices" involved in training a monkey as a dancer or a coconut picker – which were "practical (functional or productive in an economic sense) process[es] intentionally directed by humans to produce the desired outcome" – to the

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*Heredity* 70 (1979): 301-308; L.N. Trut, "Early Canid Domestication: The Farm-Fox Experiment," *American Scientist* 87 (1999): 160-169; J. Lindberg et al., "Selection for Tameness Has Changed Brain Gene Expression in Silver Foxes," *Current Biology* 15, no. 22 (2005): R915-R916.

38 Flight distance is the distance at which an animal will flee from a human. One implication of Belyaev and Trut's work is that flight distance has bases in inherited behaviors. The term is taken from Margaret Altmann, who derived the concept from a 1938 article by the Swiss zoologist Heini Hediger. M. Altmann, "The Flight Distance in Free-Ranging Big Game," *Journal of Wildlife Manage* 22, no. 2 (1958): 207-209.

39 R. Coppinger and L. Coppinger, *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 61.

40 It's worth remembering that there's more to evolutionary success, flourishing, than numbers of offspring produced. R.C. Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology: The Doctrine of DNA* (New York: HarperPerennial (HarperCollins), 1992).

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cultural inclusion and the architectural accommodation that humans effect for monkeys in monkey temple settings.<sup>41</sup> He stressed the role that "human *place*" (his italics) has in facilitating monkeys' "potential participation in a human initiated domesticatory practice."<sup>42</sup> Human place is more than just the built environment, it also "involves cultural constructs and cultural behavior as well as a degree of manipulation of environmental and ecological parameters."<sup>43</sup> Fuentes's emphasis on "place" disrupted the notion that domestication is primarily carried out by the willful action of humans, situating it as an outcome tied to the broader environment that humans help to make available to some of their nonhuman neighbors.<sup>44</sup> That is to say that "human place" describes both the anthropogenic environment and the "niche" or ecological "profession" of the rhesus macaques.<sup>45</sup>

An earlier, but sympathetic and differently suggestive, account of macaque domestication was described by cultural anthropologist Leslie Sponsel et al. in their 2002 study of long-tailed and pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, a weed species, and

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41 A. Fuentes, "Monkey and Human Interconnections: The Wild, the Captive, and the In-between," in *Where the Wild Things Are Now: Domestication Reconsidered*, ed. R. Cassidy and M. Mullin (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 139.

42 Ibid., 133-134.

43 Ibid., 133.

44 The notion of unconscious selection by humans or human-initiated changes in the environment was not novel to Fuentes. An essay by archaeologist Helen Leach in the same volume as Fuentes's 2007 piece categorizes variations upon the theme of unconscious selection, which could result in stable long-term relationships between humans and other species. H. Leach, "Selection and the Unforeseen Consequences of Domestication," in *Where the Wild Things Are Now*, ed. R. Cassidy and M. Mullin (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 71-100.

45 I take the idea that a niche is like an organisms' profession in the environment from the ecologist Paul Colinvaux, but I follow more closely the notion of niche described by the paleontologist and evolutionary theorist George Gaylord Simpson, who pointed out that niches are "almost entirely behavioral", meaning that an organisms' way of life is not just a matter of its anatomy, but of the possibilities for action opened up by the confluence of its anatomy and its environment. Paul Colinvaux, *Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare: An Ecologist's Perspective*, Princeton Science Library (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); G.G. Simpson, "Behavior and Evolution," in *Behavior and Evolution*, ed. G.G. Simpson and A. Roe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1958), 507-535.

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*Macaca nemestrina*, a non-weed species) trained to pick coconuts on plantations in Thailand. As southern Thailand's coconut growing industry shifted in the last part of the Twentieth Century from subsistence cultivation to the plantation-style cultivation of coconuts, the relationships between agricultural workers and macaques also shifted from one where humans hunted crop-raiding macaques as pests to one where humans trained and employed the nimble monkeys to climb up trees and retrieve the coconuts and fruit. The shift was prompted by the “synergy” of biological, economic, and cultural conditions. The biological set includes the physical ease with which macaques climbed trees as well as their predilection for living near humans; it also includes the energetic expenditure required by farmers to hunt monkeys, an expenditure that cannot be recouped by eating the monkeys because feeding on the human-like primates is considered distasteful conduct. The economic conditions that favored this shift include the stress on plantation-style cultivation of coconuts as a cash crop as well as the fact that a monkey can do the job of coconut picking – a task formerly reserved for small boys – at a fraction of the price required by humans. Cultural facilitators include religiously inspired beliefs common to local Buddhists and Muslims that monkeys have souls and should not be eaten, preexistent small-scale use of macaques as coconut pickers, the willingness of individuals of both species to cooperate, and the precedent for the relatively humane treatment of monkeys by Thais.<sup>46</sup>

Sponsel suggested that this apparent case of domestication was an “adaptive shift” in the Thai macaques' niches, brought about by the cohesion of multiple mutualities in human

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46 L.E. Sponsel, N. Ruttanadukul, and P. Natadecha-Sponsel, “Monkey Business? The Conservation Implications of Macaque Ethnoprimatology in Southern Thailand,” in *Primates Face to Face: The Conservation Implications of Human-Nonhuman Primate Interconnections*, ed. A. Fuentes and L.D. Wolfe, Cambridge Studies in Biological and Evolutionary Anthropology (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 288-309.

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and macaque lifestyles.<sup>47</sup> Like Coppinger's proto-dogs, the Thai monkeys were to some degree self-domesticating. Like Fuentes' temple monkeys, the relationships that they enjoyed with humans were much more complex than humans' decisions to bring them into society.

### **Construction: Coconstructed Niche, Labor**

Fuentes's 2010 essay, "Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkeys, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimatology", corrects for the awkwardness of the term domestication, which connotes the *domos*, the place of human dominion. Here he shifts the emphasis from "human place" to the "coconstructed niche."<sup>48</sup> Rather than situating the monkeys as organisms shifting into the space of human control, Fuentes here has the monkeys as competent co-manipulators of their environment alongside humans. Fuentes' "coconstructed niche" builds off of what some ecologists and evolutionary scientists have called "niche construction"<sup>49</sup> and other have called "ecosystems engineering".<sup>50</sup> They both refer to behaviors that produce effects in the environment to the extent that the acting organisms can potentially modulate the selective pressures that shape their own evolution. Both terms would include the goal-oriented work of humans, whom we know to coordinate their energies actively towards material goals through social exercises like politics and technology. But they

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47 Colinvaux, *Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare: An Ecologist's Perspective*.

48 A. Fuentes, "Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkey, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimatology," *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2010): 600-624.

49 K.N. Laland and M.J. O'Brien, "Niche Construction Theory and Archaeology," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* no. online article (2010), <http://www.springerlink.com/content/kh1n851370862k71/fulltext.pdf>; J. Odling-Smee, K.N. Laland, and M.W. Feldman, *Niche Construction: The Neglected Process in Evolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Fuentes, "Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkey, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimatology."

50 C.G. Jones, J.H. Lawton, and M. Shachak, "Organisms as Ecosystem Engineers," *Oikos* no. 69 (1994): 373-386; C.G. Jones, J.H. Lawton, and M. Shachak, "Positive and Negative Effects of Organisms as Physical Ecosystem Engineers," *Ecology* 78, no. 7 (1997): 1946-1957.

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would also include the unintended effects of organisms upon their host environment. Fuentes's notion of niche coconstruction describes a collaborative effort of sorts – a niche that is modulated by the productive activity of multiple species. He reminds us that the monkeys' niche is not exhausted by ecological or adaptive perspectives, but that “cultural elements are also at play in building and reshaping the local niches of the humans and macaques.”<sup>51</sup>

“Human place” was the domos materialized and refracted in the human-altered environment. It was not a matter of humans exerting their agency over other organisms on the model of dominance. “Coconstructed niche” represented a further innovation in niche theories that not only disrupted the primacy of conscious human agency, but also situated the macaques as participants in the ongoing creation of a niche, a lifestyle in the environment, something which would also shape them. The construction or coconstruction of niches in this way bears a resemblance to the circuitous nature of labor and the subject described by Karl Marx:

“Labor is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature’s production in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature.”<sup>52</sup>

What differentiated the human laborer from the animal for Marx – the difference between the best of bees and the most talentless architect – was the human's ability to plan

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51 Fuentes, “Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkey, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimateology.”

52 K. Marx, “Capital I,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R.C. Tucker, vol. Second (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 344.

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ahead of time what he might be building.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the material relevance of nonhumans' input into the common environment – and the ramifications of this input for history and agency – is demonstrated not only in niche theory, but also in the work of post-Marxist historians like Timothy Mitchell. In his essay “Can the Mosquito Speak?” Mitchell discusses how mosquitoes conspired with colonial mismanagement and warfare to create a malaria epidemic in Egypt in WWII era Egypt. Even if the mosquitoes did not plot to rain disease upon a vulnerable Egyptian populace, their contribution to the conditions of both their own future and the future world of their human prey and exterminators were considerable.<sup>54</sup> In the context of their association with human beings – in the synergy of economic, ecological, behavioral, anatomical, and semiotic factors – the monkeys are, like the mosquitoes, made capable of contributing to the conditions of existence which they and their commensal allies the humans share.<sup>55</sup> In this sense, we might think of macaques' activities as something along the lines of the world-building labor theorized by Marx.

### **Troops: Multiple, Differently Unfolding Worlds**

If monkeys build a world, then it is not a matter of them laying brick and plowing

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53 K. Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R.C. Tucker, vol. Second (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 66-125.

54 T. Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002).

55 Cf. the notion of “rendering capable” described by Vinciane Despret. Despret describes a form of multispecies agency where actors of different types do not begin with certain a priori capacities, but instead become capable of action in situated networks of agents and technologies. Her example is Alex the African gray parrot's celebrated talent for speech, which was a capability that he came by only in the context of his relationship with his teacher, Irene Pepperberg. Despret emphasizes the differences between situations in which animals' agencies are made possible, not the differences between species. Vinciane Despret, “The Becomings of Subjectivity in Animal Worlds,” *Subjectivity* 23 (2008): 123-139.

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fields. Not that they couldn't be taught, but monkeys do not build much of anything in the way of edifices, or even nests. Though monkeys will take shelter in abandoned buildings, under eaves, and among ruins if available, most monkeys appear to sleep at night in a furry crowd on a sturdy branch or a high wall. One's troopmates are one's only shelter and comfort. Who needs a domos when you have a troop?

"Troop" is the word of primatologists and wildlife officials. It refers to a stable social group of monkeys. It doesn't entirely lose its military connotation when applied to macaques, for they have rank and hierarchy, and they sometimes wield organized violence. In this sense, the word's meaning is not too far from that of the Hindi word, *sena*, "army," which is also commonly used to describe monkeys. But, *troop's* etymology contains many connotations besides that of organized violent power. *Troop's* former avatars include "thorp" or "village" from a likely Germanic lineage, which suggests a "dwelling" or a "flock," as of sheep. A less likely Greek etymology suggests that a troop is related to "tropos" or "expression," or possibly a "style of doing things."<sup>56</sup> Either of these roots would be appropriate to describe the society of the rhesus macaques I met. The troop is the monkey's social context – the village or flock – but it also denotes a multiplicity of potential actors and conglomerates of actors, each of whom might be thought of as given to their own native social situation, their own world.<sup>57</sup>

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56 The Hindi word *sena*, "army," can be applied to monkeys and retains the militaristic connotation of "troop", but also refers to the "monkey army" of the Ramayana. If we follow the etymology of *troop*, we can get back to a different sort of "dwelling". The *Online Etymological Dictionary* says of *troop*: "1540s, "body of soldiers," from M.Fr. troupe, from O.Fr. trope "band of people, company, troop" (13c.), probably from Frank. \*thorp "assembly, gathering of people" (cf. O.E. ðorp, O.N. thorp "village," see thorp). OED derives the French word from L. troppus "flock," which is of unknown origin but may be from the Germanic source."" Following the link to the Old English *thorp* we get: "O.E. ðorp "village, hamlet, farm, estate," reinforced by O.N. ðorp, both from P.Gmc. \*thurpa- (cf. O.Fris. thorp, Fris. terp, M.Du., Du. dorp, Ger. dorf "village," Goth. þaurp "estate, land, field"), probably from PIE base \*treb- "dwelling." Preserved in place names ending in -thorp, -thrup." D. Harper, "Online Etymology Dictionary," 2010, <http://www.etymonline.com>.

57 In this sense, the troop might be thought of as a pack, as the philosophers Deleuze and

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The differential quality of human and monkey worlds, even ones that occupy the same material space, can be observed in how cities unfold for macaques. The vertical surfaces of the environment that humans build for themselves extends into higher reaches than what most humans are capable of easily accessing, and so high rises and skyscrapers become spaces of refuge and play for rhesus. (And for other arboreal and aerial animals as well, like striped squirrels, pigeons, parrots, mongooses, blackbirds, kites, langurs, and cats.) Specific locomotor and foraging techniques are required to get by in these landscapes. During my time in Delhi, I often attempted to follow the monkeys of the Hanuman Road neighborhood behind the Regal Cinema Building in Connaught Place, but never could for very long. They crossed private yards, climbed or leaped over walls and fences, mounted the rooftops, and dodged traffic. I was privy to only some of their movements as they appeared and disappeared.

The monkeys are capable of exploiting the overlaps between worlds. At Jakhoo Hill in Shimla macaques have re-purposed both the temple's architectural structures by incorporating a narrow staircase into their predatory foraging tactics, and its religious atmosphere by exploiting the affection and compassion of tourists and Hanuman bhakts. Macaques' attunement to facial expression and the postures of bodies, and their own social conventions together allow them a measure of competence in many of the fundamental mechanical and social tasks built into the environment by humans. Opening refrigerators and working faucets are straightforward examples of the kinds of mechanical tasks that a monkey might discover in its world courtesy of humans. Tugging on a human's clothes – both a person's literal clothes, and the extra layer of “cultural clothing” imagined by the cognitive

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Guattari wrote about it in *A Thousand Plateaus*: as the heterogeneity of the multitude inflicting itself upon the modern self, fracturing it. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).



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researcher Dario Maestriperi to be the difference between humans and rhesus macaques<sup>58</sup> – and looking directly into that person's face is a means of foraging, and a social task that operates in different ways, depending on the monkey's effective domination of the human subject (bullying them), or the monkeys' affective appeal to the human subject (being cute or sacred).

What coincidences there are between human and monkey worlds shouldn't be too surprising because, in the great array of living diversity from proto- and archaea-bacteria, to plants, fungus, and animals, rhesus macaques and humans are practically the same thing. Not to overstate things! – humans and rhesus macaques draw upon distinct repertoires of facial expressions and body language, but there are overlaps as well, which are partially explained by a shared evolutionary history,<sup>59</sup> and partially explained by the species' own adaptations to life alongside others.<sup>60</sup> This may have been part of what Agustín Fuentes was getting at when he wrote:

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58 As part of his argument that humans and rhesus macaques conserve an ancestral genetic orientation towards nepotistic-despotic societies, Maestriperi claims that not only are monkeys without the differential, local traditions called culture, but that they are basically the same all around the world and across social situations. This is patently inaccurate – the monkeys on Jakhoo Hill and in the monkey forests of Bali have mastered skills that are unknown to other urban macaques, let alone to monkeys living away from humans. Cf. D. Maestriperi, *Macachiavellian Intelligence: How Rhesus Macaques and Humans Have Conquered the World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

59 Cf. C. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, vol. 3rd edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

60 I.e., rhesus macaques and dogs out-perform chimpanzees on following human directional cues like gazes and pointing. Dogs' and rhesus macaques' capacities to do so are not the results of their evolutionary closeness with humans, but rather of their convergent adaptations to human commensality. M. Tomasello, B. Hare, and T. Fogleman, "The Ontogeny of Gaze Following in Chimpanzees, Pan Troglodytes, and Rhesus Macaques, *Macaca Mulatta*," *Animal Behaviour* 61, no. 2 (2001): 335–343; B. Hare and M. Tomasello, "Domestic Dogs (*Canis Familiaris*) Use Human and Conspecific Social Cues to Locate Hidden Food," *Journal of Comparative Psychology* 113, no. 2 (1999): 173–177.

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I have no doubt that the anthropoid primates I have worked with see me as something quite different than a seagull or a cat and are fully cognizant of my gaze upon them and our interactions. Our shared "nakedness" (what connects our mutual gaze/interconnectivity, to paraphrase Derrida 2008) is that of mutual physiologies, ecologies, social-experiential contexts, leading in some cases to shared niches.<sup>61</sup>

The Derridean "nakedness" that Fuentes evokes is a state of exposure to one another's worlds. Monkey and human worlds are exposed to one another: They are mutually partially legible, partially connected, and potentially engaged – which is always also to say that human and monkey worlds are vulnerable to one another's effects.

### **Multispecies Worlds**

Derrida wrote about his nakedness in "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)". One morning in the bathroom, he passed, undressed, through the gaze of his pet cat, and caught himself feeling shame at the exposure. Later he made this shame into one of the key moments in his deconstructive critique of the concept of "the animal," which he described as a kind of violence against real animals.<sup>62</sup> Though she acknowledges the power of this insight, Donna Haraway, in her book *When Species Meet*, expresses dissatisfaction with Derrida's analysis of his nakedness before his cat. She allows that Derrida probably knew how to interact with his cat shamelessly, probably had the skills to "greet this cat," who was familiar to him, but laments that the "embodied mindful encounter" that probably unfolded between Derrida and his cat on most mornings did not make it into his public scholarship.<sup>63</sup>

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61 Fuentes, "Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkey, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimateology," 618.

62 J. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. M.-L. Mallet, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 47-48.

63 D. Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 21-23.

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Rather than engaging with the material reality of his encounter with the cat, rather than engaging with the etiquette and power relations that unfolded between he and his pet (or friend or companion), Derrida turned away from the subject of apparent vulnerability to the cat's gaze, and set his attention squarely on philosophy.

Haraway wrote, "Shame is not an adequate response to our inheritance of multispecies histories, even at their most brutal."<sup>64</sup> Shame is an embarrassment in the flesh, a stopping-up of trust, and a step away from vulnerability. Shame guards against our worst embarrassments and defends our psyches from the weight of our failures, but it also disallows lovers to love. Shame is an expressive force like laughter, which, as Mary Douglas wrote, is communication about the social system, specifically a form of communication that allows or disallows certain forms of discourse.<sup>65</sup>

Wherever human and nonhuman worlds overlap – in that interconnected space of the anthropoid gaze, or in humans' and monkeys' shared interests in food and dominance – is also a point at which the two species become vulnerable to one another. Just as between speaking humans the act of learning a new language opens one up to new friendships and new insults alike, the points at which humans and monkeys build and inhabit a space of mutual connection are also the points at which they are likely to inflict violence or distress upon one another. This is the situation in Delhi, where the monkeys rummage through garbage for food, steal dinners, contribute to the spread of filth, and ruin rooves as they scamper through the city. There are also points at which the two species have worked out

64 D. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, ed. C. Wolfe (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 23.

65 In the same way, shame is a  $\mu$ -function (per Gregory Bateson) or a meta-social cue that sets the stage for the closure of discourse. M. Douglas, "Do Dogs Laugh?," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*, vol. 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 165-169; G. Bateson, "Problems in Cetacean and Other Mammalian Communication," in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 364-378.

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mutually beneficial relationships – at Jakhoo, I must say the masses of humans, monkeys, and gods have got a good thing going. Together, they've established – not a home necessarily and not strictly an ecology or economy, but – a somewhat stable social situation in which many players appear to be flourishing, and with subdued or minimal violence.

Yet, there remains political demands for government intervention in human-monkey relations. Michel Foucault wrote of governmentality as power exercised over “the imbrication of men and things” in a given territory;<sup>66</sup> fair enough, polities within Delhi and Shimla exert pressure for government to manage the imbrication of humans and monkeys. But in both locales there are also strong tempering forces that force government to forgo management measures that might offend the sensibilities of religious groups or animal welfare interests. In any case, the concern of the managers is to create a workable situation. Yet what works is not beholden to grand designs and big categories such as “human” and “monkey,” or “jungle” and “man.”

In situations like Jakhoo, the question may be, as the former Chief Wildlife Warden of Himachal Pradesh suggested, about preserving the “present situation,” and conserving what already works. In Delhi, the mega-city that is margins all the way down,<sup>67</sup> wildlife authorities have attempted to translocate the zone of human-monkey interconnection itself, away from the streets and temples of the city and into government-managed channels and spaces. Given the vicissitudes of political will and the judicial manner in which responsibility for monkey management was allotted in Delhi, wildlife managers and animal advocates have conceded to managing monkeys by removing them, and the very points of human-monkey

66 M. Foucault, “Governmentality,” in *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. P. Rabinow and N. Rose, The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984 (New York: The New Press, 2003), 229-245.

67 Cf. Lyotard's megalopolis, the city and domos with no outside, where distinctions of margin and center are materially moot. Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Domus and the Megalopolis,” in *The Inhuman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 191-204.

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food exchanges, away from the city. And so, this too is a "working" relationship, even if the parameters in which the Delhi management strategy can be said to have "worked" are entirely human-political.

To chart the resonances between species and scales and to search out what works and what doesn't is to "compose" – not to "critique." Bruno Latour wrote about this in his "An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto": An orientation towards "compositionism" would entail the maintenance of the actual heterogeneity and uncertainty that the composers encounter in the world. This is to say that rather than self-appointing themselves with de facto ethical precedence, composers would turn instead to the specific actors encountered in real-life political and ecological situations – the identification of the elements of each situation would be specific to the relationships under analysis. That is, a compositionist investigation would seek out the inhabitants of *this* world or *that* world, but not *the* world. Latour writes that there is a demand for this kind of attention because "consequences overwhelm their causes, and this overflow has to be respected everywhere." Which is to say that even in the heart of modernity, there are bound to be multiplicities, things overlooked, and inconsistencies. These points of disjuncture are not only between analytic modes, but also between heterogeneous worlds of meaning and matter.<sup>68, 69</sup>

The monkeys bear this last part out. Monkeys and humans engage one another in hybrid political orders, orders which emerge from both species' social capacities and their material relations in the environment. Even the monkey menace narratives of Indian journalism demonstrate that contemporary humans and monkeys associate with one another in the halls of governance, in the inner sanctums of holy places, in laboratories, and in the

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68 B. Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'," *New Literary History* no. 41 (2010): 484.

69 If I tend to get carried away with some of my narratives, its because I have a hard time grasping the difference between story-analysis!

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marketplace. Humans and rhesus macaques cohabitate in the very centers of what we think of as human culture, society, and knowledge. That brings up at least two possibilities: that the macaques have undergone an adaptive shift from margin to center, or that what we think of as the centers of human society are actually margins of a different kind – margins around a multiplicity of human and nonhuman worlds that occur where the human-built world overlaps with others.<sup>70</sup>

What I am going to call a "world" here includes a wide range of human and macaque social organization and disorganization, understandings and misunderstandings, points of friction and slippage.<sup>71</sup> Looking at social and ecological relations as "worlds" shifts analysis away from dyadic relationships and towards the resonances that occur among the multitude of species, gods, bodies, behaviors. (The opposable terms organism-environment, subject-society, evolution-history, and nature-culture do not come into any greater resolve in this study, but rather dissolve into a multiplicity of forces and movements that constitute social realities.) As an analytic, a world includes much of what has been covered above in terms of niches, synergy, labor, and commensality. But what occurs on Jakhoo Hill and in Delhi plays out in not just the exchanges of food that occur between primates, but also in the semiotic continuities that can exist between creatures with such similar bodies, and in the human and

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70 Though the citation may appear out of place, I think that this is just what philosopher bell hooks is getting at in the section of her book *From Margin to Center* entitled "Revolutionary Parenting", in which she advocates for the a community model of child-rearing as a way to combat essentialist perspectives like racism and chauvinism. It also reminds me of "Bestiality" by Alphonso Lingis, who writes that we humans learn to recognize certain aspects of ourselves and our world in terms inherited from a multiplicity of sources including animals – we know of the courage of a lion, the cunning of a fox, and the loyalty of a dog. A. Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2000); bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

71 The notion of a "world" comes to me from no single author, but from the teaching and writing of many faculty members at the University of California – Santa Cruz, especially Susan Harding, Donna Haraway, and Anna Tsing.

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monkey (and human-monkey) political machinations that are fueled by ongoing coexistence between the species.

The world analytic is not meant to succeed or surpass any of the analytics described in the last section. Like Latour and others, Donna Haraway has written against progressive models of knowledge: in her manifesto, she turned to Marilyn Strathern's notion of "'partial connections,' which are about the counter-intuitive geometries and incongruous translations necessary to getting on together, where the god-tricks of self certainty and deathless communion are not an option."<sup>72</sup> The alter-histories of human-dog relationships Haraway offers in her 2002 *Companion Species Manifesto* are not meant to function as sweeping narratives or ciphers for human-dog relations everywhere, but are mostly localized stories that bind specific actors, components, or contingencies together. Building upon and diverging from an earlier proposition, the heterogeneous techno-organic subjectivity of the "cyborg,"<sup>73</sup> Haraway suggests that humans and dogs might be better considered as "companion species." Companion species are organisms whose evolutionary and historical pasts have been mingled, and who now make their way in "natureculture" worlds as ecological and social kin, if not quite as composites. While "companion species" are in some ways kin to "cyborgs," they are not successors. Rather than displace the "cyborg," the term "companion species" describes a different kind of organization of material and meaning, a different kind of world. Even if a world is not self-contained, it must be considered on its own terms. It and the method used to describe it remain open to overlap, expansion, and contraction.

World analysis is ultimately about how disparate but connected lives can "get on

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72 Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, 25.

73 D. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 149-181.

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together.” For Haraway, what matters is the material of life and death, questions of justice and quality of life, “who and what lives and dies, where, when and how?”<sup>74</sup> Latour echoes this with his question, “How can a livable and breathable 'home' be built for these errant masses?”<sup>75</sup>

The worlds that I am concerned with are the worlds of mortal and moral primates. I trace these worlds through the impacts of activity at points of human-monkey interface. This study is an analysis of the cross-species governance techniques used by state entities whose ostensible prerogative is to answer the demands of human citizens who insist on a division between the species. I emphasize exchange, food, etiquette or social mores, and power – but reducing the social and-or ecological complexes I describe down to variations upon these overarching themes is not the program. Rather, these relationships say something about the resilient regimes of practice and politesse that entail among primate individuals, polities, and ecologies. They speak to how social coherences persist despite government's efforts to accommodate the demands of an agitated citizenry for a separation between urban modernity and the jungle. Rather than seeing monkeys as willful disruptors of governance, we may also approach them as participants in society, denizens if not quite citizens,<sup>76</sup> whose transworld effects have implications for even the agency of government entities.

### Summary of Chapters

The remainder of this dissertation puts the analytics introduced in the previous

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74 D. Haraway, “Speculative Fabulations for Technoculture’s Generations: Taking Care of Unexpected Country,” *Australian Humanities Review* no. 50 (May 2011), <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-May-2011/haraway.html>.

75 Latour, “An Attempt at a ‘Compositionist Manifesto’,” 488.

76 Cf. the political-categorical proposals delineated by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka: citizenship for domestic animals, denizenship for those who dwell among us but do not play on our terms, and sovereignty for wild animals. Each category entails different ethical regimes. Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory on Animal Rights* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).



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section to work to describe a series of distinct world-situations in which humans and monkeys live. Though I refer back to the language of worlds, niches, zones of interconnection, and evolution throughout, I do not try to explain these worlds in those terms – these analytics are handholds and lenses for grasping or shedding light on the complexity of the situations discussed here.

Part II of the dissertation focuses on Delhi. In Chapter Three, "The Out-of-Placeness of Monkeys in Menace Narratives", the first world to get further attention is the discursive and literary world of the monkey menace itself, which is best read through journalistic and literary tales of menace, and not through the material relations on the ground, which tend to contradict it. In these stories, monkeys are produced as outsiders par excellence, who thwart all efforts at placement. Chapter Three deals with the meaningful consequences of this constant misplacement. In Chapter Four, "Dis/Affections for Monkeys and the Problem of Anthropomorphism", I focus on the anthropomorphic and theomorphic worlds of human affection for monkeys. Here I also draw on journalistic and other textual sources, but I interrupt these narratives alongside ethnographic stories and primatological sources to make the point that even in the context of constant misreadings of monkeys' motives and desires, monkeys are capable of participating in niche-construction and world-building.

Chapter Five, "Dislocating and Relocating Monkeys on Global Scales" turns toward the current and former trade in rhesus macaques – a world of global exchange – to trace the transnational demands for commoditized monkeys in Western biomedicine, and the repercussions in animal advocacy. Continuing demand for rhesus macaques in biomedical research around the world is stymied by a ban on their export from India, which supports more than half of the planet's rhesus. The struggles in India and abroad that saw the rhesus trade abolished in India also have repercussions for the monkeys' treatment by domestic

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government. Finally, in Chapter Six, "Capture and Sanctuary in Delhi", I follow the recent debates and management efforts around monkeys in Delhi. Like the world of commoditized rhesus described in the previous chapter, the sanctuary world does not center on a discrete space, but emerges from the movement of monkeys across borders. The difference here is that the borders that matter in Chapter Six are those between the modern and the premodern, the city and the wild, human and monkey, and bourgeoisie and working class.

In the last part, I describe the human-monkey worlds of Shimla. Himachal's strategy of monkey governance is distinguished from Delhi's not on account of a lack of violence or misreading – Shimlan human-monkey worlds are full of violence and miscommunication – but by a respect for the claims that actors situated in material and moral relations have to their relationships. This respect is not the product of pro-animal advocacy, but it is, like Delhi's appeal to a separation between humans and wildlife, the outcome of a drawn-out debate. I begin the task of surveying the multispecies worlds of Shimla in Chapter Seven, "Hill Histories", by looking to the past social relations which have left a sedimentation of romantic, sacred, and leisurely sentiment on the landscape. In Chapter Eight, "Etiquette and Exchange in the Monkey Kingdom", I describe the social life of the denizens of the monkey temple on Jakhoo Hill, with special attention to how the monkeys themselves extend their power relations to humans like tourists, pilgrims, and myself. In Chapter Nine, "Governing the Monkey Kingdom", I track the capture, sterilization, and release of monkeys in Shimla district through a the misadventures of a prominent monkey on Jakhoo Hill and the work of state Wildlife officers.

It could be said that, in terms of achieving the goal of making more livable worlds, Himachal's strategy of monkey governance has so far produced better results than Delhi's. In Delhi, very little can be said for sure, and in the face of this the city's monkey managers

## Chapter Two: Theorizing Multispecies Worlds

respond not to the specific entanglements of the actors in specific landscapes, but to the cultural constructs of a monkey menace, and to an ideal modernity that makes banishes monkeys to the jungle hinterlands. In Shimla, a sort of politically necessary respect for these entanglements is at least preserving already working situations. But the goal of these surveys is not to find one situation that is better than the others and to advocate for the expansion of that system, nor is it to develop a framework that will let us understand each of these worlds in a common rubric. Instead the idea here is to produce a textual guide to some of the home-worlds of the players who live and work across situations already, and to advocate for what Donna Haraway writes about as "becoming worldly" and Bruno Latour and Isabelle Stengers have written about as "diplomacy."<sup>77</sup> Not only is this an argument for the sort of patience and flexibility demonstrated by the monkeys and humans of Jakhoo and other places, but it is an argument for taking note of the worldly monkeys and other diplomatic primates who are already out there, and for recognizing how they contribute to the production and maintenance of zones of interconnection where the work of cross-world politics occurs.

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<sup>77</sup> More on this in the conclusion.

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Figure 11. Palika Kendra government building in New Delhi, from a rooftop in nearby Paharganj neighborhood on a smoggy day. House crows in foreground.

### ***Part II – Delhi and Its Environs***

The next four chapters do not describe discrete "worlds"; they focus on zones in which human and monkey worlds overlap to become human-monkey worlds. The four "zones of interconnection" I write about here are: the discursive space of modernity posited in monkey menace narratives; affectionate relations between monkeys and humans in India; global biomedicine; and, finally, the management of monkeys in Shimla and the political-legal debates that shaped management's constituent practices. Each of these overlapping worlds are informed by a multiplicity of actors, situations, and inheritances; each has consequences for how real monkeys and real people encounter one another; each contributes to the

## Part II – Delhi and Its Environs

sentiments that motivate contemporary management programs.

In the introduction, I identified monkey menace narratives as crucial political motivators for government exercises of power over monkeys. Monkey menace narratives tend to posit the moral qualities of human sentiment about monkeys as a binary: Premodern religiosity and irrational affection for monkeys allows rowdy animals too much political traction, and in turn foils the progressive improvement and purification of Indian cities into modern spaces in line with bourgeois desires. In Chapter Three I disrupt this narrative by detailing how politically complicated the question of monkeys' emplacement is, even in menace tales. Cast as unable to settle into the politicized partitions of space and place demarcated by human agencies, monkeys appear as both wills who resist settling into place, and as rhetorical resources for criticism and outcry. They are permanently out of place in menace tales; no matter where the monkeys end up, it seems that there is always someone ready to level an objection to their presence. Monkeys' out-of-placeness is prerequisite to their production as a wild zone and a threat to Indian modernity, but it also undercuts the notion that monkey space and human space can be sorted out through a one-sided exercise of anthropocentric power.

In Chapter Four and Chapter Five, I want to demonstrate the dispersed, networked character of the rationales, affects, and practices that inform contemporary politicking around monkey-human relations, and monkey management itself. The desires that motivate humans in their interactions with monkeys – religious, secular bourgeois, or otherwise – come from multiple directions, arrive through multiple channels, and defy the monoliths of inside/outside and city/jungle expressed in the modern fantasies of menace narratives.

In Chapter Four, I discuss how politically efficacious affection for monkeys arrives from adoration for Hanuman, but is also generated in encounters between Indians and

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monkeys who have taken up more or less legitimate professions in Indian society. In Chapter Four, I also want to make the point that, in spite of the implicit assumption of human dominance in menace narratives (and even in many pro-monkey discourses), the behavioral and ecological spaces of contact are indeed also monkey worlds. This is not to dismiss human dominance, which is reproduced anthropomorphically in many of these situations, but to recognize that these are also spaces which monkeys inhabit and construct. Though it takes certain kinds of human actors to bear monkeys' impacts into state political contexts, this is the natureculture of niche co-construction, and this is how monkeys contribute meaningfully to the shared worlds from which both menace narratives and pro-monkey advocacy emerge.

Chapter Five is a history of the monkeys' demographics in the Twentieth Century and their imbrication into transnational circuits of exchange. The most prominent legal standard for monkey protection is derived from the Wildlife Act of 1972, which did not extend significant protections to monkeys until 1980, after it had been established that decades of un-managed harvesting of the monkeys for use in foreign biomedical research had decimated Indian rhesus populations.

Chapter Six is about managed worlds and the actors and debates that bring them into existence. Here I focus on the politically favored technique of management in Delhi, translocation, and on the complications of using this strategy to handle the city's 13,000 or more monkeys. There is a monkey reservation set aside within the bounds of the Ashola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, and this space has become the focus of debates. Given the continued mobility of captured monkeys, and the state's reluctance to expand their intervention from straightforward removal and relocation to the inclusion of ecological and reproductive facets of monkey ecological life, it might be argued that the sanctuary solution is more politically expedient than materially efficacious. But in the act of regulating space and

## Part II – Delhi and Its Environs

food exchange, Delhi's monkey governance does produce *something*; the effects of management are differently productive in different worlds of class, status, authority, and expertise. For the monkey-catcher Nand Lal, it's a living. For the prominent animal welfare activists, Sonya Ghosh and Iqbal Malik, it's a way to improve the environment and the quality of life for two primate species. Even as their interests become intelligible to one another through the boundary object of a state apparatus ostensibly bent on drawing a line of control around human urbanity and monkey land<sup>78</sup>, these differently situated actors respond to the multifariousness of human-monkey relations as they encounter them in their respective worlds of bourgeois activism and economic banality.

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78 "Boundary objects": Cf. Chapter Two and S.L. Star and J.R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translation,' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," in *The Science Studies Reader*, ed. M. Biagioli (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 505-524.

Figure 12. Male rhesus watching us from a niche in the ruined Bundi Palace, Rajasthan.



### Chapter Three: The Out-of-Placeness of Monkeys in Menace Narratives

In Delhi, monkey management has been discussed mainly as a problem of correcting monkey's spatial distribution and rationally limiting the movement of food from humans to monkeys. In this chapter I highlight the former with a discussion of the discourses and practices of dis- and re-placement that monkey menace narratives and Delhi's style of monkey management have in common.

I open Chapter Three with the story of the killer of Laxmi Nagar, which I have composed from a series of fairly sensation news accounts around the slaying of a young child by a monkey. I follow this monkey's media career as a criminal initially and later as a faceless prisoner among a mass of government captives through a series of geographic relocations – from an upscale neighborhood in South Delhi to government holding facilities, and finally into the artificial wilderness of the future Kuno lion reserve in Madhya Pradesh. In all cases, there are human agents who argue that the monkeys are out of place, and that government has



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some responsibility to do something.

Journalist and novelist Ranjit Lal published a novel, *The Simians of South Block and the Yum-Yum Piglets*, in 2008 that parodies this misadventure in translocation. Comically harkening back to the jungle folk of Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli tales, Lal comically caricatures Delhi's monkeys as the ultimate incorrigible outsiders to both human and jungle society, and he uses them to poke fun at the political interests served by the translocation of monkeys. Here, monkeys are passed through the gauntlet of vigilante justice, government power, and the jungle that is sometimes cast as their natural habitat, and their significance shifts at every turn, but precisely and only because they are imagined as constitutionally incapable of joining any community but their own.

The list of epithets that are attached to monkeys in menace narratives are long, but the gist of most unsympathetic ascriptions might be captured by the terms "terrorist" and "invader." While these words do not reflect the material situation of Delhi's rhesus macaques, who have probably been living alongside humans for generations and generations, they do describe the lines of attack and points of vulnerability that are emphasized by menace narratives. The agency supposed in these moral, place-based ascriptions is anthropomorphic. Like the stories of Lal and Kipling, these narratives pin the incorrigibility, the inability to embrace society, on the monkey natures.

Finally, I turn to the mostly comic monkey stories of journalist Rahul Bedi, who published many monkey menace tales in international news outlets during the first decade of the 21st Century. Bedi's often humorous, often ethnographic monkey stories deal less with monkeys' willful resistance, which is presumed by the ascriptions of terrorists and invaders, and more with the incompetence of human actors to adequately grasp or control monkeys. While he does not focus on the failures of translocation, Bedi's monkeys are nevertheless out

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of place no matter where they end up. In this way, Bedi manages a critique of governance and civil society, but in reiterating the persistent failure of humans to grasp monkeys' natures he also places the fault squarely on the shoulders of human agents, who fail to rationally grasp monkeys' interests.

### **The Killer of Laxmi Nagar and the Simians of South Block**

On January 26th, 2004, a monkey in Delhi attacked and killed a child, Kajal Pandey. The two-month old's mother and grandmother had left her sleeping on a cot in the courtyard for only a few moments when it happened. Gora Devi, Kajal's grandmother, returned to the yard and noticed her grandchild's blanket moving. "She lifted it," *The Times of India* reported, "to find the monkey devouring the child's head." When Gora Devi, charged at the monkey, he fled and "smashed [the child's] head against the wall."<sup>79</sup> According to the article, Gora Devi had tried to scare the monkey away, "but the killer monkey attacked her instead and kept on biting the baby's head." Two days after the attack, residents were complaining that the culprit was still on the loose, and that he had bitten four more people, including a police officer. The Hindu's reporter commented that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had sent monkey catchers to Laxmi Nagar, but when pursued, "the creature would vanish along with the other monkeys of his gang."<sup>80</sup>

Though they are not generally dangerous, and though most monkeys would probably prefer not to risk conflict with humans, who are much larger, it would be disingenuous to try to argue that rhesus macaques don't have the capacity to seriously hurt or even kill a person.

Yet, it's hard to say why a monkey would have attacked a baby like Kajal. Most conflict

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79 Times News Network, "Monkey Kills Sleeping Baby," *The Times of India*, 2004.

80 Our Staff Reporter, "Infant Mauled to Death by Monkey," *The Hindu*, 2004.

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between humans and macaques is started either by human aggression, miscommunication, or competition over food, and being that rhesus macaques do not generally eat meat, an attack on a sleeping child would have occurred under unusual circumstances. (Though I won't rule out the possibility that the killer was a depraved monkey indeed.)

Nevertheless, the incident aggravated fears of an invasion of monkeys in Delhi. Over the past several years, rhesus had gained a reputation in the media as all around antagonistic characters: In the four years before Kajal's death, monkeys had been reported entering government offices, destroying documents and harassing government officials, causing traffic accidents, "terrorising" workers and tourists to the city. And, less than three years earlier, Eastern Delhi had been stalked by the kala bandar, a black monkey with supernatural powers; at least three people died in separate incidents, falling from their cool rooftop sleeping places as they fled the kala bandar's nocturnal predations.

On the 28th, *The Times of India* published a story, "Monkey Menace: Delhi Gov't Blames MCD, NDMC". An official with the Department of Environment, a ministry under the direction of the government of the state of Delhi, explained that in most states, responsibility for handling wildlife in cities fell upon the municipal governments. He pointed out the civil dimension of the issue, reminding *The Times'* reporter that monkeys are supported by the affections and donations of the city's residents. They are considered sacred by many Hindus, but some people just like to share food with monkeys, as they do with dogs and pigeons. "MCD cannot shirk responsibility," the environment official said. The director of the Delhi Municipal Corporation's Veterinary Department, Dr. S. Srivastava, on the other hand, was adamant: "Monkeys are wild animals. It is not a part of our job to capture them." Nevertheless, Srivastava allowed that the MCD did hire a contracted monkey-catcher. In addition to taking "over 20 calls a day," the poor man had been "often beaten" by Delhi

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residents coming to the defense of the monkeys. *The Times'* reporter summarized, "Even while Kajal's parents grieve the death of their child, civic agencies and the Delhi government are too busy passing the buck."<sup>81</sup>

"On Tuesday," *The Hindu's* correspondent wrote, "the monkey-catcher and local police personnel trailed the monkey and tried to nab him, but he vanished again." The monkey remained at large, reportedly visiting the Pandey residence daily, until a week later. A group of "enterprising young men" had observed the monkey as he returned to the scene of the crime, and on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, they stalked him, following him for several hours until he entered a home in Bank Colony. The self-appointed posse went into the home and trapped the monkey in a room. No mention is made of whether the residents were around or not. By this point in the narrative, the monkey's reputation had grown. In addition to mauling Kajal and possibly wounding four other people, *The Hindu* correspondent added that, "the monkey had attacked and injured a large number of people over the past few months." The hubbub at the home where the monkey had been confined was such that it attracted the attention of Delhi's Finance Minister, Dr. A.K. Walia, who lived across the street. He said: "That the monkey has finally been caught – and that too by the local residents and not by the monkey-catchers of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi – has come as a big relief." Shortly the monkey was overpowered with blankets and taken to the Pandey home where Kajal's mother identified him as the killer. But when the residents called the MCD for a monkey catcher with a cage, they received no response because the offices were closed for Eid. Eventually the captive was handed over to the police, who then passed him to officials from the New Delhi Zoo. Zoo Director B.S. Bonal said that he would be sent to the "Monkey Rescue Centre" at

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<sup>81</sup> Times News Network, "Monkey Menace: Delhi Govt Blames MCD, NDMC," *The Times of India*, 2004.

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Rajokri in South Delhi.<sup>82</sup>

Did they catch the real killer of Laxmi Nagar? Monkeys are individual beings who bear distinct visages, as recognizable to one another (and to those humans who know them) as our own faces are to us. Even though the killer was a monkey, a humanist notion of criminal culpability, which centers responsibility on the crux of an individual's rational control over their own behavior, is evident in this story: The alleged killer is taken before Kajal's mother to be positively identified.

But should we doubt that the monkey blamed for Kajal's death was the one captured? We might because, often enough, one monkey is as good as the next one – they are interchangeable, especially in the demographic logics of the state. The word *bandar* is both the singular and the plural for "monkey" in Hindi, like the English word *sheep*. Both words have connotations of substance and interchangeability, as with *people*. (As if *bandar*, *sheep*, and *people* were things you could spread around like butter or distribute and redistribute into bodies like clay.)<sup>83</sup> It's true enough that the individual monkey and the group can be easily confounded. Let the difficulties of counting monkeys attest to this. They move, they cling to each other, they appear from and vanish into thin air. Despite this, the reduction of individuals into the substance of groups and populations may be a necessary tactic for the tasks of governance and wildlife management, who deal expressly in large groups of animals, respectively pluralized and de-individualized into "voting blocks" and "populations."

It was at the point when he was handed over to the authorities that the killer of Laxmi Nagar's career as a criminal monkey reached its zenith and he sank back into the

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82 Our Staff Reporter, "Terror Monkey Behind Bars," *The Hindu*, 2004; Our Staff Reporter, "Killer Monkey Trapped at Long Last," *The Hindu*, 2004, <http://www.hindu.com/2004/02/03/stories/2004020308050100.htm>.

83 Both this substantial indistinction and this tendency to be distributed and redistributed between bodies are present in the singular-plural words, *flesh*, *money*, and *knowledge*.

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anonymous ranks of his fellows. His fate joined with those of around two hundred and fifty other monkeys held at the "rescue centre" Rajokri. The number was contrasted against the small dimensions of the holding cages. The Wildlife Trust of India reported that most of Rajokri's residents at the time had been captured from government offices on Raisina Hill in September of 2003, but others, like the monkey who mauled Kajal, had been captured sporadically over the past few years from government offices and upscale neighborhoods in other places. By the time the killer of Laxmi Nagar joined their ranks, the disposition of the monkeys caged at Rajokri had already been a matter of some debate in Delhi politics for some time. According to the WTI report, the monkey facilities at Rajokri amounted to one twelve by twenty by thirty foot enclosure which was overseen by Delhi's Wildlife Department. Animal rights activists had been exerting pressure for the release of the captives. Most of Rajokri's monkeys were in fact released in June of 2004 into Palpur-Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh state, and a sum of 25 lakh rupees (around 45,000 USD) was given to the Wildlife Department of MP to provide for the establishment of a "natural habitation" for the monkeys.<sup>84</sup>

The Wildlife Trust of India considered the release to be a serious misstep in maintaining the health of the sanctuary, which had been (and still is, someday) slated to host a population of Asiatic lions from their only remaining habitat, the Gir Forest of Gujarat state.<sup>85</sup> Among the preparations effected for the lions – who have still not been cleared by the government of Gujarat for translocation – was the eviction of more than eight thousand

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84 A. Pandey, "Delhi Battles Monkey Menace," *NDTV.com*, 2007, <http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/story.aspx?id=NEWEN20070030197&ch=10/22/2007%2010:37:00%20AM>.

85 Wildlife Trust of India, "Government Releases 'Diseased' City Macaques at Lion Relocation Site," 2004, <http://wildlifetrustofindia.org/news-archives/2004/06/21/government-releases-diseased-city-macaques-at-lion-relocation-site/>.

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adivasi farmers from the area in the Spring of 2003.<sup>86</sup> All of this, claims the WTI report, was jeopardized by the release of Rajokri's misfits into Kuno.

The "monkey menace" is a political issue, and Kajal's death was a political event. As the newspapers and Internet news sources broadcasted the violence of monkeys to India and the world, the demise of Kajal Pandey became a moment for critiquing Delhi's government specifically and Delhi's version of urban modernity in general. As the killer and other rowdy monkeys passed through a series of environments, new claims about their misplacement emerged in tow.

I lose track of the monkeys after Kuno, but in 2008, journalist and naturalist Ranjit Lal published his comedic novel, *The Simians of South Block and the Yummy Piglets*, which parodied the episode as a fable and filled in many of the missing details of what transpired. In Lal's story, a group of barbarous urban macaques led by Gutka the Gross are removed from their haunts among the elites of Delhi and translocated to the fictional Shikhargunj National Park,<sup>87</sup> where most of the story's action takes place. Once there, they swiftly commence to wreak all sorts of inconvenience upon the resident animals, eventually taking a group of boar piglets captive so as to bend the wills of the more peaceful jungle animals. Eventually the jungle animals, who like the Jungle Folk of Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli tales, ally themselves with a ranger's daughter and connive to have the monkeys re-translocated to the doorsteps of the Delhi netas who had seen to their ejection in the first place.<sup>88</sup>

The career, capture, and disastrous release of the killer of Laxmi Nagar speaks to the anxieties that manifest among the wealthy urbanites in Delhi around the problem of monkeys

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86 M. Dowie, "Eviction Slip," 2008, [http://www.guernicamag.com/features/556/post\\_1/](http://www.guernicamag.com/features/556/post_1/).

87 "Shikhargunj" would translate to something like, "Hunter's Trove."

88 The ranger's daughter, Aranya, is a sort of wild child, though not a boy adventurer like Mowgli. It is worth noting in any case, that Mowgli's first appearance was in the story *In the Rukh*, where he appeared as an adult working in the service of the forest department.

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and nature in the city in general. Lal's story, in turn, makes light of these sensibilities and the imaginary barriers that state authorities and monkey advocates mobilize to assuage these anxieties. Anthropomorphizing the jungle animals as a united community of the sort one might find in any Bollywood village drama, Lal, like his predecessor Kipling,<sup>89</sup> casts monkeys as eternal outsiders to civil society. Divested of their divine connotations – as terrorists or Gutka the Gross's barbarians – monkeys are liable to be cast as polluting presences, whether they are in the city or in the discursively pristine versions of nature located outside the city, like Kuno, from which all traces of human life had to be removed before charismatic wildlife could be installed.

In real life, there has not yet been an alliance capable of effecting a conclusion to the “monkey menace” as satisfying as the ending of *The Simians of South Block and the Yummy Piglets*, though such an ending is a mainstay of monkey menace journalism: The epilogue depicts a minister of some undisclosed department conversing with an industrialist. Having heard news of the urban monkeys' destructive behavior in Shikhargunj Park – but having not an inkling of the final stage of the jungle animals' plan – they begin to discuss their future plans for Shikhargunj, which has clearly been rendered unsuitable as a natural reserve or tourist attraction. “This nation needs shopping malls and multiplexes and golf courses everywhere, if it is to progress. Not wild jungles with wild animals running around,” Lal has the industrialist declare. “It's time we joined the modern developed world!” agrees the minister. Gutka the Gross and his thugs arrive on the scene just in time to snatch victory from the officials. “We take South Block!” he orders his troops, and they charge into the minister's wood-paneled chamber.<sup>90</sup> In this moment, Lal's story is entirely in step with other narratives of

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89 Especially in the story, *Kaa's Hunting*, where Mowgli is captured by the bandar-log.

90 Ranjit Lal, *The Simians of South Block and the Yummy Piglets* (New Delhi: India Ink, 2008), 145-147.



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the monkey menace that express doubts about government power over wildlife: If they can be cast as wild zones of unrelenting resistance to the power of state over its territory and the beings within it,<sup>91</sup> then monkeys can also be turned against the state.

The themes that Lal pursues in his novel are not indigenous to contemporary menace narratives, but draw upon older popular and literary sentiments about monkeys. There is an adage that, of all the animals, monkeys are the only ones who do not make their own homes. Lockwood Kipling mentioned this proverb in his 1904 monograph *Beast and Man in India*, but in New Delhi in 2008 I met a parliamentarian's son from Madhya Pradesh who offered a similar anecdote while trying to explain the mental differences between monkeys and humans. Rhesus macaques don't build nests, and they generally sleep in furry bunches up in trees or other high, sheltered places. In both New Delhi and Shimla, they have reputations for inhabiting otherwise unused human buildings, and when Lockwood's son, Rudyard, imagined the bandar-log carrying Mowgli off to the Cold Lairs of men, he was noting among other things a pervasive affinity between the monkey-folk and ruins.<sup>92</sup> In Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli stories, the bandar log are a non-society of nattering mimics who are incapable of integrating into the idealized society of the other "jungle folk"; this is because they are too raucous and self-involved to obey the law, learn from the past, or do anything other than get wrapped up in their own illusions. Even though their overt reason for kidnapping Mowgli in "Kaa's Hunting" is to become more man-like, Mowgli, like the ruins the monkeys inhabit, ends up serving only to confirm the bandar's self-importance. Lal's jungle folk are made to represent a different

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91 Cf. Foucault, "Governmentality."

92 . . . The monkeys called the place their city, and pretended to despise the Jungle People because they lived in the forest. And yet they never knew what the buildings were made for nor how to use them. . . . They explored all the passages and dark tunnels in the palace and the hundreds of little dark rooms, but they never remembered what they had seen and what they had not; and so drifted about in ones and twos or crowds telling each other that they were doing as men did. (From the story "Kaa's Hunting" in: R. Kipling, *The Adventures of Mowgli* (New Delhi: Puffin, 2009), 45–46.)

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idealized society; they are more like a Bollywood village: The main plot-line is about an imposition from the powers-that-be, and it is only through cooperation across lines of difference (in this case, species) that allows the interests of the animal and human characters to converge at the end of the story

### **Terrorists, Invaders**

A bomb goes off literally every few months in Delhi. In light of this, I initially had trouble understanding the application of the term "terrorist" to monkeys, even to killers like the individuals or groups who took the lives of Kajal Pandey and S.S. Bajwa. It's not that there aren't some obvious connections between terrorists and monkeys in journalistic taxonomies. Both are posited as invaders, outsiders to the city and to modernity. Terrorism is anti-modern,

Figure 13. A juvenile monkey patiently tearing some wires apart, New Delhi.



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which is to say that it attacks elements of society that are native to modernity, but also that it emerges from modernity. The impact of apparently random bombings is felt in the intensification of anxieties about the fragile infrastructures of modernity. Thus, per sociologist Stephen Graham, anxieties about terrorist attacks are often expressed in terms of a potential threat to technologies of mobility – those systems that enable either human transportation or the distribution of resources. Such technologies "can be instantly harnessed by non-state terrorists to produce sites of mediatized, mass death."<sup>93</sup>

"Mass death" is not something that monkeys do to people, but humans are sometimes capable and desirous of systematically wiping out entire classes of life, and it is arguable that this sort of capacity and desire is, again, specifically a product of modern societies.<sup>94</sup> But rhesus macaques – hungry, mean, and dextrous – are potentially disruptive to the high-strung technologies that make possible the high densities of human life in Delhi and other metropolises. Train stations and bus stations attract monkeys because of the large amounts of untended edible garbage that accumulate at such transitory locales. Rhesus macaques sometimes damage telephone wires, satellite dishes, antennas, electrical conductors, and other high-strung pieces of infrastructure. Roadways and bridges, areas of major concern to anti-terrorist agencies, are also attractive to some rhesus. In the city, such transport pathways are also bottlenecks, and restricted lines of movement allow gutsy monkeys the perfect setting for stealing food right out of the hands of passing humans. A bridge over the Ganges in Rishikesh serves this purpose for monkeys, and so does a stairwell on the side of Jakhoo Hill. The attraction of transitory sites to terrorists and monkeys

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93 S. Graham, "Urban Metabolism as Target: Contemporary War as Forced Demodernization," in *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, ed. N. Heynen, M. Kaika, and E. Swyngedouw, Questioning Cities (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 245.

94 Cf. Deborah Bird Rose, "What If the Angel of History Were a Dog," *Cultural Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (March 2006): 67-78.

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lies in the difficulty of managing and defending concentrations of bodies in motion, and in the ease with which violence or violent images can be spread from such sites. On the other hand, monkeys are drawn to food and things to climb, and it is a coincidence of adaptation and ecology that humans' technologies of mobility meet monkeys' locomotor and dietary adaptations.

Stories of monkeys making mischief on the Delhi subway system (which has armed police guards posted at every entrance) or frustrating authorities at the Indira Gandhi International Airport are ready choices for staging critiques of the city's modernization. Both monkeys and terrorists appear at places where crowds and bodies are regulated only with difficulty. Like "terrorists," the monkeys of the "monkey menace" are especially liable to (accidentally) sabotage critical elements of an already shaky urban infrastructure, causing blackouts, disrupting train schedules, interfering at elections. Both figures appear in Indian and global culture as the repositories of the Other, the inhuman, the pre-human, or the anti-modern. The slippage between monkeys and terrorists seems pre-ordained, as though the monkeys were pre-adapted to fill the social niche of the "terrorist." They're not sweet creatures, but aren't monkeys less terrible than Lakshar-e-Taiba, the Indian Mujahideen, or even the Bajrang Dal? Doesn't that seem like a serious accusation?

Since (at least) the late Eighties, monkeys have been making occasional appearances as villains in the newspapers – though it'd be foolish to assume that it was only in the late Twentieth Century that monkeys came to be known as nuisances. Every few years since the early Nineties (when my sample of news articles begins), stories have been surfacing of monkeys breaking into government offices in Delhi, destroying paperwork, and assailing state employees.<sup>95</sup> In other stories monkeys appear in the roles of "marauders,"

<sup>95</sup> For a sample: Reuters News Agency, "Monkeys Trash New Delhi Office," *The Toronto Star*, 1991; R. Bedi, "Monkey Menace Baffles Officials," *South China Morning Post*, 1993;

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"raiders," "criminals," "thieves," an invading "army," murderers, "thugs," and even a "rapist" in one case.<sup>96</sup> Violent "menace" narratives introduce the news-consuming world to the downside of urban life alongside monkeys, and though they often point out that the expansion of cities has robbed wildlife of its habitat, such stories generally configure the "monkey menace" as a consequence of India's particular trajectory towards modernity. The "monkey menace" appears as a concrete failure on the part of governance, but also as a failure on the part of Indian society to rise to the occasion of modernity. The notion that the perils of the monkey menace are a result of anthropomorphism and other human miscalculations is a counterpoint to the moral indignation expressed in the various labels applied derogatorily to monkeys in the news.

#### Human Misreadings

"Monkey menace" discourses have reached dire proportions in the midst of contemporary anxieties about security, the nature of the city, the status of the "common man" in politics, and the competence of government. But the prevalence of the "monkey menace" as a critical trope in the first place, its "legs," may have something to do with the fact that though monkeys may be menacing, they are also well-represented as comic characters. No author of monkey menace news draws more clearly upon monkeys' comic connotations than Rahul Bedi. Bedi, a senior journalist with *The Telegraph* (UK), has seen a lot over his career,

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T. McGirk, "Don't Mess with the Monkey – Delhi Days," *The Independent*, 1996; R. Bedi, "The Monkey on a Nation's Back," *The Australian*, 1998; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, "Government Swings into Action to Ban Delhi Monkeys," 1999; R. Marquand, "Simian Thieves Steal State Secrets, Cheese," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2000; Associated Press, "Monkeys Invade Delhi Government," *BBC News Online*, 2001.

<sup>96</sup> The rapist monkey was actually reported as a langur, which is a larger animal than a macaque. In the langur's defense, I have to say that I have a difficult time believing that a langur could overpower even a small human in this way. Anyway, see, "Monkey Is Rapist," *The Sun*, 2008.

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including the Trilokipuri Riots that occurred in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1983, and monkey fare is by no means a major preoccupation of his. But he has published more than a dozen monkey-related stories in non-Indian papers over the past fifteen years, and his work has helped to transmit "monkey menace" stories to news consumers in China, Australia, Canada, and the UK – not to mention anyplace with an Internet connection and enough Roman letter keys to do an Internet search for "monkeys India."<sup>97</sup> Bedi's takes on menace narratives are sometimes absurd and sometimes sensational, but they root this absurdity and sensationalism in the irrational impulses of human society. For Bedi and few other menace narrativists, monkeys can be victims, too.

Most of Bedi's monkey pieces have been published in English newspapers outside of India, and many of them contain an element of humor. One of them, published in the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong) as "Monkeys Mock Democracy" related the travails of officials at the New Delhi Election Commission, who feared that monkeys "might damage valuable election material like electoral rolls, ballot papers, ink and stamps." In response, security was considering getting a stun gun.<sup>98</sup> (When sticks and stones usually suffice, just imagine blasting a monkey with electricity. In my opinion, somebody just wanted a stun gun.) Similarly, *The Australian* published "The Monkey on a Nation's Back" about the helplessness of security at the Delhi Excise Department to keep a gang of seven monkeys from invading their offices and stealing booze. "Each monkey must have drunk hundreds of bottles by now,"

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97 E.g., R. Bedi, "Delhi Rambo Ends Monkey Business," *The Daily Telegraph*, 2000; R. Bedi, "India – Romeo's Monkey Business Drives Nurses Bananas," *South China Morning Post*, 1994; R. Bedi, "Indians Jail Marauding Monkeys A Mischievous Band of 'Criminals' Is Menacing the Punjab.," *The Daily Telegraph*, 2002; R. Bedi, "India's Marauding Monkeys Face Arrest and Deportation," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 1999; R. Bedi, "Judges Call for Action as Monkeys Wreak Havoc in Corridors of Power," *The Irish Times*, 2006; R. Bedi, "Monkey Gets His Own Off City's Back," *The Australian*, 2001; Bedi, "Monkey Menace Baffles Officials"; R. Bedi, "Monkey Wedding Pulls in the Crowds in India," *The Telegraph*, 2008, telegraph.co.uk; R. Bedi, "Monkeys Go to Jail," *South China Morning Post*, 1997.

98 Bedi, "Monkeys Mock Democracy."

### Chapter Three: The Out-of-Placeness of Monkeys in Menace Narratives

Bedi quoted one official from the department's laboratory. A likely tale!<sup>99</sup>

In a brief response to some questions I had sent him in 2009, Bedi pointed out that animal stories are welcomed by his British audiences, and that monkeys in particular "tickle the British funny bone." But he also admitted that stories like his are "a dig at the ancient albeit irrational beliefs we as a society nurture for monkeys. . . the army chief, police and all officialdom are tolerant of this menace, perpetuating these regressive beliefs that impinge destructively on many of our lives." The "monkey menace" is not just a practical issue, to be resolved by arriving at some consensus about what to do with monkeys. It is also a theoretical question about what Delhi, Shimla, Lucknow, Varanasi, and the rest of India ought to be. Human-monkey conflict in India, even in its cities, is nothing new, but the millennial "monkey menace" – taken as a load of media hype, as the real conflicts between humans and monkeys, or both at once – is often posited as a result of India's failure to modernize.

This failure might be read in the figure of a government that is too inept to even keep monkeys out of Parliament, or in the figure of a backwards Indian society that cannot get over its religious sympathies for dangerous animals. From the least sympathetic perspective, Bedi's rhesus macaques are sites where Indian society is ready to reveal its parochial, superstitious side. "The monkey on a nation's back" could be wholesale government incompetence, or just the sort of everyday opportunism where a few bottles of booze might accidentally get stolen by – nudge, wink – "monkeys." Or it might be actual monkeys.

The nature of the "monkey menace" is up for grabs, and Bedi does not neglect to cover its ambiguity. His 2002 report in *The Daily Telegraph*, tells the story of a monkey who

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99 Bedi, "The Monkey on a Nation's Back." Not that this is the only story of hard-drinking monkeys that I've heard. The clerk at a liquor store in the alleys behind the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in Delhi told me about a monkey who used to ride a bus that serviced Gol Market. He would get off the bus at each liquor store, go beg for a sip, and then get back on the bus when it returned to the stop.

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had wandered into a temple in Timmaganipalli, Andhra Pradesh, where he was taken as an incarnation of Hanuman. The Associated Free Press quoted an animal rights activist who described the monkey as "quite old," with both of his legs paralyzed. When he and others concerned for the monkey's welfare tried to remove him to a hospital, villagers interfered. Eventually the monkey began to refuse to eat. Though judges ordered that he be removed from the temple for medical care, he died before any action could be taken. News of his death traveled quickly.

Bedi's headline adequately captured the results of the fiasco: "4000 mourn monkey 'god'". The story of the "monkey 'god'" of Timmaganipalli can be interpreted in different ways, but one thing that emerges clearly from both Bedi's and the AFP's accounts is that monkeys themselves may be at risk from the very same sorts of things that are commonly blamed for ineffective management of human-monkey relations.

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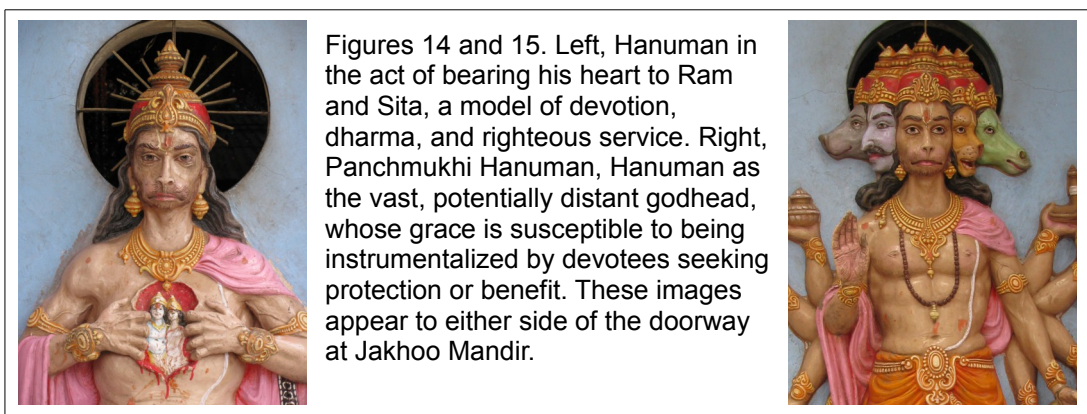
Some specifically modern discourses like the monkey menace posit a rigidly separatist notion of the proper emplacement of monkeys in the urban landscape: they don't belong there. But if one thing is clarified in the stories of the killer of Laxmi Nagar and Lal's parody of Delhi's initial efforts to manage monkeys, it is this: As a "menace," monkeys are capable only of resisting emplacement, emplacement in human places, but also emplacement in the social and moral relationships relevant to other species. But in these tales of menace, the same might be said of Hindu religious, or even of politicians and government netas. Whether the ascription is applied to monkeys or humans, the notion that communication or socialization with monkeys runs into an impasse that prevents their comprehension or integration into society is not, as the menace tales suggest, simply an obstacle to progress, but is actually productive – productive of government power and



### Chapter Three: The Out-of-Placeness of Monkeys in Menace Narratives

productive of critiques that make claims about the proper shape of modern Indian society.

The next chapter focuses on how rhesus and other monkeys actually are integrated in Indian society despite the puritanism of menace narrators. There I discuss the maligned affections that many Indians and other humans feel towards monkeys, and the professions that monkeys occupy in India's ostensibly human social worlds. These professions, and the sentiments that radiate from them inform Indians' practical and political orientations towards monkeys, which in turn inflects upon the outcomes of multispecies socialization – that is, upon the "worlding" or "niche co-construction" that occurs as humans and monkeys navigate life in heterogeneous crowds.



Figures 14 and 15. Left, Hanuman in the act of bearing his heart to Ram and Sita, a model of devotion, dharma, and righteous service. Right, Panchmukhi Hanuman, Hanuman as the vast, potentially distant godhead, whose grace is susceptible to being instrumentalized by devotees seeking protection or benefit. These images appear to either side of the doorway at Jakhoo Mandir.

#### Chapter Four: Dis/Affections for Monkeys

Contrary to menace narratives and their parodies, living monkeys are not totally intractable beings. This chapter discusses the affections which some rhesus macaques ply to make a living. The worlds of affection and collaboration that I cover here can be understood as necessary background information for understanding the monkey menace,<sup>100</sup> but the other purpose I have in mind is to identify some of the multiple home-worlds from which the sentiments that humans express in political venues hail. Despite the stark terms of the monkey menace narratives that I began this part of the dissertation with, rhesus and other monkeys actually have a number of professions or lifestyles available to them in Indian society. While many of these professions or niches entail dominance by humans to different degrees, and most of them involve some measure of human misreadings of monkeys along anthropomorphic or theomorphic – "god-shaped" – lines, some of these niches also afford monkeys affective traction in human moral ecologies, which can translate into leverage to be applied in inter individual encounters, or into politically potent human activism. This is another way multispecies world-building occurs.

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<sup>100</sup>Cf. M. Douglas, "Introduction to Essays on the Implicit," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 3–7.

#### Chapter Four: Dis/Affections for Monkeys

In some human-monkey worlds, such as those inhabited by temple monkeys or other monkeys who benefit from human provisioning, monkeys are situated to make demands upon humans, and to sometimes have them fulfilled. The first section introduces the reader to the monkey god Hanuman, and to some of the interpretations of his connection to the monkeys who scamper along Delhi's eaves. Hanuman's and monkeys' sacred incarnations are counter-points to the religiosity imagined in monkey menace narratives, which is typified as backwards and antithetical to modernity: Hindus' reverence and affection for Hanuman does not always hail from a pre-modern past that persists in spite of modernity, but emerges and re-emerges from the multiple modernities that have embraced Hanuman in the present. But, as we will see again and again in the human-monkey worlds of Delhi and Shimla, affection marks a space of vulnerability, and therefore danger. Part of the danger is in the misinterpretation of nonhuman lives as they are held to human or godly standards. Pandit B.P. Sharma – the younger of three pandits named Sharma who work at the Hanuman mandir on Jakhoo in Shimla – reminded me that the rhesus who lived on the temple grounds were just monkeys, not deities, and that they were different from the monkeys who served in the Ramayana. I think his admonitions were meant to guard the monkeys from any unrealistic expectations I might have for them. This is the problem of anthropomorphism, and theomorphism: monkeys being held to human (or godly) standards that fail to account for the material situation and actual unruliness of living, profane organisms.

In her ethnography of an orangutan rehabilitation center in Malaysia, Rheana Parreñas has written that affectionate and protective sentiment does not necessarily preclude the anthropomorphic reproduction of unequal human power arrangements in mixed species social relations; in the case of the orang-human relations at the rehabilitation center in Sarawak, an ethic of custodial care actually serves to effect an unequal distribution of

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vulnerability among species, class, and gender lines.<sup>101</sup> Even if the human sentiments attached to the anthropomorphism are caring or even egalitarian, there is the potential to reduce or misinterpret animals in ways that cauterize their capacity to participate in mixed species social worlds – what Parreñas called "arrested autonomy."<sup>102</sup> Wasn't this just the case at Timmaganipali (Chapter Three)?

Rhesus macaques are quite different from orangutans, who are adapted to arboreal life away from humans. Intense anthropomorphism has been part and parcel of monkey worlds for who-knows-how-long, and rhesus macaques are themselves habitual anthropophiliacs. Like humans, rhesus macaques are predisposed towards carrying on socially with a large variety of animal species, especially other mammals, and it is not just human inclusiveness and anthropomorphic stereotypes that allow rhesus macaques to manage a living in ostensibly human worlds. Monkeys' participation in multispecies social relations is also the result of their own proclivities towards gregariousness and social manipulation. Just as it can be said that macaques' generalist dietary and locomotor tendencies suits them to lives as urban-dwelling human-commensals,<sup>103</sup> it can be argued also that monkeys' social profligacy contributes to their flexibility in mixed species social worlds.

### **The Monkey with a Thousand Faces**

Monkeys have a powerful friend in the very popular "monkey god" Hanuman.

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101 Rheana Parreñas, "Producing Affect: Transnational Volunteerism in a Malaysian Orangutan Rehabilitation Center," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 4 (2012): 673–687.

102 Rheana Parreñas, *Arrested Autonomy: An Ethnography of Orangutan Rehabilitation* (Cambridge: Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard, 2011).

103 Cf. Sponsel, Ruttanadakul, and Natadecha-Sponsel, "Monkey Business? The Conservation Implications of Macaque Ethnoprimateology in Southern Thailand"; L.E. Sponsel, "The Human Niche in Amazonia: Explorations in Ethnoprimateology," in *New World Primates: Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior*, ed. W. Kinzey (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1997), 143–165.

#### Chapter Four: Dis/Affections for Monkeys

Hanuman is a servant, a hero, a scholar, a teacher, a patron of wrestlers, and a protector. He is the very picture of faith, loyalty, strength, and dharma. He is an all-around god. As an avatar of Shiva, he is a destroyer; but Hanuman's beneficence is more commonly talked about in terms of a generally protective or invigorating "shakt" or "power."<sup>104</sup> He is best known for his exploits in the Ramayana, a Hindu epic originally penned sometime during the last few centuries before the Common Era and attributed to the sage-poet Valmiki. The Ramayana details the life and adventures of Ram, an incarnation of the god Vishnu. In the story Hanuman and the monkey-chief Sugriv offer aid to Ram and his brother Lakshman as they search for Ram's kidnapped wife, Sita, and wage war against her captor, Ravan, the demonic ruler of the island kingdom Lanka.

Over the course of the Ramayana, Hanuman slays dragons and demons, leaps across seas, literally moves mountains, and sets fire to Lanka. In the Puranas and later versions of the epic, Hanuman becomes Ram's devotee, rather than just his ally. Many representations of Hanuman depict him tearing open his chest to reveal portraits of Ram and Sita inscribed on his heart – this popular scene, which makes clear that it is his devotion to Ram from which he derives his power, is first found in a Bengali version of the Ramayana dating from the 11th century.<sup>105</sup> As reward for his service to Ram, Hanuman is gifted with immortality and asked to remain on earth for as long as people remember Ram's story. And the story has been remembered well.

Hanuman is explicitly a hybrid being, and his hybridity is key to his role in the Ramayana. The demon Ravan, after performing several thousand years of rites to Brahma, the god of creation, asked to be granted immunity from the attacks of gods, demons, and a

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104 Cf. L.T. Wolcott, "Hanumān: The Power-Dispensing Monkey in North Indian Folk Religion," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (1978): 653–661.

105 P. Lutgendorf, "My Hanuman Is Bigger Than Yours," *History of Religions* 33, no. 3 (1994): 211–245.

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long list of terrestrial creatures that ultimately included all beings except humans and monkeys, which Ravan had omitted out of sheer arrogance.<sup>106</sup> And so it was two avatars – gods in terrestrial form – of Vishnu and Shiva, the human-born Ram and the vanar-born Hanuman, who would later bring Ravan down.

The vanar are either civilized monkeys or monkey-like humans; in all cases, they are semi-divine and possessed of supernatural powers.<sup>107</sup> Their kingdom was Kishkindha, in southern India. The geographic placement of the monkey kingdom has fueled debate about the historical origins of the vanar. In his exegesis of the Ramayana, historian Makhanlal Sen speculated that Hanuman was an historical figure, a noteworthy chieftain born of mixed northern-southern – which is to say, Aryan-Dravidian or Aryan-tribal – parentage.<sup>108</sup> In the Ramayana, Ram and the human beings who shared his earthly parentage were creatures of civilization and urbanity. In contrast, the wilderness was a place of unrefined beauty and danger, the realm of animals and people of non-Aryan descent. It was a place that civilized

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106 P. Lutgendorf, "Monkey in the Middle: The Status of Hanuman in Popular Hinduism," *Religion* 27 (1997): 311–332.

107 Whether or not vanar are monkeys is debatable. This was explained to me once by a guard at Indira Gandhi Airport. Getting up close to me as he patted me down, he saw the medallion I sometimes wear, which depicts Hanuman carrying the mountain to Lakshman. He asked me something like, "Oh, you like Hanuman?" in English.

"He's my favorite," I replied in Hindi.

"Excellent! You know Hindi!"

"I learned it for work."

"What work?"

"I study the relationships between humans and monkeys, and . . . Hanuman is the greatest monkey."

The guard finished by checking my ankles and then stood up. "Hanuman," he said seriously, "is not a monkey. *He is a vanar.*"

The vanar are the monkey-like humanoid creatures who aided Ram in the Ramayana as his "monkey army," and Hanuman is counted among them. Most people seem at ease with the notion that the vanar and Hanuman are monkeys, but a resolute minority disputes it, identifying the vanar as a special class of supernatural beings apart from all others, or as a kind of lost tribe that was subjugated to Aryan invaders in pre-epic times.

108 M. Sen, *The Ramayana: Translated from the Original of Valmiki: a Modernised Version in English Prose* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1988).

#### Chapter Four: Dis/Affections for Monkeys

humans rarely ventured, where saints meditated, where beasts roamed, and where kings conducted epic hunts. It was in the wilderness outside of Kishkindha that Ram and Lakshman first met Hanuman, who was disguised as a mendicant. Later Hanuman demonstrated a downright kingly (which is to say Kshatriya-like) capacity for violence, but instead of operating in the kingly narrative of power, which would have him defeating wild beasts and demons in the wilderness (like Ram, Arjun, and other good rulers from the epics), Hanuman exercises his violent potential by burning the golden capital of Lanka. Hanuman, then, reverses the kingly prerogative in some respects. As a servant, he is devoted to Ram; as a warrior from outside Aryan civilization, he subverts kingly, urban power.

Hanuman himself models this warrior aesthetic, but he is also a teacher and scholar. Tulsidas, the 16th-17th century translator of the Ramayana, and (possibly) the poet behind the ubiquitous prayer to Lord Hanuman known as the Hanuman Chalisa ("Forty Lines for Hanuman"), asserted that, "Greater than Ram is Ram's servant." Like all mystical proclamations, Tulsidas's line – "Rama te adhik, Rama kar dasa" – resonates on multiple levels. Tulsidas's version of Hanuman (and the Hanuman of many subsequent versions of the story) often comes off as a superior moral example to the hero Ram, but moreover, Hanuman is simply more popular and probably better-loved than his master. Where Ram's purity is assumed and guaranteed – Ram is what he is – Hanuman is actually more human in that he must strive to follow his ethics. In the Ramayana he must achieve consciousness of the true extent of his powers, and despite them he continues to work hard to adhere to his dharma.

As one of the most popular gods in India, Hanuman is thus subject to a variety of interpretations and reconfigurations. Current depictions of Hanuman in sacred art commonly offer an image of a meditative langur-like form with an overall human frame and musculature, white or divine blue body hair, and light facial skin and hands (the most common species of

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langur has dark skin and white hair). Sometimes he appears as a reddish or yellowish, anthropomorphic monkey, visually akin to rhesus macaques. Hanuman has taken another form in two spectacular recent incarnations. As the hero of the blockbusting *Hanuman* (2005), the monkey god is depicted in a fully anthropomorphic – except for his red rhesus mouth and long langur's tail – with very light tan or pink skin. This is more than anthropomorphic, but possibly also Brahminomorphic, Aryomorphic, or bourgeois-morphic insofar as it bodily identifies Hanuman with the racial, class-ical, and caste marks valued by upper-class Indians.

A very similar form is seen in the shape of the monumental Hanuman temple in New Delhi – it towers over a commuter rail line and a major intersection in Karol Bhag near the heart of the city. The proliferation of giant Hanumans in the form of statues and buildings, as documented by Philip Lutgendorf in his essay, "My Hanuman is Bigger than Yours" (1994), is linked to an increasingly powerful connection between Hanuman, conspicuous consumption, masculine Hindu religious authority, and populism. In contemporary religious practice, Ram often figures as a kind of Hindu national hero, and as Ram's right-hand man (after Lakshman, maybe), Hanuman has found growing popularity among Hindu fundamentalists and nationalist groups like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, also known as the World Hindu Council. The monkeys of the Ramayana were brave and loyal warriors, and they serve as the model for the youth wing of the VHP, the Bajrang Dal or "monkey brigade."

The Hanuman of the Bajrang Dal is a trainer of Hindu youth and the protector of Mother India against supposed invaders. The Bajrang Dal is fiercely protective of their interpretation of Hanuman. When New Wave Hindi novelist Rajendra Yadav commented in a 2002 article in the Hindi literary magazine *Hans* that Hanuman's burning of Sri Lanka was the world's first act of terrorism,<sup>109</sup> his insult against the monkey god placed him on a Bajrang Dal

109 D. Ghosh, "Writer Stands by Controversial Remarks on Hanuman," *Indo-Asian News Service*, 2002, <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0102/73.html>.



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blacklist of enemies to Hindu unity.<sup>110</sup> This stands in stark contrast to the Bajrang Dal's own terrorism during the 1992 Ayodhya crisis<sup>111</sup> where it may be said that another modern mutation of the monkey god, Hulladiya Hanuman, was born. Hulladiya Hanuman is Hanuman the riot-born, Hanuman victorious over Muslims: This is the incarnation of Hanuman who gets installed in the ruined halls of razed mosques, the Hanuman who marks space as "reclaimed" by Hindus.<sup>112</sup>

Hanuman's virility makes him a model of masculine health and beauty as well. He is truly appropriate as the patron deity of traditional wrestling gymnasiums. In this role, he is not necessarily a nationalist hero, and he is not exclusive to Hindus. As a wrestler's god, Hanuman has devotees among Muslims and many Sikhs as well.<sup>113</sup> Yet, when wrestler and actor Dara Singh launched his political career as a member of the Rajya Sabha (India's upper house of Parliament) and a leader of the conservative Bharatiya Janata Party, it was founded upon the nationalist cred he had garnered in his starring role as Hanuman in the 1976 live action film, *Bajrangbali*, as well as the Ramayana-based television serials "Mahabharat" (1988) and "Luv Kush" (1989).<sup>114</sup>

During my fieldwork period one of the most noticeable images of Hanuman on the street was that of Bal Hanuman, Hanuman as a child. And not just as a child, but as a cartoon character, the star of *Hanuman* (2005), billed facetiously as India's first full-length animated

110 HinduUnity.org, "The Black List: Enemies of Hindus Exposed," n.d., accessed January 2, 2012.

111 In 1992 Hindu "volunteers" destroyed the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. The mosque had reputedly been built at the site of a Ram mandir which had been razed by a Mughal general in the early 16th Century. Hundreds of Hindus and Muslims died in the sectarian violence that spread throughout India in the wake of the mosque's demolition.

112 A. Bigelow, "Hulladiya Hanuman: The Return or the End of History?," 2002.

113 Cf. Lutgendorf, "My Hanuman Is Bigger Than Yours"; J.S. Alter, "The 'Sannyasi' and the Indian Wrestler: The Anatomy of a Relationship," *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 2 (1992): 317–336.

114 Chandrakant, *Bajrangbali*, 1976; Ramanand Sagar, "Luv Kush" (DD National, 1989); Baldev Raj Chopra and Ravi Chopra, "Mahabharat" (DD National, 1988).

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feature.<sup>115</sup> The character designs, backgrounds, and animation in *Hanuman* appeal to an aesthetic of juvenilia and explicitly drew upon the animated fantasies of 20th century Japan and America. Some of the cells in *Hanuman* featuring monkeys appear to be faulty traces of characters from Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967), and many of the animations of Bal Hanuman swinging his club or flying through the air are similar on a frame-to-frame basis to those found in Toei's *Alakazam the Great* (1960), which is an adaptation of the epic story of Asia's other great monkey hero, Sun Wukong (Son Goku in Japan), also known among English speakers as simply "Monkey." This isn't to accuse the animators of *Hanuman* of being unoriginal – after all, it is arguable that Sun Wukong and Sun Goku are East Asian versions of India's monkey god – but to again highlight how a character as typically Indian as Hanuman emerges and re-emerges from a matrix that is always-already adulterated by influences from abroad and distinctions from within.<sup>116</sup>

While Hanuman is at his most popular when he wears a hominid form, he is perhaps at his most sacred when he is relatively formless, when he arrives on earth in a swayambhu shape. Swayambhu images of Hanuman are typically murtis (idols) that have appeared on their own in stone. Each swayambhu Hanuman is said to bear some resemblance to a recognized image of Hanuman – e.g., Hanuman carrying the mountain, Hanuman bearing his heart, Hanuman kneeling before Ram. I could never make out Hanuman in any of the swayambhu murtis I encountered – which include the central images at both of my favored Hanuman mandirs, Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in CP and Jakhoo Mandir in Shimla – but that

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115 It was not; there was at least one other major animated production coming out of India before *Hanuman*. The earlier Japanese-Indian production, *Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama* (1992) was scripted in Hindi and Japanese, and animated in the heroic style of Nineties anime. Yugo Sako and Ram Mohan, *Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama*, 1992.

116 V.G. Samant and Milind Ukey, *Hanuman* (Hyderabad Innovatives, 2005); Wolfgang Reitherman, *Jungle Book* (Buena Vista Distribution, 1967); Daisaku Shirakawa and Taiji Yabushita, *Alakazam the Great*, 1960.

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may be because the attributes of the murtis that make them recognizable as Hanuman are blurred under years of devoted sindhur applications. As the appliqués obscure the features that initially attracted Hanuman's devotees, the legitimacy of the idol comes to be read not in its resemblance to Hanuman, which is obscured, but in the accumulation of the sindhur itself.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, swayambhu murtis are often decorated – as if in recognition of this blurring of form – with a tilak and eyes (sometimes plastic googly eyes) which serve to alert the viewer to the god's facial features. The eyes are important, for the goal of worship is to receive darshan from the deity – that is, to attract the deity's gaze. At the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place, New Delhi, and at Jakhoo Mandir on Jakhoo Hill in Shimla, swayambhu images are the centerpieces of Hanuman temples, and in this context they serve as evidence of the sites' antiquity.

Certainly the rhesus who dwell at monkey temples serve a similar purpose in their temple worlds. In spite of the inevitable property damage, theft, and other shenanigans that occur at sites like these, the monkeys are like sindhur caked around a swayambhu murti. They are the very mark of the sacred at the mandirs and stupas where they live, the living evidence that the site has been touched by the divine and is under an ahimsik influence. This will be discussed more in Part III, but for now I want to point out that instead of thinking of anthropomorphism or theomorphism as only unproductive misreadings of monkeys' actions in the world, these frameworks for misinterpretation can be understood as appliques that also augment monkeys and their worlds. The -morphisms that humans apply to monkeys are contributions to the symbolic environments monkeys occupy, and they are part of the context for monkeys' successes as well as their travails. The two key points to remember are: First, though monkeys are liable to find themselves situated at the business end of power even in

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<sup>117</sup>Cf. P.S. Sangren, "Dialectics of Alienation: Individuals and Collectivities in Chinese Religion," *Man* 26, no. 1 (1991): 67–86.

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affectionate or devotional relationships, there is also sometimes traction for monkey agency in these worlds. And second, monkeys' adaptations and proclivities situate them as active contributors to, and manipulators of anthropomorphic and theomorphic worlds of meaning.

### Social Profligacy

Rhesus macaques are, like humans, promiscuous in their social associations. Scientifically-minded observers have noted rhesus grooming and playing with squirrels; grooming other species of monkeys, deer, and dogs; riding deer; having sex with distantly related species of monkey like langurs; and producing hybrid offspring with other species of macaque, like bonnets and long-tails.<sup>118</sup> I've watched monkeys purposely tease angry dogs by pulling their tails or grabbing their fur and then running away to safety – in just the same way that teenage human suburbanites might dare one another to ring the doorbell at a known curmudgeon's house. Rhesus also often associate with chital and muntjacs (two kinds of deer), who follow rhesus troops and feed upon fruit and leaves dislodged by the macaques arboreal peregrinations, and who also respond to macaque alarm calls.<sup>119</sup> They have been observed "riding" deer.<sup>120</sup> The female bonnet macaque who guards a herd of goats in Kerala state is also worth mentioning<sup>121</sup> – baboons (*Papio* sp.), who are fairly close relatives of

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118 Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780)."

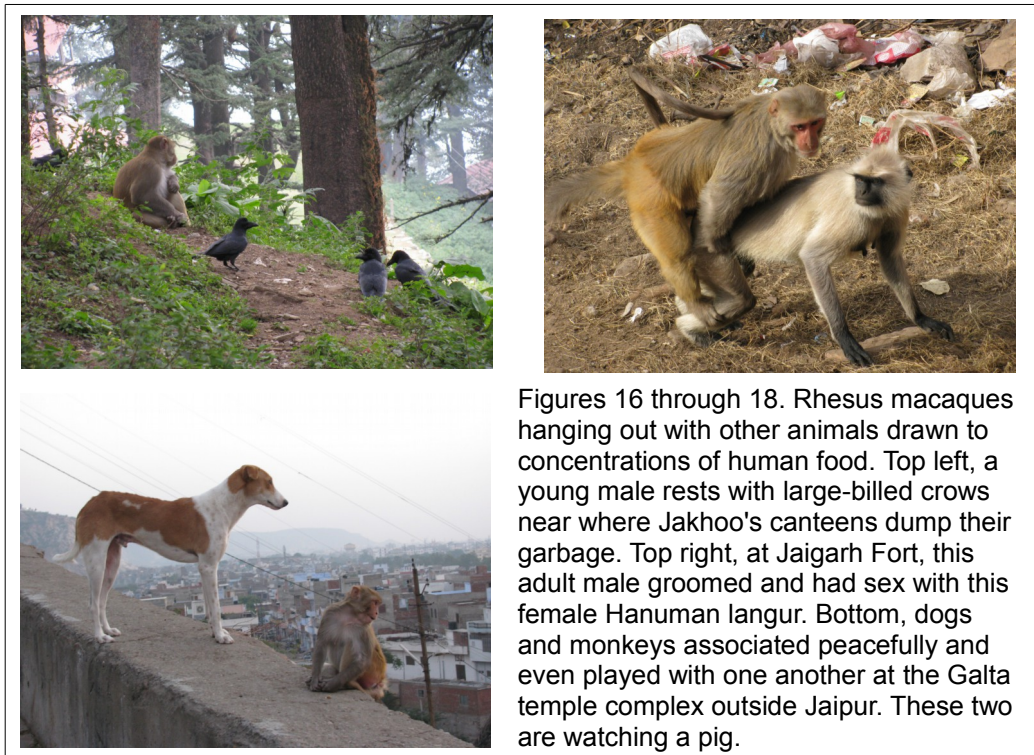
119 R.P. Mukherjee and S. Gupta, "Habits of the Rhesus Macaque *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann) in the Sunderbans, 24-Parganas, West Bengal," *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 62 (1965): 145–146. Cf. Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780)."

120 A.K. Mandal, "The Behaviour of the Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta* Zimmermann) in the Sundarbans.," *Journal of the Bengal Natural History Society* 33 (1964): 153–165.

121 I heard of her in a Malayalam language magazine, which I actually couldn't read, but was explained to me by a friend. A similar monkey, a male bonnet macaque, was reported doing similar work in Kerala state by IBN-CNN News: K.S. Narayanan, "Kerala Monkey Doubles up as a Shepherd," 2008, <http://www.ibnlive.com/news/kerala-monkey-doubles-up-as-a-shepherd/67606-13.html>.

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macaques<sup>122</sup> have apparently taken on similar work in South Africa.<sup>123</sup>



Figures 16 through 18. Rhesus macaques hanging out with other animals drawn to concentrations of human food. Top left, a young male rests with large-billed crows near where Jakhoo's canteens dump their garbage. Top right, at Jaigarh Fort, this adult male groomed and had sex with this female Hanuman langur. Bottom, dogs and monkeys associated peacefully and even played with one another at the Galta temple complex outside Jaipur. These two are watching a pig.

Macaques do not flourish as loners, and lonely macaques, especially young ones, are not picky about the nature of the others to whom they cling. Internet archives yield a plethora of cute photographs and videos of captive macaques whose closest associates are animals of other species. In the Fifties and Sixties, psychologist Harry Harlow's research into the necessity of maternal affection in primates found that young rhesus macaques desired contact with a soft, furry mother-like doll more than they desired milk, which could be obtained from a less comfy wire doll. Even when the furry mother-doll was transformed into a monster-mother who would throw the young monkey off or prod them with spikes, infant

<sup>122</sup> Baboons and macaques are in the same "tribe" (a Linnaean taxon), Papionini.

<sup>123</sup> The fact of baboons working as herders is attested in English sources: D.L. Cheney and R.M. Seyfarth, *Baboon Metaphysics: The Evolution of a Social Mind* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

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rhesus still preferred to cling to her, usually visiting the milk-bearing mother only when hungry.<sup>124</sup> The reassuring sensation of another warm, hairy body is of vital concern to rhesus macaques, much more than monkeys' dedication to mingling with their own kind.

At the Jaigarh Fort outside Jaipur, I saw two adult male rhesus hanging out with a group of Hanuman langurs (*Presbytis entellus* or *Semnopithecus entellus*) – the macaques were apparently well-enough integrated into the group of only distantly related and comparatively taciturn langurs that one of the female langurs permitted a macaque not only to groom her, but to mount her. This struck me as potentially unusual because, as is often noted by observers of monkeys, rhesus macaques are quarrelsome among themselves, which presents an obstacle to making friends. Getting close enough to novel individuals to even begin to be friendly can be a drawn-out process. To this end, macaques deploy a number of signals to let the prospective grooming partner know that there is no violent intention: Avoiding eye contact, grunting and girneying,<sup>125</sup> maintaining a non-aggressive posture, and lip-smacking. The extent to which the rhesus macaques and the langurs may have been able to deploy such signals to pave the way to intimacy, I can't say; langurs are very different creatures from rhesus. Rhesus macaques' and langurs' vocal and facial repertoires are as different as humans' and macaques, and where macaques do much of their intra-specific communication with their eyes and painted faces, the same is not quite as true for langurs, whose features blend into their dark faces. Though both species seem to have affiliative grunt calls, the sounds of these calls and the accompanying facial effects may be too different to be

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124 H.F. Harlow and R.R. Zimmermann, "Affectional Responses in the Infant Monkey," *Science* 130 (1959): 421–432.

125 A girney is a high-pitched nasal whine. Whitman, Gerald, and Maestriperi do not think that girneys and grunts are necessarily emitted as signals, per se, but that rhesus who hear the vocalizations do interpret them as signs of non-aggressive intent. J.C. Whitman, M.S. Gerald, and D. Maestriperi, "Intended Receivers and Functional Significance of Grunt and Girney Vocalizations in Free-Ranging Female Rhesus Macaques," *Ethology* 113 (2007): 862–874.

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intelligible as signs across the *Presbytis-Macaca* line.

I imagine that grooming is how it happened. Grooming, which is what the mixed species pair were initially doing when I found them, would have been a necessary prelude to more intimate relations. Though hair is useful for body heat regulation, display, and defense, it also collects dirt, dead skin, and parasites, so the act of picking through fur and cleaning it is an obligation of most mammals. This is a task best accomplished with the help of a friend, and it is in this interpersonal capacity that mammalian grooming takes on its social significance. Even humans, with their reduced and easily managed body hair, often prefer to allow another person to groom them. Proximity and the management of space is an essential medium of power: flatly, you don't let organisms you don't trust near to you, and to allow another to touch you in these intimate ways requires even more trust. In both rhesus and langurs grooming serves to strengthen social bonds and alleviate tensions in the group. And so I expect that what the interspecies friends had in common was an appreciation for the sensation of fingers in hair.

I was struck by the intimacy of the rhesus and langur at Jaigarh, but associations between rhesus and langurs are not uncommon. Primatologists have observed female langurs suckling rhesus infants, and have noted that in interspecies troops, the rhesus macaques generally appear dominant over the larger langurs.<sup>126</sup> The two species do occasionally come into conflict under non-anthropogenic circumstances – and in those cases, it seems that the rhesus usually manage to displace their larger competitors.<sup>127</sup> But just as

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126 M.L. Roonwal and S.M. Mohnot, *Primates of South Asia: Ecology, Sociobiology, and Behavior* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1977); S.M. Das and B.D. Sharma, "Observations on a Remarkable Association Between Rhesus Monkey (*Macaca Mulatta Villosa*) and the Himalayan Langur (*Presbytis Entellus Schistaceus*) in the Kumaun Himalayas, India," *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 77 (1981): 496–497; Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780)."

127 Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann,

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often, the two seem to mesh without incident.

### **Working Monkeys**

The amenable relations between some macaques and langurs are a strike against the prevailing wisdom I encountered in Delhi, where the only langurs are working monkeys employed to rout troublesome rhesus macaques from upscale neighborhoods and government facilities. Though I have never observed members of the two species in conflict except when captive langurs were set upon rhesus by a human master, most of the langur handlers whom I met attested to a natural enmity between langurs and bandar.

It is a strange sight: a langur riding around on the back of a bicycle, moped, or motorcycle with one or two humans in front or behind. They always look as though they are about to get their tails caught in the spokes of the rear wheel. But this is how many of the langurs whose trainers are employed by the municipal corporations of Delhi and the homeowner's associations of upscale neighborhoods in South Delhi, NOIDA, and elsewhere get around town. In monkey menace narratives, the use of langurs to counter rhesus macaques was a persistent theme. They were sometimes touted as an environmentally sound solution to the monkey problem. (This is where the ascription of natural enmity between langurs and rhesus comes in – as though the men who sic their langurs on rhesus macaques are merely piggybacking on violence that would have happened anyway.) When US President Barack Obama visited Delhi in 2010, he was accompanied by a contingent of langurs to guard against rhesus macaques.<sup>128</sup> When Delhi hosted the Commonwealth Games

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1780).”  
128 Dean Nelson, “Monkey Catchers on Guard for Barack Obama’s India Visit,” *The Telegraph*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/8102597/Monkey-catchers-on-guard-for-Barack-Obamas-India-visit.html>.



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in 2010, there were numerous stories of the langur squads who had been called in to defend the games against rhesus macaques, who were themselves displaced by the building of the stadium complex that hosted the games.<sup>129</sup> Langurs were cast as defenders of democracy in one earlier case, where they were installed to maintain order at a polling station.<sup>130</sup>

Importantly, these good simian citizens are marked as such in two ways: They are subservient to humans – especially to the bourgeoisie and the state – and they direct their aggression against out of place rhesus.

But rhesus, too, have their professions cut out for them, occupations which are more, or less, legitimate in Indian societies. Some of them are even beloved: India's trained monkey dancers come to mind right-away, despite the fact that I only ever met a few dancing monkeys. The capture and training of monkeys is nowadays strictly illegal, and so there are fewer dancers about as there might once have been. Of the acts I encountered, I was left in each instance with the impression that the dancing monkeys had literally gone insane. I remember a young female in Calcutta named after the movie star Kareena Kapoor. She wore a wedding sari that looked as if it had been sewn for a doll, and clutched her knees as she rocked herself nervously beneath the folds of her master's dhoti. She did this until it was time for her to step out and press her muzzle into the maw of her male compatriot, Shah Rukh, as part of a mock wedding. Though Shah Rukh's canine teeth had been removed, the fear Kareena felt as she received his open-mouth "kiss" was evident from the grimace she displayed – parted lips, clenched teeth, a typical rhesus fear face – as Shah Rukh went through the motions dictated by the drums and stick of their trainer. Shah Rukh's

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129 Comparatively less coverage of the human displacements that were entailed in the building of the complex, and in the beautification campaign that preceded the games made it into the major news outlets I trawled. Press Trust of India, "Anti-begging Drive Intensified in Delhi," *Business Standard*, 2008; L. Kaur, "Commonwealth Games and a Beggar Free Delhi," *CounterCurrents.org*, 2008.

130 "Langur to the Rescue of Democracy," *The Times of India*, 2004.

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nervousness showed too. He had been flashing mild threats at passers-by throughout the performance, ears back, lips opened into an O-shape. I asked their trainer about his methods and he admitted that he needed his rod to make them understand. He told me the police never bothered him, but that he had to watch out for the forest department. Nevertheless, I have heard many fond recollections of monkey performances. There was wonderment on the face of a friend's mother as she recalled the monkey weddings she attended as a child in Calcutta.

It is possible, I think, for working monkeys to lead better lives. Leslie Sponsel et al. have discussed the employment of stump-tailed macaques (*M. arctoides*) as coconut pickers in Thailand as a “synergy” of a pacifist religion (Buddhism), pragmatic economics (a positive demand for cheap, small-bodied, semi-arboreal laborers on coconut plantations), and behavior (the monkeys' foraging takes them into the margins of the plantation lands).<sup>131</sup> Though this isn't from the Indian canon, the sort of ecological-cultural convergence that Sponsel et al. describe is one way for multispecies societies to form – grooming is another, and again, submission is yet another.

Take the story of the blacksmith's monkeys, which I have garnered from *The Washington Post*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and *the Toronto Star*: When two monkeys, a mother and her daughter, kept coming to his forge in Orissa state, smithy Kalicharan Maharana captured the elder of the two and taught both of them to work the bellows. (The younger remained because she could not leave without her mother?) Of the mother, Kuni, Maharana told reporters and officials that at first “She was disobedient and tried to run away. But my love and patience paid off and she replaced my human blower operator,” who was costing Maharana about forty rupees a day. When labor officials found the two monkeys

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<sup>131</sup> Sponsel, Ruttanadakul, and Natadecha-Sponsel, “Monkey Business? The Conservation Implications of Macaque Ethnoprimateology in Southern Thailand.”

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working in Maharana's shop, they considered prosecuting him under child labor laws before deciding to simply cap the workday of Kuni's young daughter, Mini, at two hours.<sup>132</sup>

### Monkey Children

The Orissan labor officials' comparison of Mini to a human child allowed them to demarcate some protections for her as a worker who might potentially require protection from her manager, Maharana. Despite their apparently good intentions, their decision actually contravenes the federal Wildlife Act, which forbids anyone from capturing, selling, transporting, or employing monkeys. Whether or not the protections that the labor officials could extend to Mini were appropriate for her situation, they were in line with another trend in monkey affection, the protection of monkeys as children or infants.

Take for instance, Buru, a monkey who made the BBC News on account of being adopted by a human woman, Namita Das. This is scarcely a first; I imagine that what gave the story its legs was the image that accompanied the story of Mrs. Das allowing Buru to suckle her breast (also not a first). This breach of the species boundary is surely received in some quarters as yet another instance of backwards Indians' irrational involvement with opportunistic monkeys. But the affection is obvious and even if the young, but nearly full-sized monkey depicted clutching at Das's chest is less than what most people would consider cute, it should take no great effort for one to imagine how Das's own affections came to rest upon the abandoned monkey child rescued by her woodcutter husband. Even Das's human children appeared to accept Buru as their kin. His human sisters reported that just as they would do with a human brother, they tie a cord around his wrist on Raksha Bandhan, when

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132 S.A. Rahman, "Primates Blacksmith's Prime Mates; LABOUR SAVING GLOBAL VILLAGE," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1999; S.A. Rahman, "Man's Monkey Business Drives Officials up a Tree; Simian Duo Helps Out Blacksmith," *The Washington Times*, 2000.

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Hindu sisters and brothers reaffirm their bonds and duties to one another.<sup>133</sup>

Though infantilization is one of the most blatantly anthropomorphic tendencies in the array of social relationships between humans and nonhuman animals, and one of the easiest to look down upon, it is also one of the most complicated in terms of the directionality of power in the lived relations. Rhesus macaques and human children are both subject to the whims and grace of adult humans, and as such are necessarily skilled manipulators of adult human attentions. Infantilization is part of their social niche, and temple monkeys and human children alike use it as traction for the extraction of resources like food and protection from adult humans. While some of these protections are generated on an institutional level – such as the anti-child labor laws that the Orissan officials saw fit to apply to Mini – they also emerge from the interconnected space of human and monkey sociality, especially their faces.<sup>134</sup>

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133 S. Bhaumik, “The Mother Who Suckles Pet Monkey,” *BBC News Online*, 2005.

134 Though the ethicist Emmanuel Levinas initially appeared to deny that animals could have something like a human “face” – a self-presentation that automatically implores the looker, “do not kill me!” – he conceded that in certain social contexts, an animal could bear something that a human would recognize as a face. In evolutionary terms, in the array of living things that exist in the world where monkeys and humans are practically the same thing, a monkey face has all the physical qualifications of a human face and it serves many of the same purposes that it serves for humans. It is both a sensory cluster and communicative node adapted for seizing and manipulating the attentions of those who might engage with it. Levinas devised the notion of a face with regard to humans' face-to-face contact. When asked whether animals had faces, Levinas found himself unable to answer the question in any wholesale way. Where a dog could have a face, he was unable to determine whether or not a snake could be said to have a face that made the demand to not kill. “I cannot say at what moment you have the right to be called 'face'. I don't know if a snake has a face. I can't answer that question.” While some might find this sort of “agnosticism” about one's ethical responsibilities towards an animal frustrating, but Matthew Calarco interprets Levinas's reticence to make a blanket statement about animal faces as an indication of his desire to keep the question open – that is to avoid cutting off some of the ways in which one might be “transformed” or “disrupted” in an encounter with an animal, “several of which could just as suitably be called 'ethical' as the ones Levinas highlights.” Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, and Alison Ainley, “The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas,” in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other* (London and New York: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., 1988), 168-180; M. Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*

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The pleasure that foreigners and natives to human-monkey worlds alike take in monkeys at play – observing them, writing about them, recording them on their telephones, and posting them to internet video archives like YouTube – is at one with moderns' appreciation of cuteness. Once, when I was feeding the monkeys on Jakhoo, a man and a woman from New Delhi struck up a conversation with me about them. What I remember distinctly was asking the woman why she found monkeys appealing, just as Chewbacca Monkey approached us. Chewbacca was an older female and one of my favorites (see Chapter Eight), but she was not what I would have considered “cute.” Her splotchy skin, her patchy, disheveled locks of graying hair on her body and head, her crooked gait, and the single white spot above her left eye all made her easy to recognize but also gave her the appearance of being a little bit dilapidated. When Chewbacca approached us, sat down next to us, and cast her eyes up to me to beg as politely as any monkey will, the Dilliwali literally squealed her answer to my question: “They're so cute!” with stress on the *uuuuuute*! The closest Hindi equivalent to the English “cute” is *pyara*, and both words are applied in similarly diminutive, affectionate ways.<sup>135</sup>

Neither the notion that monkeys are cute – in the way that a baby is cute, attractive in his delicacy and vulnerability – nor the pleasure that the Dilliwali took in feeding and observing monkeys is unusual. But there is something in the way in which she declared her pleasure that is akin to the pleasure that many Internet-goers take in, for instance, sappily-captioned pictures of cute kittens.<sup>136</sup> My interlocutor, like some of the other Delhi-ites who visited Jakhoo, did so for the novel experience of close contact with animals who in other

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(New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 68-69. Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

135 We could quibble that the kind of love being expressed in the English word “cute” is closer to the Hindi concept of “sneha” or affectionate love, which is something like what a girl feels for her doll.

136 Cf. LOLcatscom, icanhas.cheezburger.com.

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circumstances would not necessarily be so approachable or trusting. Though the tendency in humans, macaques, and other mammals to respond with affection and care to others who display certain physical traits characteristic of infants is not unusual – even rhesus macaques appear to have their own, species-specific "cute schema," a set of traits that engenders maternal care from them<sup>137</sup> – the exaggeration of these traits into a form of pop art, and the overtly childish pleasure that consumers of such images take in them may be a modern and urban phenomenon. What was "cute" to the Delhi-ite on Jakhoo might just have seemed pitiful or "bechara" to other people – as I've said, Chewbacca Monkey was not exactly evocative of the youth and potential of a child. In her case, it was likely her submission and apparently vulnerability that made her cute to the tourist from Delhi – perhaps in the same way that I once heard an American student of Hindi lament, "Oh, but you've got to admit that the children are so cute!" as she forced herself to turn away from some particularly cheeky child beggars in Jaipur. Though both monkeys and children are considered to be subject to coercive powers, which they are in turn considered incompetent to comprehend, the affection that coexists with the doubly subordinated niches of monkey children also affords them a measure of wiggle room in which they may manipulate their dominators.

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Even though many of the niches for monkeys discussed above are explicit transpositions of human power arrangements onto human-monkey relations, we have also seen that anthropomorphism does not exhaust the potential bounty of human-macaque similitude. If macaques are able to make their livings in human-inflected worlds, then it is partly because of their ability to macaca-morphize humans; that is, their ability to make humans and other organisms interpretable in monkey terms. I take this up more in Chapter

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137 J.D. Higley et al., "Preferences of Female Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta*) for Infantile Coloration," *Developmental Psychobiology* 20, no. 1 (1987): 7–18.

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Eight where I discuss how macaques extend their own political systems to humans and contribute in that way to the formation of human-macaque social worlds. For now, it is enough to make the point that humans are not the only interpreters in town; even though the niches that carry the most legitimacy in Indian society are premised on implicit or explicit human dominance, rhesus monkeys do more than simply resist those impositions or fall into line with them. Sometimes monkeys flourish in their prescribed positions in these multicultural, multispecies ecologies; and in those cases where they do flourish, humans cannot take all the credit.

There is often violence in this. Sometimes, violence is a product of misunderstandings or misreadings across difference. Sometimes it is the result of a willful imposition of meaning onto lived spaces. There is physical violence, but also psychological violence – to my mind, Hulladiya Hanuman has more in common with Kareena Kapoor's trainer than with the monkey herself. But cases like this are situations in which monkeys have also undergone something like economic or ecological violence. They have been divorced from the contexts which they have made their own through the ecological and cultural circuitry of niche construction alongside humans, which is to say that they have been made subject to the worst effects of anthropomorphism.

Nevertheless, these varying niches or professions for monkeys in Indian society are, like menace narratives, veritable home-worlds for the scorn, affection, or felt obligations that impel political action, and which in turn parlay into strategies of governance, monkey management, and interspecies relation. Among the vying visions of monkeys' places in urban Indian society, there are also sympathetic visions of Indian nature-cultural relations, which inspire and are inspired by the material exchange relations that exist between actual monkeys and humans, often in the anthropomorphic or theomorphic contexts described

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above. The generally positive affect that is generated by these non-terrorist, non-criminal, mostly legit professions parlays into politically potent sentiment that inflects upon the options that government has available to it as it pursues monkey management agendas.

Chapter Five expands the range of home-worlds from which politically potent sentiment – the human-borne vector of human-monkey niche co-construction – to include international biomedical, military, and animal advocacy interests.



## Chapter Five: Dislocating and Relocating Monkeys on Global Scales



Figure 19. Female with infant perched on a sign on the Mall, Shimla.

### ***Chapter Five: Dislocating and Relocating Monkeys on Global Scales***

In Chapter Three, I wrote about the discourses of out-of-placeness that are characteristic of monkeys in menace narratives, and how the monkeys' permanent misplacement actually tends to undercut the purified spatial reckonings posited in the menace narratives and bourgeois environmentalists. In Chapter Four, I discussed affection as a further "space" of human-monkey contact. Affection is often subject to human misappropriation, but it is nevertheless both constitutive of and composed in human-monkey worlds. In this chapter, I trace the global currents and far-flung sentiments that, first, literally decimated Indian rhesus populations, and, second, contributed to the extension of legal

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protections originally meant for globally charismatic megafauna – tigers, rhinos, elephants, and lions – to monkeys.

The Wildlife Act of 1972 is probably the single most important piece of legislation granting protections to Indian monkeys. The inclusion of monkeys on the protected schedules<sup>138</sup> of the Wildlife Act was not entirely due to religious affection. An American primate advocacy organization, the International Primate Protection League, takes some of the credit for the accomplishment, and their main concern was the use of rhesus macaques in cruel military experiments in the United States. Rhesus macaques' use in Western biomedicine goes back quite far, but the de facto implementation of a rhesus standard in primate-based biomedical research goes back to the monkeys' usefulness in 1950s polio research, which spurred a boom in rhesus exports from India. This boom has had material and meaningful consequences for rhesus in terms of their demographics, behavioral ecology, and political situation in India.

### **Transnational Laboratory Animals: The Boom and the Ban**

I came upon the idea of writing about monkeys originally because I was interested in rats. For neuroscientists and other researchers, rats are dissimilar enough from humans that it is relatively less morally questionable, for instance, to permanently attach electronic devices to their brains by way of wires and screws run through holes drilled in their skull than to do so to humans; yet they are similar enough to us that, through the application of such methods, we may learn something about human (and, arguably, specifically Western) mental disease states, like depression. So, my original question might have turned out to be something like: What kinds of models of ethical and biological "humanity" are produced through such

138 See the appendix for details on these schedules.

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practices?

Monkeys seemed to make the problem even more marked because of their apparent anatomical and behavioral closeness to humans. When I started reading about them as laboratory animals in 2003, I almost immediately encountered panicked references to a dire shortage of them in the US. This was the story that eventually led me to the monkeys of Delhi and Shimla.

In the United States, rhesus macaques are the most popular choice for any number of psychological, psychiatric, biomedical, immunological, and genetic research methodologies that require primates. Overall, monkeys find work in many of the same genres of research as rats, but are of special importance in a few key fields, including HIV studies and the development of anti-bioterrorism measures. In 2002 speakers at a conference produced by officials from two National Institutes of Health bodies described the limitations on American "scientific progress" posed by a shortage of rhesus macaques, and offered a number of reasoned solutions. The introduction to the conference report was clear about what was at stake: "Of scientists who requested access to NPRCs [National Primate Research Centers], 95 percent had their requests granted. The remaining 5 percent were denied access primarily because of lack of animals or lack of space."<sup>139</sup> And, later, "Failure to provide such critical research resources may seriously jeopardize our nation's ability to protect its citizens from bioterrorism, AIDS, and other major threats to human health."<sup>140</sup>

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139 Research Resources Information Center, "Rhesus Monkey Demands in Biomedical Research: A Workshop Report," *Workshop on Rhesus Monkey Demands in Biomedical Research* (2002). Whether the high acceptance rate of applications to work with primates is founded upon a uniformly high standard of primate research under NPRC auspices or uniformly mediocre ethical standards has been debated elsewhere. India's ban on the export of primates to the United States in 1978/1979 came during a period when standards of primate research appear to have been fairly lax in the United States, see this section.

140 Ibid.

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The most straightforward solution – adding more monkeys to the NPRCs' stock – was complicated by a material and cultural preference among American scientists for monkeys of Indian origin, dating back to the 1950s, during the first great wave of rhesus-bound biomedical research in the West, spurred on by the race to develop a polio vaccine. Without the untold numbers of rhesus sacrificed in laboratories all over the world, it might not have been possible to reduce polio to what it is today, which is almost gone. The vaccines were originally produced on a substrate of rhesus macaque kidney, and scarcely anyone in the countries most served by biomedical breakthroughs gets polio anymore. (The rest of the world, including India got less out of the deal until more recently.) It was an overall gain for the human species, at least compared to how rhesus macaques fared.

In the 1950s, rhesus macaques' organs, and the monkeys themselves, were repurposed to function as elements of a population-scale techno-immunological system as mass production of the Sabin Original Merck polio vaccine took off. Western governments and biomedical interests spurred demand and Indian trappers – reportedly dominated by Muslims, but in the south Hindus participated as well – provided a steady source of monkeys. Voices among animal welfare organizations were raised against the work, and in 1955 India banned the export of rhesus macaques on account of the large numbers of monkeys who were dying in transit to North America. The ban could not last long; scientists in India and abroad protested that the monkeys were too important for defeating polio, and India knew about polio. The ban was lifted four months later and the monkey trade would continue for twenty more years.<sup>141</sup>

According to Charles Southwick and M. Farooq Siddiqi, the researchers whose groundbreaking population surveys confirmed the macaques' decline in the Fifties, Sixties,

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141 “India Bans Export of Rhesus Monkeys,” *International Primate Protection League Newsletter*, 1978.

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and Seventies, India was exporting about 14,000 monkeys a month in 1959. The question of a ban was raised again in 1977 when it was made public that rhesus macaques were being used in American military research, a violation of the agreement that had allowed the previous ban to be lifted. While American animal advocates like Shirley McGreal, co-chairwoman of the International Primate Protection League in South Carolina, has maintained that nuclear research and space research were specifically forbidden, only a portion of the conditions that allowed that the 1955 ban to be rescinded were remembered in print on the "certificates of need" that every research institute had to submit to the NIH in order to obtain Indian rhesus during the Sixties and Seventies: "I hereby certify (1) that that the monkeys now being purchased will be used only for medical research or the production of anti-poliomyelitis vaccine, previously described, and (2) that they will receive humane treatment under our care."<sup>142</sup>

In June of 1977, *Washington Post* defense correspondent Walter Pincus wrote that rhesus were being used at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute in Bethesda in radiation experiments. An article in *The Guardian* (UK) in May had reported something similar. When McGreal learned about this, her organization contacted Charles McPherson, chief of the Animal Resources Branch (ARB) of the Division of Research Resources at the National Institutes of Health, who admitted that the ARB was empowered with oversight concerning requests for rhesus macaques for research purposes, but did not review individual certificates of need before passing the requests onto one of two animal dealers (located in New York and New Jersey) who had contracts with Indian animal suppliers. McGreal and IPPL members wrote letters to Admiral Monroe of the Defense Nuclear Agency, under whose auspices the Air Force experiments had been conducted. Monroe in turn wrote

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 2.

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to Senator Hayakawa of California informing him that the radiation experiments fell within the purview of medical experiments and that, though some rhesus died during the work, "to the best of our knowledge, the animals experience no pain."<sup>143</sup>

The IPPL contacted the Indian Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, who in turn contacted the Radiobiology Research Institute, who denied misusing the monkeys.<sup>144</sup> In response, the IPPL distributed press releases in several languages to Indian newspapers, and issued a general call for a ban. Among the horrors – and how else could the monkeys have experienced the following ordeals? – that the IPPL reported to the Indian public were:

. . . trauma studies such as the dipping of ten rhesus monkeys in boiling water (University of Kansas), shooting of ten rhesus monkeys in the face with a Crossman power rifle at a distance of 3 centimeters (University of Chicago), and a study in which 72 rhesus monkeys were slammed in the guts with a cannon impactor moving at 70 miles an hour in simulation of car crashes (University of Michigan).<sup>145</sup>

Dr. S. M. Mohnot, a prominent primatologist at the University of Jodhpur and an IPPL adviser, coordinated domestic pressure on government officials. In November 1977, an editorial appeared in *The Times of India* ("Appalling Cruelty") calling for greater accountability in the rhesus trade and an end to grisly "non-research."<sup>146</sup>

The legal and governmental stage had already been set for a ban on monkey exports, but monkeys were not in the purview of early conservation legislation. In the early Seventies, Indira Gandhi had popularized the conservation of charismatic Indian mammal

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143 A ridiculous, duplicitous statement reproduced by the IPPL. "India Bans Export of Rhesus Monkeys."

144 S. McGreal, "Interview with Shirley McGreal," *Satya*, 1996, <http://www.montelis.com/satya/backissues/dec96/interview2.html>; T. O'Toole, "India Banning Monkey Exports to U.S.; Part of Reason Is Use by Pentagon to Test Radiation Effects," *The Washington Post*, 1978; B. Rensberger, *New York Times*, 1978.

145 "India Bans Export of Rhesus Monkeys," 3.

146 "India Bans Export of Rhesus Monkeys," 3.

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species, but monkeys had not been among the ranks of the big game superstars – tigers, elephants, rhinos – whose conservation had been popularized by famous hunters and Indian naturalists. Gandhi's advocacy for animals such as these was not religious in nature, but based in her own secular love for animals, and in a desire to present India as a scientific, modern nation worthy of standing alongside other powerful nations.<sup>147</sup> At the time, rhesus macaques were arguably of more interest in scientific contexts as resources than as candidates for conservation. Of course, even as she was advocating for protecting other endangered species, Gandhi was shutting down elections, oppressing free speech, and imprisoning her political opponents. By the time the 1975-77 "Emergency" which had served her as the grounds for suspending democracy in India had passed, and Congress Party's conservative opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party, had placed Morarji Desai in the Prime Minister's office, the Indian public was already primed to get behind the extension of legal protections to rhesus macaques. There was only the administrative formality of taking advantage of the existing language of the 1972 Wildlife Act to officially list rhesus macaques as a protected "schedule II" species. Schedule II animals may never be sold, killed, or captured by anyone except the appropriate wildlife authorities, and those licensed by the wildlife authorities.<sup>148</sup>

Desai was in attendance at an animal welfare conference in November of 1977 where S.M. Mohnot called for a discussion regarding the matter of rhesus research in the US. After an investigation, Desai asked Rukmini Devi Arundale, the head of the Indian Animal Welfare Board (a government organization originally under the auspices of the Ministry of

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147 Cf. P. Greenough, "Pathogens, Pugmarks, and Political 'Emergency': The 1970s South Asian Debate on Nature," in *Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. P. Greenough and A.L. Tsing (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 201–230.

148 Discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine, where I cover Himachali farmers' advocacy for a rescheduling of rhesus macaques.

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Food and Agriculture now under the Ministry of Environment and Forests), to announce on his behalf that the rhesus trade would be banned. She did so at the same conference, and the rescheduling was announced officially on behalf of the Indian government by the governor of Tamil Nadu state, Prabhu Dass Patwari at the World Vegetarian Congress in December of 1977.<sup>149</sup>

The kind of charisma generated by rhesus macaques did not resonate among global biomedical interests, who tended to cast the motivating sentiments behind rhesus protection in India – whether or not they supported those interests – as a manifestation of a localized misunderstanding. In February of 1978, the NIH issued a statement, attributing the ban to ambiguous reports in Indian newspapers:

No official reason was given for the ban but it coincided with reports in the Indian press about allegedly cruel experiments involving rhesus monkeys exported from India. The newspaper accounts told of the use of rhesus monkeys in neutron irradiation tests and alleged that this was in violation of the U.S.-India agreement . . . Specifically prohibited uses are atomic blast experiments and space research.

The cessation of the Indian rhesus trade necessitated that the NIH rethink its rhesus-based research practices:

Domestic breeding programs started in recent years are making satisfactory progress but in 1978 will be able to supply only about 10% of the 13,000 rhesus monkeys used annually in the U.S. Bangladesh is also a supplier . . . an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 animals can be obtained from this source annually. Re-uses of animals in this country and use of other species are tactics that individual investigators might find helpful if the ban is not rescinded.<sup>150</sup>

Despite a telephone campaign by World Health Organization officials in an attempt to

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149 McGreal, "Interview with Shirley McGreal."

150 "India Announces Ban on Primate Exports," *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts* 7, no. 3 (1978).



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mobilize the biomedical research community into putting pressure on the Indian Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, the ban took effect as planned. When the US attempted to up its imports from other rhesus-bearing countries, the IPPL moved to block those exports as well, beginning with Bangladesh. They deluged officials with letters, and commenced another press campaign. To the chagrin of the NIH, Bangladesh followed the IPPL's suggestions and India's lead by banning the export of primates in 1979. Shirley McGreal recounts that at one point "the U.S. actually threatened to cut off aid to Bangladesh unless it reinstated the contract, but that small country stood up to the big international bully."<sup>151</sup> Indonesia and the Philippines enacted partial bans later, allowing the export of captive bred monkeys only (their monkeys were long-tailed macaques, *M. fascicularis*, a different species). Each of the world's main suppliers of rhesus macaques shut its doors to the United States, and their efforts were cast as resistance to a global Western hegemony.

In the early 1980s it was found that a strain of Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) from African green monkeys and sooty mangabeys caused AIDS in rhesus macaques. And so, the population of rhesus that had been cultivated for the production of polio vaccines was converted into a population of controlled AIDS patients. Since then, the demand for rhesus monkeys in the US has only grown, but without steady supplies of monkeys from overseas, US rhesus resources have continued to dwindle. Possibilities for trade with Nepal or China, and continued primate trade relations with Indonesia and the Philippines may relieve the pressure on US breeding populations. The possibility of using other species of primates is frequently discussed, but would require an overhaul of the industry standard; equipment, bioreagents, anatomies, dosages, and many of the most valuable disease models have been derived for rhesus bodies, behaviors, and genetics. The rhesus's close relative, the long-

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<sup>151</sup> McGreal, "Interview with Shirley McGreal."

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tailed or crab-eating macaque of Indonesia (*Macaca fascicularis*), is widely considered to be a likely potential substitute,<sup>152</sup> and nowadays accounts for the majority of primates imported into the United States.<sup>153</sup>

To say the least, rhesus macaques did biomedicine, and perhaps *Homo sapiens* in general, a big favor in the Twentieth Century. Though their sacrifice was hardly voluntary, we might think about what we owe them and how to return the favor. Hundreds of thousands of rhesus were shipped to the United States alone. It's impossible to know how many died in India, in the West, and in transit; and it's even more difficult to pin down what the lasting effects of the ordeal will be on source populations. Rescheduling rhesus, removing them from the system of economic value could be seen as one of the ways that the secular state has of legitimating sacredness, or it might be understood along the lines of the nationalization of a precious resource. Though the Indian state has yet to capitalize systematically on the biomedical value of monkeys, they are still a resource for projects in religion, nationalism, ethics, and cultural narration. Debates over the protection of monkeys can be thought of as efforts to assert the propriety of different orientations towards the social potential of rhesus macaques? Shall they be protected out of a moral duty to preserve wildlife? Or as Hanuman's favored? Or should they be put to use as biomedical capital by a secular state with human interests in mind?

### Political Ecology after the Boom

One thing that can be said with certainty is that since the late Seventies, India's

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152 Research Resources Information Center, "Rhesus Monkey Demands in Biomedical Research: A Workshop Report."

153 16,119 *M. fascicularis* were imported into the US in 2011, followed by 1,516 rhesus. "IPPL Monitors U.S. 2011 Primate Imports," *IPPL News* 39, no. 1 (May 2012): 21.

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macaque populations have been growing steadily. Wildlife scientist Rajat Bhargava has written that, “The total ban on Rhesus has resulted in a phenomenal increase in their populations, and being a species that is well adapted to human habitation, this has consequently resulted in an increase in man-monkey conflicts.”<sup>154</sup> Though demand dropped off considerably in the latter decades of the boom years, scientists’ and trappers’ preference for juvenile macaques crippled the source populations’ abilities to recover their numbers from either trapping or attrition by other causes. In 2004, primatologist Iqbal Malik noted that India’s rhesus population had jumped from 200,000 in 1980 to a current total of around 500,000, with 50%-60% of the rhesus living in “urban areas.”<sup>155</sup> Malik directly attributes this rise in urban contact to the ban; her claim is that “haphazard trapping of ‘individuals’ from troops led to . . . chaotic fissioning.” The idea is that as trappers removed juveniles from rhesus troops, monkey social structures were destabilized in a wholesale way. Malik’s story is not just about the monkeys who were taken away, but about the monkeys who were left behind.

She further suggests that the effects of the trapping boom continue to echo in contemporary rhesus sociality. Rhesus macaques are socialized into their behaviors like humans and other primates, and like us they are susceptible to persistent adverse emotional and cognitive states: depression, neurosis, phobia. It is feasible that the widespread fracturing of the troop structures would have long-lasting social effects in those rhesus populations who were most afflicted by trapping, effects which might resonate through the generations as learned behaviors. Malik’s message is that the 20th century created a lost

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154 R. Bhargava, “Traditional Trapping Techniques of Primates in India” (1996), <http://www.wii.gov.in/envis/primates/page185traditional.htm>.

155 Phatarphekar and Dogra, “State in Monkey’s Shadow – Without a Containment Plan, the Man-monkey Conflict Spreads Alarmingly.” Cf. Fooden, “Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780).”

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generation of Indian rhesus macaques. Those populations affected would have been the ones who were already the most accessible to humans, specifically monkeys living in urban and agricultural settings.

Monkeys, many Delhi-ites will tell you, are *jangli janwar*, “jungle animals” who do not belong in cities, and who might prosper best away from humans. This sentiment is echoed in even the most ostensibly pro-monkey news reportage, which laments the expansion of cities and the loss of forest habitat on the monkeys' behalf. In this case, however, it may be premature to speak for the macaques: Though a gentle disposition towards *Homo sapiens* does not seem to be a consistent part of rhesus macaques' pro-human adaptations, they can positively thrive in urban environments, where edible refuse and hand-outs of food help to meet monkeys' caloric demands. In 1961, Charles Southwick and M. Farooq Siddiqi surveyed towns (>2000 people) and villages (<2000 people) in Uttar Pradesh and found that, where only 16% of “villages” had resident monkeys, 69% of “towns” did, which amounts to a positive correlation between human and rhesus populations.<sup>156</sup> In addition to having more food and more edible waste, larger towns have larger concentrations of it in the forms of bazaars and markets. Up to 86% of rhesus macaques may be living in or around human settlements.<sup>157</sup>

Living with humans is a mixed bag. While rhesus macaques appear to reach their highest population densities in close association with human settlements, this proximity also puts them at new risks. Though some authors have reported that provisioned Barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*) on Gibraltar enjoy generally better nutrition than their non-provisioned counterparts,<sup>158</sup> other researchers have found that those Barbary macaques who

156 C.H. Southwick, M.A. Beg, and M.R. Siddiqi, “A Population Survey of Rhesus Monkeys in Villages, Towns and Temples of Northern India,” *Ecology* 42, no. 3 (1961): 558-547.

157 Southwick, Beg, and Siddiqi, “Rhesus Monkeys in North India.”

158 Tracey Unwin and Andrew Smith, “Behavioral Differences Between Provisioned and Non-Provisioned Barbary Macaques (*Macaca Sylvanus*),” *Anthrozoos* 23, no. 2 (2010): 109–118.

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are fed by tourists and government officials are afflicted by obesity and cavities,<sup>159</sup> and suffer from higher levels of anxiety than their less commensal counterparts.<sup>160</sup> There are social consequences of life alongside humans as well, for some authors have reported that rhesus macaques who live in towns and cities, or who are provisioned by humans demonstrate more violent behavior among themselves than their rural and wilderness-living kin.<sup>161</sup>

But this is the probable lifestyle of the majority of the world's rhesus. Almost a third of the world's wild rhesus macaques live in India. How many monkeys is that? It's hard to say, but in 2000, there were more than 500,000 in India, and about 1.8 million worldwide, which is a lot of monkeys.<sup>162</sup> Still 500,000 is no more than 10% of the number of rhesus macaques who might have been living in mid-Twentieth Century India, before changing methods of food production and a demand for rhesus in Western biomedical research put the monkeys in peril. Their mid-century populations might have been as large as 20 million, but more conservative estimates put their numbers between 5 and 10 million.<sup>163</sup> Then again, monkeys are very difficult to count.

As the monkeys' biomedical value was realized in the West, other social changes occurring in India were aggravating their situation. Firstly, India's human population was

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159 Keri Cairns, "The Late, Great 'Barbary Ape'?", *IPPL News* 40, no. 1 (April 2013): 16–23; H. O'Leary, "Contrasts in Diet Amongst Barbary Macaques on Gibraltar: Human Influences," *Animal Welfare* 5, no. 2 (May 1996): 177–188.

160 Laëtitia Maréchal et al., "Impacts of Tourism on Anxiety and Physiological Stress Levels in Wild Male Barbary Macaques," *Biological Conservation* no. 144 (2011): 2188–2193.

161 A. Camperio Ciani, "Intertroop Agonistic Behavior of a Feral Rhesus Macaque Troop Ranging in Town and Forest Areas in India," *Aggressive Behavior* 12 (1986): 433–439; R.P. Mukherjee, "Effects of Crowding on Temple Rhesus Monkeys of Imphal, Manipur," *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 74, no. 1977 (1977): 275–281; C.H. Southwick et al., "Effects of Artificial Feeding on Aggressive Behaviour of Rhesus Monkeys in India," *Animal Behaviour* 24, no. 1 (1976): 11–15.

162 Cf. Fooden, "Systematic Review of the Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca Mulatta* (Zimmermann, 1780)."

163 C.H. Southwick and M.F. Siddiqi, "Primates in Asia: Survival in a Competitive World," *Primate Report* no. 41 (1995): 15–22.

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growing. In 1959, when Southwick and Siddiqi began their rhesus survey work, there were 397 million humans in India, and by 1979 when the primate export ban was put in place, that number had not quite doubled to 672 million. During this same period, agriculture was expanding in India, and that had mixed results for the monkeys as well. Whereas the increased food production that resulted from the Indian theater of the Green Revolution may have contributed to the recuperation of the monkeys' population in the Eighties, Southwick and Siddiqi determined early on that the modernization of agriculture in India also entailed a certain change in the dispositions of human growers. They wrote:

A common feature of the areas of greatest rhesus decline is their agricultural richness. Areas such as those north and west of Lucknow have large-scale agricultural developments and agribusiness. Such enterprises have no sentimental attachments to rhesus monkeys; agribusiness generally places greater emphasis on pest control . . . Rhesus monkeys are so destructive of agricultural crops that their decline is an almost inevitable consequence of the modernization of India, in much the same way that free-ranging bison herds are no longer compatible with modern agriculture in Iowa and Kansas.<sup>164</sup>

Echoing Southwick and Siddiqi, Iqbal Malik claims that Indians' recent orientation towards making money has led to less tolerance towards the loss of crops and produce to animals. Until the Eighties, she told me, the word was not "menace", the word was "coexistence"; it was beginning in the Eighties that "the gods became pests" – a reference to the reverence that many Hindus accord to rhesus on account of their relationship with the god Hanuman. When the boom was definitively shut down by the Prime Minister Morarji Desai, urban rhesus populations began to rebound from their 1980 anthropogenic low of about 300,000 monkeys nationwide to somewhere more than 500,000 today. In 1994, Southwick and Siddiqi, having been obligated by rhesus' rising numbers to revise their views, attributed the monkeys'

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<sup>164</sup> Southwick, Siddiqi, and Oppenheimer, "Twenty-Year Changes in Rhesus Monkey Populations in Agricultural Areas of Northern India," 438.

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recuperation to a number of causes, including "some return to traditional religious values in India. We cannot document this with facts and figures, but we have observed in rural India greater attendance at religious processions, and more frequent feeding of monkeys at temples, roadsides, parks, and shrines"<sup>165</sup>

Like the journalistic narratives of "monkey menace" discourses, the ecological perspective of Southwick, Siddiqi, and company posit modernity as the context of the monkeys' decline, and associate "traditional" or "religious" values with the monkeys' prosperity. However, Southwick and Siddiqi nod to the complexity of modernity as an ecological situation, because at a later date they would also configure modernity as the context of the monkey's recovery. They noted that the surplus of food crops in post-Green Revolution India may have favored the macaques. Not only would a surplus have increased the available calories in the monkeys' environments, but it may have also helped agriculturalists and merchants to better tolerate the loss of some of their product to freeloading simians. This does not necessarily translate to a preference on the part of macaques for rural settings – among Southwick and Siddiqi's more surprising findings from their 1979-1980 survey was that, even after decades of trapping, rhesus macaques were most populous in the more urbanized western half of Uttar Pradesh state, within two hundred kilometers of Delhi proper, and well within reach of the expansive urban sprawl.<sup>166</sup>

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Though urbanization and its accompanying demographic and ecological shifts have had negative consequences for rhesus macaques, it is not because monkeys are necessarily

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<sup>165</sup> Southwick and Siddiqi, "Population Status of Nonhuman Primates in Asia, with Emphasis on Rhesus Macaques in India," 57.

<sup>166</sup> Southwick, Siddiqi, and Oppenheimer, "Twenty-Year Changes in Rhesus Monkey Populations in Agricultural Areas of Northern India."

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jungle beasts, inimical to the city. If the species is thought to be doing relatively okay in terms of their population (they are categorized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as a species of "least concern"), then this is also because of their close ties to the lives of the humans around them. Monkeys, as Agustín Fuentes has written, are world-builders, and part of their adaptive strategy, so to speak, is their invocation of protective behaviors in human beings. The environment of rhesus macaques' success as a species includes both the breeding programs of the US National Institutes of Health as well as the meaningful load attached to them by conservationists and animal rights advocates in lands with no native monkeys of their own. One important concern of advocacy organizations like the International Primate Protection League is the monkeys' use in Western biomedical research. Biomedical researchers' interest in rhesus monkeys is founded upon the monkeys' biological and psychological similarities to ourselves, but these similarities, whether they are ultimately anthropomorphic misappropriations or material inheritances of biological evolution, can also be interpreted as the bases for an ethic of care and protection. These transnational networks of biomedicine and pro-animal political activity further expand the range of home-worlds that inform affections and management strategies in India.

In the most instrumental sense, the legal protections afforded to monkeys allows governments to regulate their exchange as commodities. Aside from helping to keep monkeys and other wildlife out of the hands of persons who might abuse them for profit, it also sets these animals aside as a political resource. Where tigers, elephants, and rhinos were for the leftist Indira Gandhi a way of situating India as a globally responsive, scientific, modern state, the extension of the same protections to monkeys were for her conservative successor Morarji Desai less about India's standing in the world, and more about being responsive to domestic affections – which nevertheless were given voice in the context of



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transnational animal rights networks.

In the following chapter, I turn to the food exchanges that occur in Delhi, and to state attempts to regulate such exchanges. Exchanges of food between humans and commensal monkeys take place on a separate scale from the international politics that brought about legal protections. The regulation of such exchanges, though sometimes couched in protectionist terms, serve entirely different political purposes. This is the topic of the next chapter.

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Figure 20. An adult female, one of several dozen residents of the old Canara Bank building behind the Regal Theatre Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi. Around the old Canara Bank building when I knew it in 2008-2009, there were street food vendors, a chaiwala, and two regular banana vendors. Nearby the building was Hanuman Road, site of a park which provided the monkeys with green grass to supplement the food from the numerous dumpsters in the near alley. Just beyond the park was Pracheen Hanuman Mandir. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the monkeys would enjoy hand-outs from visitors to this important temple and the neighboring Ganesh Mandir.

### Chapter Six: Capture and Sanctuary in Delhi

In this chapter, I discuss Delhi's management strategies in more depth. I begin with a brief discussion of the technique of translocation itself, which consists of capturing monkeys and moving them to another place. It's a simple enough problem to capture monkeys and move them, but whether or not translocation can ever be used to accomplish Delhi's goal of separating monkeys from humans is another matter. Monkeys have their own desires and tastes in space, and, as we have seen, any location or relocation of monkeys can potentially incite accusations of misplacement.

Here, I turn to several overlapping social worlds which intersect at the point of monkey management in Delhi. The first world I discuss here is the one in which bourgeois

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animal welfare activists like Iqbal Malik and Sonya Ghosh dwell and operate. Malik, a primatologist by training, is a recognized authority on urban rhesus macaques and heads an NGO, Vatavaran, which advocates for waste management reform as well as for the welfare and removal of monkeys. Sonya Ghosh is the head of another NGO, Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals, and has also acted as an agent of the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals, a government agency under the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was a thorn in the side of domestic biomedical firms and universities in the late Nineties and early Aughts.<sup>167</sup> Malik and Ghosh are both bourgeoisie and environmentalists, but their concerns for animals don't stop at sorting out the urban from the wild. Though they have been at odds in the past, both also advocate for the care of the monkeys who have been removed from the city.

The next two sections detail the linked situations of the political-legal debates about what to do with monkeys and the world of human-monkey relation that is the state's and municipalities' solution to the monkey menace, Ashola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. The first section, "The Delhi Monkey Debates", is a history of the recent debates in Delhi's courts, media, and environmentalist circles about monkeys. These debates set the stage for Delhi's current translocation strategy. It was not an easy decision! While administrative units of the Delhi governments were overall reluctant to take on the task of managing monkeys systematically, residents' welfare associations like New Friends Colony RWA applied pressure through the courts for a solution to their monkey woes, pressure which was tempered by bourgeois animal advocates like Ghosh and Malik. In the mess of political force,

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<sup>167</sup> There was no shortage of complaints from biomedical industry officials and researchers that the Maneka Gandhi and the CPCSEA were impeding scientific progress in India. E.g.: K.S. Jayaraman, "Court Compensates over Activist Delay," *Nature Medicine* 5, no. 10 (1999): 1098; D.C. Sharma, "Indian Government Puts Welfare of Monkeys before Biomedical Research," *The Lancet* 354 (1999): 659; M. Clifton, "Maneka Claims Cabinet Post for Animals," *TIME*, 1998.

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pro-monkey sentiment, and expert opinion, it was only a series of court orders that saw to the enactment of governance over wildlife, and the Ashola solution took on the appearance of being "the only way" out of a troubling situation.

If the translocation of monkeys to the space of the walled monkey reserve in Ashola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary appears as the only politically workable solution in the Delhi context, then it bears mentioning that the relationships that make up the sanctuary world of Ashola do not actually center on the physical space of the monkey reserve. Though the interned monkeys are provisioned, Ashola may be too porous to hold them, for there are reports that the monkeys who have been captured climb the reserve's fiberglass wall at will, and the monkeys who leave the monkey reserve reputedly raid the villages that exist within the greater wildlife sanctuary beyond the monkey's special reserve. Without a grasp of the rhesus population of Delhi – no one seems to know for sure how many monkeys there are in Delhi – it's difficult to say whether the movement of thousands of monkeys to Ashola is even effective as management strategy in the urban centers, let alone in the villages of the periphery.

The dedication of Ghosh and Malik to improving the situation of monkeys even as they pass through government power stands in contrast to attitudes of the municipal monkey catcher, Nand Lal, a man whose efforts have been crucial to the enactment of translocation. Lal, the municipal monkey-catcher and the subject of the third world I describe in this chapter (in the fourth section), engages with the monkey menace in an instrumental way in spite of his recognition of the heterogeneity of relations. The section centering on Lal and the ethnographic piece by Ajay Gandhi which features him, is not a criticism of the monkey-catchers' economic attitudes towards monkeys, for these men do not enjoy the same access to the courts, media, and other political resources that make activists like Malik and Ghosh effective. My goal here is to dwell a little in the multispecies world described by Gandhi,

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where human actors beholden to the inconsistencies of interspecies relations respond to living complexity in their own anthropocentric, realist terms. The multispecies world that Gandhi describes is one where heterogeneity is a mundane fact of life that can be recruited as easily by domestic power as it can be revelatory of the novel models of interspecies conduct celebrated by animal rights activists and post-humanist authors.

### **Translocation and its Complications**

In the context of Delhi, the main approach to resolving human-monkey conflict during my research period was to forcibly translocate monkeys to a reserve to the south of the city, in the Ashola Wildlife Sanctuary. This practice is known as translocation, and it consists of capturing monkeys and then releasing them in some distant, less problematic locale. The history of translocation in India is long. For instance, Rudyard Kipling's father, Lockwood, wrote in his 1904 *History of Beast and Man in India* of attempted monkey translocations:

Of late years the tradesmen who form the bulk of the members of our municipalities have felt that there are too many Hanumāns about, and have ventured on proceedings that would not have been tolerated in the days of complete Brahmanical ascendancy. Numbers of the marauders have been caught, caged, and despatched on bullock carts to places many miles distant. There they have been let loose, but, as the empty carts returned, the monkeys, quick to perceive and defeat the plan of their enemies, bounded gaily alongside, and trooped in through the city gates with the air of a holiday party returning from a picnic.<sup>168</sup>

Some translocation activities around rhesus and other primate species like baboons have achieved success in terms of permanently removing monkeys from one environment to another and providing those monkeys with a viable environment. For instance, Shirley Strum

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168 J.L. Kipling, *Beast and Man in India: A Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in Their Relations with the People* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1904), 59-60.

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and other researchers and wildlife workers with the Institute for Primate Research in Nairobi, Kenya translocated commensal olive baboons (*Papio hamadrayas anubis*)<sup>169</sup> from an area near an army installation where the crop-raiders were being shot, to ranches where they would pose less of a nuisance. Strum reports that the translocated monkeys, who were moved as whole troops (minus one male who was never caught), did as well or better than expected in their new environments by adapting to their local circumstances.<sup>170</sup> Rhesus macaques who were removed from nearby the Gurgaon Air Force Base in Haryana (near Delhi) in 1998, were reported by the scientists in charge of the translocation – Ekwil Imam, Iqbal Malik, and Hafiz S.A. Yahya<sup>171</sup> – to be doing well two years later.<sup>172</sup>

While translocations can be practiced in such a way so as to promote the well-being of the primates who have been removed, it is fraught as a management strategy. Firstly, in situations where there are dense populations of monkeys – like Delhi and Shimla – removing one set of monkeys from a given locale may only serve to create a "vacuum effect" where other monkeys of the same species as the removed individuals may simply translocate themselves into the resource-rich zone formerly occupied by the removed monkeys. There can also be anthropogenic complications. For instance: In 1996, after receiving requests from city pandits and elders, the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) for Uttar Pradesh gave the OK for a massive translocation of rhesus macaques from the holy city of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh. The operation was carried out over a period of about two weeks in January of 1997

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169 *Papio* and *Macaca* are relatively closely related species, both falling in the "tribe"-level taxon (between family and genus) of Papionini.

170 S.C. Strum, "Measuring Success in Primate Translocation: A Baboon Case Study," *American Journal of Primatology* 65 (2005): 117-140.

171 Inheritances: Iqbal Malik is a student of Charles Southwick, and Hafiz S.A. Yahya is a student of M. Farooq Siddiqi. In turn Ekwil Imam is Yahya's student.

172 E. Imam, I. Malik, and H.S.A. Yahya, "Translocation of Rhesus Macaques from Airforce Station Gurgaon (Haryana) to the Natural Forest of Firozpur-Jhirka, Haryana, India," *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 98, no. 3 (2001): 355-359.

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by Imam, Malik, and Yahya under the auspices of the World Wildlife Fund India. A survey conducted by the translocation team found that the majority of respondents (95%) felt harassed by the monkeys, who mainly made their livings on handouts in temple groves and the surrounding areas, and were mostly (69%) in favor of moving the monkeys away from urban areas. Nevertheless the first efforts at trapping monkeys were met with organized opposition. The team was initially driven off by a group of opposing pandits and other angry locals.<sup>173</sup>

Vrindavan's rhesus macaques, the objectors held, are the descendents of Lord Krishna's childhood playmates. They considered the monkeys to be an essential feature of the Brij, a sacred-geographic region that includes all the places where Krishna grew up as a child. Imam, who authored of the follow-up study, characterized the status held by the Vrindavan monkeys as "quasi-sacred." Though later excursions met with less resistance, captured monkeys had to be released under cover of night so as to "avoid conflicts with any members of the local populace that did not favor translocation and to minimise offense to people's sensibilities."<sup>174</sup> In the end, over 600 of the town's more than 1300 monkeys were removed to a forested area within Mathura district. The location was, as stipulated by the Mathura wildlife authorities, within the traditional limits of the Brij, but was also less than ideal as a release site on account of its proximity to human settlements.<sup>175</sup>

Since monkeys are counted among Krishna's youthful playmates, they sometimes receive special consideration as aspects of the epic landscape. But the Brij is just one example of how affection for landscapes and their occupants emerge from the juxtaposition of

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173 E. Imam, H.S.A. Yahya, and I. Malik, "A Successful Mass Translocation of Commensal Rhesus Monkeys *Macaca Mulatta* in Vrindaban, India," *Oryx* 36, no. 1 (2002): 87-93.

174 *Ibid.*, 90.

175 United News of India, "Over 600 Monkeys Moved Out of Vrindaban," *Rediff on the Net*, 1996.

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landscape and religious meaning. In this sense, the theomorphization of macaques – which we have already seen can be a tricky, potentially dangerous way to interpret monkeys – is sometimes also a theomorphization of the landscape. The rational, secular alternative posited in monkey menace narratives rejects religious affinities for the landscape, because they preserve problematic multispecies relationships that prevent the materialization of a bourgeois vision of urbanity that orders the natural and the modern into distinct geographies.

### **Bourgeois Monkey Advocates**

The questions that are posited in monkey menace narratives are practical ones from the point of view of bourgeois environmentalism, which is a growing aesthetic-moral presence in the landscapes of Indian cities. In the 21st Century, pleasing and healthful environments have been a driving concern of government in Delhi, where state and municipal apparatuses have moved to shut down industrial polluters within the limits of the NCR, and to remove informal settlements known as jhuggi clusters on the basis of their illegality and the human waste they produce.

While impoverished people are simply incapable of producing solid waste on the scale of the middle-classes and wealthy – who throw out food and packaging, have their own exhaust-producing automobiles, and participate more heavily in long-distance circuits of food and commodity exchange – the poor and disempowered are considered to be the problem by their wealthier counterparts. For instance, the fact that jhuggis have no latrines makes them a health hazard. People must evacuate in out of the way places, behind signs and dumpsters, in abandoned buildings, but most commonly in fields and along transport paths. (To have a window seat on a train riding out of Delhi early in the morning is to witness hundreds of



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people squatting and defecating in the lots and fields adjacent to the train tracks.) Amita Baviskar, whose concern with bourgeois environmentalism I am taking up here, has illustrated the serious consequences of this sense of order. Not only are people being uprooted and forced to move on, but things can get violent: In 1995 a young man visiting his uncle in a Delhi jhuggi was beaten to death by homeowners and security guards for leaving their neighborhood park with an empty bottle in his hand. Presumably, it had contained the water he used to clean his rear after defecating.<sup>176</sup>

Partha Chatterjee has asked the question, “Are Indian cities finally bourgeois?”<sup>177</sup> We could answer with a tentative, “yes,” and use Baviskar’s work to point out the growing influence of bourgeois desires for ordered landscapes. In another very important sense, however, we would have to answer, “No, they are not, not in terms of the material reality of most urbanites’ lifestyles, which are overwhelmingly out of synch with bourgeois tastes and habits.” Most urbanites in India are too poor to be bourgeoisie. Yet, what emerges in tandem with the material circumstances of relation in the crowded streets is not the chaos that it may seem to be from elite points of view.

After the news media, my first entry point into the debates about what to do with Delhi’s nuisance monkeys was Iqbal Malik, a student of Charles Southwick, and an adviser to the International Primate Protection League, who is best known as an authority on urban rhesus macaques. Her environmental stances, though sympathetic to the poor and to monkeys, also puts her squarely within the realm of “bourgeois environmentalism.” Malik has written extensively on the rhesus of the National Capital Region (see Chapter Five), has been called upon to aide in the capture and translocation of unwanted monkeys several times (see

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176Amita Baviskar, “The Politics of the City,” *Seminar* no. 516 (August 2002),

<http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/516/516%20amita%20baviskar.htm#top>.

177P. Chatterjee, “Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?,” in *The Politics of the Governed*, ed. P. Chatterjee (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 131–147.

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previous section), and often speaks as an expert on the topic of urban monkeys in legal contexts. Vatavaran has also contributed population data and expert social advice to the public: The organization used to distribute a pamphlet-sized guide to navigating the urban human-monkey interface, which generally calls for a polite distance between primate species. In the pamphlet Malik decries helper monkeys for paraplegics and the keeping of monkeys as pets. Among many practical suggestions for personal conduct in case of a monkey encounter – "Never stare at a monkey." – Malik's pamphlet also suggests better management of edible refuse, a notion that is reflected in the larger-scale plan she submitted to the wildlife department of Delhi in 2001. A short version of it was published in *Envis Bulletin: Wildlife and Protected Areas*:

A simple three-pronged formula to this problem is to put a ban on all trappings of monkeys from forests [for biomedical use in India]; increase the abundance of wild fruiting trees and waterholes in the remaining natural habitat for these primates and capture, quarantine, sterilize and relocate those monkeys that live in human habitations, to the Wildlife Sanctuaries of the respective states, which provide plenty of food, water and shelter for these monkeys.

The last provision, that wildlife sanctuaries provide ample resources for monkeys has been sticking point for her organization.

It's worth noting that the bulk of Vatavaran's current energies go not into counting or translocating monkeys, but into modeling sustainable urban ecologies. The urban village which hosts the organization, Shahpur Jat, has become a laboratory for waste management; Vatavaran has instituted a "Waste to Wealth" scheme for prisoners at Central Jail Tihar, a vermicomposting pit for soldiers at the Engineer's Mess in Daula Kuan; and, for students, Vatavaran has effected the conversion of Jawaharlal Nehru University campus and the southern campus of the University of Delhi into "Zero Garbage areas." The claim is a little

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hard to swallow, but any movement in this direction is laudable!

Vatavaran's ambitious waste management models and their advocacy for the maintenance of a polite distance between humans and monkeys are both attempts to reorganize energetic, ecological exchange relationships into a more sustainable situation. An ethnographer of the National Capital Region's rhesus macaques, Malik is a stranger to neither the moral connotations of monkeys nor their material conditions of existence, but her advocacy for a social and ecological distance between humans and rhesus situates her squarely in the realm of bourgeois environmentalism. She has suggested publicly that some monkeys might be used in medical research, if the researchers could be properly supervised – but this is by no means her emphasis. Malik's stance towards human-monkey relations seems to demonstrate a limit to sustainability: Rather than manage the potentially violent monkeys as participants in the urban ecologies of Delhi, she advocates for disentangling the monkeys from a human society that is itself less than pure. But she is also concerned with making the situations of the primates who occupy those worlds more amenable to their needs.

Nevertheless, Malik's willingness to suggest that some monkeys might be used for research in her capacity as an expert witness during public interest litigation in 2006 has earned her the ire of some other animal rights activists. When I mentioned Vatavaran to Sonya Ghosh, a prominent animal rights activist and associate of the even more prominent animal rights activist and right-wing parliamentarian Maneka Gandhi, she rolled her eyes and said, "Those people deal with garbage!" Where Vatavaran deals with a variety of socio-environmental issues in the city, and might be thought of as "environmentalists," Ghosh's work is primarily concerned with advocating for the welfare and rights of animals. When I met her in 2009 she was teaching Italian at the Italian embassy, traveling on behalf of Maneka

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Gandhi to Himachal Pradesh to deal with farmers Shimla who wanted to shoot monkeys (see Chapter Ten), and still finding time to make her daily rounds feeding street dogs. The food she distributes on her rounds comes out of her own pocket, but now the sites at which she feeds Delhi's dogs are provided for by order of the High Court of Delhi. Shortly after we met, Ghosh's organization, Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals, petitioned the court to protect their right to provide for the upkeep of stray dogs. Ghosh and others had been harassed for feeding street dogs previously,<sup>178</sup> and so the court granted them protection to provision the dogs in 2011. The court dictated a collective response to the problem, ordering that feeding times should be worked out between the Animal Welfare Board of India (an executive body headed by Gandhi under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment), the local police, and the relevant resident welfare associations (what we call a homeowner's association or "HOA" in the US).

Dogs are perhaps more cooperative with humans than monkeys are; at any rate, Ghosh's attitude towards human-monkey relations did not permit for the collaborative integration of monkeys into urban spaces. So, despite their differences, Ghosh and Malik – both pro-monkey advocates, both bourgeois environmentalists – have advocated for very much the same strategy of monkey management, the installation of a separation between the species. "It is the only way," Ghosh told me direly in a text message a few months after we had first met. She was referring to the Ashola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary south of Delhi, where

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178 Writing for *Tehelka*, Anjali Lal Gupta recounts how she was harassed by women for feeding a dog near their house. "One lady from an apartment complex instructed her security guard to shoo me away . . . But the piece-de-resistance of such aggression was when three women from an independent house launched a full-on shouting match inviting residents of other buildings and even passersby to heckle, harass and intimidate me. They threatened me with police action. "Why do you feed the dog everyday?" they asked repeatedly. (I feed the dog daily because like us it needs food daily.)" A.L. Gupta, "No Country for Street Dogs," *Tehelka*, 2012, [http://www.tehelka.com/story\\_main53.asp?filename=Ws210712Animal.asp](http://www.tehelka.com/story_main53.asp?filename=Ws210712Animal.asp).

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rhesus who have been translocated from the city are provisioned daily with fruit in an effort to keep them from wandering outside the bounds of the sanctuary. She had said something very similar in an interview with James Vlahos, a journalist from the American outdoors and sporting magazine *Outside*. "You have to write good things about Asola," she told him, "because it is the best solution for the monkeys. It is the only solution." The next section discusses the political context of Ghosh's assertion that Ashola is the only way forward in Delhi.

### **The Delhi Monkey Debates**

The sanctuary had been established as a protected area in 1992, but the decision to use it as a depository for macaques who had been brought under municipal control was made only in 2007, in the wake of several years of increasingly shrill rhetoric in the newspapers, complaints from wealthy home owners' associations, and public interest litigations brought against the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and other Delhi government bodies.

In 2001 Malik had submitted a plan to the central Ministry of Environments and Forests – at the ministry's request, and with the support of the Central Zoo Authority. This plan outlined the need to relocate the monkeys' food resources, create sanctuaries for captive monkeys, and cease reckless trapping. This was more than a decade after the Indian Board for Wildlife, of which Malik was a member, submitted a similar plan to the ministry. The IBWL is supposed to be an apex body for dictating wildlife policy to the central ministry, but like other animal welfare and protection agencies in the central government, it is largely a moral authority with little ability to enforce its will. In fact, it did not meet for five years between

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1997 and 2002, and since then its recommendations have been followed only in pieces. When I first met with her in July of 2007, Dr. Malik offered the mangling of her own plan as an instance of the sort of half-cocked performances that she had come to expect from the MCD and the various Ministries of Environment. When "her" plan was finally enacted by the MCD in October of 2002, there was no relocation of food resources, no sanctuary in which captured monkeys might live out their days away from humans, and trapping methods were not updated.<sup>179</sup>

Beginning in 2002, captive monkeys were removed to the municipality's cages at Rajokri – these were the monkeys later released at the Kuno lion reserve. Malik found the imprisonment of monkeys at Rajokri deplorable. Worse, the MCD officers claimed that they were following her suggestions. It was a struggle to get the government to shape up, and years passed before real ground could be gained. Firstly, there was the question of whether it should be the Municipal Corporation of Delhi or the state government of Delhi – i.e., the Delhi Forest Department, the state-level "ministry" of environment – that ought to take charge of monkey management. The MCD had been maintaining for years that monkeys were "wildlife" and therefore the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment. On the other hand, the ministry claimed that the monkeys fell outside their geographical jurisdiction, and were more like the stray dogs for whom the MCD's Veterinary Division is responsible.<sup>180</sup> In 2006, practicing advocate Nirmal Chopra brought suit against the MCD on behalf of citizens plagued by monkeys at Tis Hazari court complex, the largest legal campus in Asia. The

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179 Malik's underfed blog, "Primates in Peril", gives a more complete account of her plans and involvement with the actions eventually taken by the MCD and Ministry of Environment. I. Malik, "2008 Update from Vatavaran Trust," *Primates in Peril*, 2008, <http://primatesinperil.blogspot.com/2008/04/2008-update-from-vatavaran-trust.html>; Iqbal Malik and Carol Berman, "Rhesus in India," December 26, 2005, [http://primatesinperil.blogspot.com/2005\\_12\\_01\\_archive.html](http://primatesinperil.blogspot.com/2005_12_01_archive.html).

180 A similar debate occurred in Himachal Pradesh around the task of managing the urban macaques of Shimla. See Chapter Nine.

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judges on the case found that it was the MCD's responsibility to maintain order at Tis Hazari (where the High Court itself is located), but this was just a reminder of a precedent that had already been set.

The MCD protested, attributing its inaction to limited resources. In 2004, after the death of Kajal Pandey, the MCD had complained that it had only one monkey catcher on staff, and that this pitiable soul, a man by the name of Nand Lal, was often beaten by angry residents who objected to the rough treatment doled out to troublesome monkeys.<sup>181</sup>

Secondly, there was the question of what techniques ought to be used to manage the monkeys, a point which the MCD felt had not been clarified. Many wildlife scientists agreed that translocation was practicable in theory, but debacles like the attempted translocation of Rajokri's monkeys to the Palpur-Kuno Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh (see Chapter Three), inconsistent dictates from state and national authorities, and active thwarting of capture by pious individuals and animal rights activists complicated the picture. Sterilization was a commonly-eyed alternative or complement to translocation. In the Aughts, there had been (and continued to be after the High Court's 2007 ruling) a sustained debate about whether males or females ought to be fixed. In 2005, S.M. Mohnot, a senior primatologist at the University of Jodhpur and a board member of the IPPL asserted in an open letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that a draft plan forwarded by the Ministry of the Environment for the capture and sterilization of Delhi's monkeys – a piecemeal version of Malik's plan, perhaps – should be scrapped. Sterilizing males, which the plan suggested, would be useless, for male rhesus are often transients; it ought to be the females who were sterilized, because they not only remain with their troop for their entire life, but they also represent the upper limit of population growth – a population cannot grow faster than its females can have

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181 Times News Network, "Monkey Menace: Delhi Govt Blames MCD, NDMC."

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babies. Further, Mohnot indicated that an expert committee should be established to oversee all these details.<sup>182</sup>

No action was immediately taken, but the argument continued. The dam finally broke when the High Court handed down a series of additional judicial orders in February and March of 2007. With advocate Meera Bhatia, the residents' welfare association of the affluent New Friends Colony in South Delhi had petitioned the court to direct the concerned governmental bodies to take steps to control the stray monkeys, dogs, and cattle who frequented the colony. The petition was made as a PIL or "public interest litigation," a special class of legal complaint that enables parties with no vested interest in the subject of the complaint to file suit on behalf of the public interest.<sup>183</sup>

Since PILs are often brought to court expressly because other branches of government lack the apparatuses to deal with the issues highlighted by PILs, petitioners often seek judicial orders from the courts in lieu of new legislation or executive action. Courts answering PILs tend to enact their wills through the assembly of expert committees. Though the PILs are theoretically meant to articulate speechless parties to a legal voice, they are susceptible to power – this much is demonstrated in the bourgeois activism represented by the New Friends RWA's suit against the MCD.<sup>184</sup>

182 Press Trust of India, "Monkeys Ain't Mutts'," *The Financial Express*, 2005.

183 PILs have effected two important innovations in Indian governmentality – first, the expanded sense of legal standing that PILs offer has allowed ecological groups to bring suit on behalf of the environment, journalists to bring suit against a public home for children, and a legal advocate to petition for greater censorship of socially divisive themes in films. G.L. Peiris, "Public Interest Litigation in the Indian Subcontinent: Current Dimensions," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1991): 66-90.

184 The Supreme Court Chief Justice who is known as the pioneer of the PIL, P.N. Bhagwati, outlined the nature of the procedure in 1982's *S.P. Gupta v. Union of India*, writing that: Where a legal wrong or a legal injury is caused to a person or to a determinate class of persons . . . and such a person or determinate class of persons is by reason of poverty, helplessness or disability or socially or economically disadvantaged position, unable to approach the court for relief, any member of the public can maintain an application for appropriate direction. J. Cassels, "Judicial Activism and Public Interest Litigation in India:



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On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the High Court ruled that the RWA had a point and that it was government's responsibility to ensure that its citizens could live without harassment from unruly animals. Because of the broad agency the PIL format gives judges, the High Court was in a position to enumerate several conditions for future monkey management. The court ruled specifically against the use of sterilization, as suggested by the New Friends RWA. In February, Justices Swatanter Kumar and H.R. Malhotra, perhaps appealing to the Constitutional duty of Indian citizens to protect their country's wildlife, erred on the side of caution and asked the New Friends RWA, "By sterilizing all the monkeys, you would extinguish the whole race. Is it fair to the animal race?"<sup>185</sup> In this regard the justices showed considerable care for the fates of the standing-less monkeys. They also raised objections to the MCD and the Ministry of Environment and Forests about the process by which the sterilizations would be carried out. Regarding non-injurious methods for capture and sterilization, the justices received no answer to their satisfaction, and in their March 14<sup>th</sup> ruling, they dictated that sterilization ought to be pursued only if unavoidable, and in that case no more than 25% of the population should be sterilized. This is why, even as Himachal Pradesh's wildlife authorities were in the initial steps of carrying out the sterilization of thousands of monkeys in Shimla district and beyond (see Chapter Nine), the High Court had slammed the brakes on sterilization in Delhi.

### **The Only Way**

Justices Kumar and Malhotra ordered that rather than maintaining the monkeys at the

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Attempting the Impossible?," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 37, no. 3 (1989): 495-519.  
185 Indo-Asian News Service, "Court Refuses Nod for Monkeys' Sterilization," *Web India* 123, 2007.

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Rajokri cages indefinitely, the monkeys should be transferred to a specially created sanctuary within the National Capital Territory – Delhi should not waste time and money with more inter-state translocation efforts, which had been plagued by snafus of the grandest order. Ashola had been under consideration by the Forest Department, Vatavaran, and especially Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals for some time already. In declaring that Ashola ought to be the monkeys' new home, the High Court marked out a more defined role for the National Capital Territory's Ministry of Wildlife to play in the monkey menace affair, relieving some of the burden from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Again, Iqbal Malik and Vatavaran attempted to eke out a niche for themselves and their agenda in the blossoming ecosystem of actors and orders. They asserted their version of scientific monkey management on February 20<sup>th</sup>, after a first spate of orders from the Kumar-Malhotra bench. Vatavaran announced a new project, the Primate Procession, which was a plan for the realization of a Vatavaran "Primate Estate" on the grounds of Ashola-Bhatti. Malik and her people released a list of tree species to be planted in the confines of the monkey sanctuary, which would be only a small part of the greater Ashola-Bhatti area. These trees would feed the monkeys and provide them with shelter. Malik's plan – or the 2007 iteration of it – never went anywhere. When Justices Kumar and Malhotra ordered the creation of a sub-committee to oversee the translocation of the monkeys, Ghosh and other persons associated with Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals – which is to say, persons in the animal welfare orbit of Maneka Gandhi – were appointed, but not Malik nor anyone else from Vatavaran.

Translocation in Delhi remained sluggish until the death of deputy mayor S.S. Bajwa early in the morning of October 20<sup>th</sup> in 2009. Bajwa, who was also the vice president of the Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party, had been breakfasting on his rooftop terrace when he lost his

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balance and fell two stories to the street below. He died a day later from his injuries. No one seems to have actually witnessed the attack, but relatives attributed the accident to known nuisance monkeys seen fleeing the scene.<sup>186</sup> Meera Bhatia, who had represented the New Friends Colony RWA's petition for monkey sterilization, took the opportunity to submit a further PIL to the Delhi High Court the day after Bajwa's death, charging that, "The MCD's lethargy to catch monkeys and to fortify Bhatti Mines sanctuary with a high wall has proved that even captured monkeys are back in town." This petition was not heard. It was rejected by Supreme Justice M.K. Sharma, who, apparently did not want to get into Kumar and Malhotra's monkey business. Sharma said, "We are barely able to bring relief to humans; we cannot afford to look into the case of monkeys right now," and reiterated the High Court's earlier orders. "It is for the government to take over."<sup>187</sup> As the shadowy tale around Bajwa's death found legs in the same international media circuits that circulated monkey stories to, as Rahul Bedi had put it, tickle the British (and American, Australian, Chinese, etc.) funny bone, the loss of one of the megalopolis's mayoral staff to monkeys became a public image catastrophe.

The MCD got serious about capturing monkeys after Bajwa's demise. There are now literally thousands of monkeys who have been translocated to Ashola. In August 2009, the MCD Press Officer Deep Mathur told British documentarian Jav Douglas that 8,601 monkeys had been captured and sent to the sanctuary since 2006.<sup>188</sup> In a May 2012 interview with the

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186 Associated Free Press, "Indian Capital Can't Cope with Monkey Menace, Mayor Says," 2007; Associated Free Press, "Monkeys Rampage in Indian Capital," *Yahoo!*, 2007; K. Choudhury and V. Singh, "Delhi Dy Mayor Falls Prey to Simian Wrath," *Hindustan Times*, 2007, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?id=b39b8063-4327-4e34-b30d-26467185794a&&Headline=Delhi+Dy+Mayor+falls+prey+to+simian+wrath;mirrorwarp>, "Marauding Monkeys Kill Delhi Deputy Mayor," 2007, [http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/241911/Marauding\\_Monkeys\\_Kill\\_Delhi\\_Deputy\\_Mayor](http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/241911/Marauding_Monkeys_Kill_Delhi_Deputy_Mayor).

187 Express News Service, "Monkey Rehab Can Wait: HC," *The Express*, 2007.

188 Jav told me in 2012.

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*New York Times*, the MCD's chief veterinary officer, R.B.S. Tyagi, stated that 13,013 monkeys had been sent to Ashola-Bhatti. That number of monkeys is nearly unbelievable – 13,000 monkeys all in one place? In 2005 Iqbal Malik, who had long studied the monkeys of Delhi, estimated that there were only about 6000 rhesus in the entire city. Someone, somewhere is miscounting monkeys. But that's nothing new: the mutability of monkey demographics, like their out-of-placeness, means that their numbers are obliging to all manner of argumentation. If we think of monkeys as objects of exchange – and surely they are passing through hands and cages on their way from downtown Delhi to the jungle of Ashola – then we might also think of them as currency. Perhaps the monkeys are escaping from Ashola and being recaptured?

### **Capturing Feeding/ Feeding the Captives**

I didn't get to visit Ashola. Hoping to get me to conduct a survey of Ashola's monkeys – a job that I told her I simply could not do – Ghosh had brought the idea of me visiting the monkey sanctuary up to the warden in Delhi. He was not okay with it. Afterwards, she told me that it was something about him not wanting any foreigners in the sanctuary. James Vlahos, the journalist who had interviewed Ghosh for his piece on Delhi's monkeys, had also wanted to visit Ashola, but had been unable to through legitimate channels. Nand Lal and the other monkey-catchers he accompanied wouldn't take him to their wards' final destination; the sanctuary warden stalled him; J.K. Dadoo, the Delhi Minister of Environment also refused him. But Vlahos was more persistent, and sneaky, than I was. After the rebuffs: "On my last day in Delhi, I decided to just go for it and sneak in."

In his feature piece about the monkey menace, "Howl", he tells us that the sanctuary

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was near a shantytown, and that among the first things he had seen there were monkeys "dodging rocks fired by grinning village boys with slingshots" as they scampered along the top of the fiberglass fence that had been installed to keep them in.<sup>189</sup> The gates were open and inside he found the ranking ranger in the midst of a cricket match. When Vlahos presented himself, he was disallowed further access, and his camera was confiscated and locked in a shed. When he tried to bribe the guard, the man refused and said something in Hindi. The translator explained to Vlahos that the guard was a religious man. "He thinks that you are a devil sent by God to test him." When the devil withdrew his bribe money, the guard consented to show him around, under the condition that Vlahos wouldn't print his name. The reporter wrote that as the unnamed ranger drove him through the gates and into the scrubland, he "felt like Sam Neill in *Jurassic Park*."

The monkeys were gathered at a lake.

Hundreds of them. Animals that until recently had lived in the heart of a polluted megalopolis. They dashed around the car and chased one another through tall grass. They hung in the trees, silhouetted against the sky, and perched nobly atop boulders, posing for Discovery Channel close-ups. The place was lovely.

For Vlahos, Ashola was a pre-modern space, a real-life Jurassic Park built to house the hostile echoes of religiosity, backwards-ness, and irrationality. But it was also a place of beauty, a primordial Eden. The forest guard who escorted Vlahos in Ashola found the sight of monkeys feeding en masse "beautiful." Easy for him to say! Being a religious man and an officer of the state, his involvement with channeling food to macaques was legitimated by at least two higher authorities!

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189 A. Buncombe, "Invasion of the Killer Monkeys; The Death of Delhi's Deputy Mayor as He Tackled Simian Intruders Highlights the Problem of Man and the Long-tailed Primates Living Side-by-side in India's Capital," *Belfast Telegraph*, 2007.

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"The animals seemed happy," Vlahos concluded. The lake was "an Elysian splendor . . . marred only slightly by the presence of a ravine to our right that was littered with rotting produce." Since the trees in Ashola were said to not produce edible food, the monkeys were fed by "dumping truckloads of oranges, carrots, and bananas into the gully," much of which apparently went uneaten. Iqbal Malik had made similar accusations in her "Primates in Peril" blog, indicating that the produce that was distributed at Ashola was dispersed recklessly and wastefully. I had asked Sonya Ghosh about the feeding of the Ashola monkeys during our meeting over pizza at the Italian embassy – specifically I mentioned Vlahos's report that "truckloads" were "dumped." She corrected me, saying that the produce was distributed "scientifically" to individual monkey groups, not in truckloads. She denied that feeding the monkeys at Ashola involved any significant wastage.

If the wildlife department provisions these state wards with vegetables, then this is in tune, sort of, with Malik's recommendations that the monkeys be provided with resource pools that are outside the most urbanized sectors of Delhi. I suspect that the monkeys at Ashola are not provisioned because there is nothing edible in the confines of the park, as Malik suggests. Rhesus macaques eat a wide variety of plant matter, and there is probably potential monkey food growing naturally in the confines of the Asholan jungle. But this may amount to the same thing as saying that there is potential human food lurking thereabouts, and as Edmund Leach observed, edibility is at least partially dependent on familiarity.<sup>190</sup> As expatriate urbanites, the monkeys are used to a variety of processed foods, refuse, and breads. It's possible that they simply wouldn't recognize many of the edible materials in Ashola as such.

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190 E. Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse (1964)," in *The Essential Edmund Leach*, ed. S. Hugh-Jones and J. Laidlaw (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 322-342.

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D.M. Shukla, chief wildlife warden of Delhi, was quoted in 2012 by a New York Times blogger saying, "Now we spend nearly 1 crore (10 million) rupees (about \$180,000) a year on feeding captured monkeys. They get what even human beings in India don't get."<sup>191</sup> Shukla, like Ghosh, is in between a rock and a hard place. If he wants to maintain the separation between humans and animals that the judiciary has commanded, that the RWAs and the pro-monkey activists have demanded, then he must commit government energies to the perpetration of one of the acts that is responsible for the blurring of the boundaries in the first place: He must feed the monkeys!

With Ashola's population soaring (and leaking out), it is now an open question as to who feeds more individual monkeys – the collective Hanuman bhakts and monkey-lovers of Delhi, or the state and municipal governments. At the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in downtown Connaught Place there is a sign, posted in an alley behind the adjacent bangle market, clearly stating that it is illegal to feed monkeys, and that donations meant for them should be placed in a box on the mandir's premises. But no one I talked to knew where the box was. I asked a few pandits, they didn't know; I asked some of the touts and urchins I'd meet in the vicinity, and they didn't know; I asked the daughter of the mandir's mahout himself, who took me on a tour of the mandir, and she didn't know. These mysterious bins, meant to be located at Pracheen Hanuman Mandir and at the Hanuman Mandir at Yamuna Bazaar – are supposed to provide food for the captive monkeys, but, as Shukla said, the municipal government is making the greater contribution. According to Iqbal Malik, the grain comes from government ration shops and undisclosed wholesalers at Azad Vegetable Market.<sup>192</sup>

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191 M. Vyawahare, "A Conversation With: Delhi's Wildlife Warden," *The New York Times/International Herald Tribune*, 2012, <http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/23/a-conversation-with-delhis-wildlife-warden/>.

192 Malik, "2008 Update from Vatavaran Trust."

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All along, Malik has maintained that Ashola, as-is, could neither confine the monkeys nor keep them healthy. Vatavaran filed a petition early in 2008, asking that three corrections be made: First, the fiberglass walls that had been installed around the portion of the sanctuary earmarked for monkeys should be converted into walls that could not be climbed by monkeys. Second, she objected to the fact that the citizens of nearby villages were not involved in the project at all. Ashola is at the southern edge of the National Capital Territory, not in the city proper, but on its outskirts where wilderness, village, and farm together form a mosaic landscape. Monkeys did not seem to see in the wall the same significance that the MCD and the CWPA did, and reports of them escaping into adjacent territories started almost as soon as the translocation effort began in 2007. Finally, the petition asked that the poorly maintained arbor that had been established in Ashola be replaced by the diversity of fruits Malik had suggested in 2007. The petition was read and dismissed in March.<sup>193</sup> The state would continue with its program of capture, incarceration, and provisioning.

### **Everything is Instrumental**

To move monkeys, trappers were needed. Ethnographer Ajay Gandhi observed and interviewed some of these men, including Nand Lal, in Delhi in 2007 and 2008. Gandhi's article is quite busy, but most of all he teaches us that contradiction is the warp and woof of the human-macaque relationship. He and the Lal harmonize in their matter-of-factness about the multiple-contradictory interpretations of monkeys in play in Delhi. In "Catch Me If You Can: Monkey Capture in Delhi", Gandhi's writing and attentive practice are dreamy and diffuse, but not quite surreal. The title of his piece is the only moment in which he offers anything of the monkeys' points of view – and only by way of an anthropomorphic joke, at that

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.



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– but his most productive writing emerges from his engagements with the taxonomies and practices of Nand Lal and his crew. He does not present them as authorities, and he does not go down the old anthropological road of arguing for the rationality or alter-rationality of his ethnographic subjects. Unlike Malik, who recognizes the contradictions, yet still seeks to sort the gods out from the people, Gandhi casts the paradoxes of Delhi-ites' relationships with monkeys as unavoidable and constitutive.

Nand Lal and his men are not presented as ethno-philosophers, but Gandhi does make a point with their help. In the abstract for the piece, Gandhi writes that, "The monkey catchers' porous taxonomy for human-animal difference affirms human primacy as much as it dissolves dichotomies."<sup>194</sup> Which is to say that the paradoxes of human-monkey relations in Delhi are indeed productive, and that what they are productive of is indifference. When the monkey catchers face a monkey, they are, as much as anyone else, encountering a multifaceted being whose existence challenges easy dichotomies. But they are also encountering one monkey among thousands, each of whom are worth about 450 rupees when caged and turned over to the Ministry of the Environment.

Gandhi situates the monkey catchers' pragmatic approach as a counter-balance to the "post-humanist" thinking of Donna Haraway and other Western intellectuals who found the ambiguity and multi-valence of monkeys and other primates "revelatory" inspiration for "invented theories of multispecies and trans-humanist life that – seizing on animal consciousness – corrected human vanity (Haraway 2007)."<sup>195</sup> Gandhi writes, "On the ground it was less rosy," meaning that among Nand Lal and company, "porous taxonomies" corrected nothing, and could be recruited, like pro-monkey advocacy and public interest litigations, to

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194 A. Gandhi, "Catch Me If You Can: Monkey Capture in Delhi," *Ethnography* 13, no. 1 (2012): 43.

195 Here he cites *When Species Meet*. Ibid., 52; Haraway, *When Species Meet*.

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justify power. Gandhi's critique of Haraway is perfunctory, but his insight is a powerful one. His dogged determination to communicate a perspective that is true to the inconsistencies "on the ground" results in an ethnography of multispecies society that accurately reflects the fractured state of commonsense among the conservationists, journalists, citizens, and wildlife scientists who problematize the human-monkey relations of Delhi: "The same residents who demanded the removal of the monkeys fed them."<sup>196</sup> And this contradiction, though exciting enough to me to draw me to India again and again, is nothing new and not particularly interesting in its native context. Everybody knows it, it creates no revolution, and it can confirm power.

Nand Lal explains the practice of monkey feeding more frankly and more cynically than any bhakt: "People who feed these animals pin hopes [ummeed] onto them. They think that feeding the monkey will help [bhala] them. It is for their greed [lalach] that people feed monkeys so that Hanuman will benefit them."<sup>197</sup> Later, Gandhi writes, "The unsavoury dimension of motivation," he reminds us, "is everywhere."<sup>198</sup> To elaborate upon Lal's explanation, Gandhi draws upon the ethnographic work of Marcel Mauss, Jonathan Parry, and Gloria Raheja, who described gift-giving in Indian societies.

In theory, *dan* was self-negating, unlike most gifts. It was presented as pure generosity, with no strings attached. But the structure of the gift means that something of the giver is transacted alongside the object in question (Mauss 1990 [1924]). In the case of donated *dan* [gift], sin or *paap* was transferred onto the recipient (Parry, 1994; Raheja 1988). The giver got rid of their suffering with little cost; the recipient drank from a poisoned chalice. It could be considered a feedback loop: self-interest became, through human giving to monkeys, the latter's burden. Delhi's simian menace, then, was not wildness threatening civilization; monkeys wrestled with a negativity that was human in origin.<sup>199</sup>

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196 Gandhi, "Catch Me If You Can: Monkey Capture in Delhi," 44.

197 Ibid., 53.

198 Ibid.

199 Ibid., 53.

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The problem is reciprocity. For Mauss, as well as for the anthropologists of South Asia discussed above, giving was necessarily an exchange, and a moral hazard.<sup>200</sup> This much was so obvious from a sociological point of view that Mauss could describe the topic of his famous essay *The Gift* like this:

What rule of legality and self-interest, in societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?<sup>201</sup>

Mauss's question might be reinterpreted as asking, where does responsibility come from? For the persons engaged in the circuits of consequence that are Maussian gifts, the responsibility for reciprocity is enforced by the consequences. Monkeys are not equipped with the cognition, culture, and disposition to engage in calculated exchanges with humans like the ones discussed by Gandhi and other scholars of the Maussian tradition. They may not recognize consequences in human worlds, and they can't be counted upon to return human kindness in any positive way. So what alternatives are there, but to be calculating and instrumental in one's relations with these incorrigible others?

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200 The tradition of theorizing gifts as morally fraught exchanges goes back pretty far in Western scholarship, as far back as Seneca, the Roman stoic philosopher. In book one of *On Benefits*, he wrote that "No one writes down his gifts in a ledger," and adds idealistically that, "A good man never thinks of such matters unless reminded by someone returning his gift, otherwise they become debts owing to him." L.A. Seneca, *On Benefits* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), <http://thriceholy.net/Texts/Benefits1.html>; L.A. Seneca, "Seneca's Essays Volume III," in *Materials for the Construction of Shakespeare's Morals: The Stoic Legacy to the Renaissance*, ed. B.R. Schneider (Appleton, WI, 1999), [http://www.stoics.com/seneca\\_essays\\_book\\_3.html#giving\\_motive1](http://www.stoics.com/seneca_essays_book_3.html#giving_motive1).

201 M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.



Figure 21. Pracheen Hanuman Mandir, Connaught Place, New Delhi.

### Captive Gods

When Iqbal Malik spoke to Star News reporter Steve Nettleton in 2000, she phrased her attitude towards the feeding of monkeys not as an admonition against revering monkeys, but against the practical misstep of luring these god-beasts into a place where untamed beings ought not proliferate. "I tell them if you consider monkeys as gods, nothing wrong with that. Don't let the gods come to your doorstep and ask for food. Go to their home. Go to the home where the gods stay. Go and feed monkeys where they are naturally living."<sup>202</sup> Something that she misunderstood about the relationship between god-monkeys (if that is truly how they are considered) and their devotees is that being a god means making

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202 S. Nettleton, "Monkey Menace," 2000, startv.com.

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demands, and that being a devotee means meeting the demands of the gods on the terms of the gods. Malik's attitude towards religious reverence for monkeys does not let the recognition of reverence interfere with her scientifically minded prerogatives.<sup>203</sup>

If some people collapse the categories "monkey" and "god" – very well, Malik can work with that. But this did not stop her from inscribing another distinction into the matrix of the relationship. Either ascription – god or monkey – locates the monkeys properly or "naturally" somewhere other than the city, somewhere other than the residence of humans, somewhere beyond the domus. Though she spoke in such a way as to acknowledge the validity of hybrid taxonomies, Malik still promoted the separation of mixed entities from human places. Her recommendation (in her organization's pamphlet) that people who live alongside monkeys develop a sense for monkey manners speaks to a different kind of ethical formula, which has been lost to some degree in her later proposals to the Forest Department and the Indian Board for Wildlife, which were in tune with the overwhelming sentiment that the point of human-monkey interface (food exchange) ought to be moved away from the city. Yet, even her recommendations about monkey etiquette presume that the best thing for all parties involved is a respectful distance.

Many wildlife experts and activists, in tune with Ajay Gandhi and Nand Lal, pointed out to me that the motivation behind feeding monkeys was something other than selfless care. Indeed, the notion that monkeys are gods had more currency in expert circles than in the narratives of the actual monkey feeders I met. When I set myself to ask the monkey-feeding bhakts at Jakhoo and the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in Delhi what their reasons for feeding monkeys were, people generally assumed that I simply needed to be briefed on

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<sup>203</sup> She even engages in a little scientism in her pamphlet about monkeys, as she suggests that Hanuman himself may be a folkloric memory of some of the extinct ape species who used to dwell in India, like *Sivapithecus*.

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Hanuman's involvement with monkeys, or on the ritual of Tuesday monkey feeding. If I tried to wheedle instrumentalities out of temple-goers without being boorish – "Do you need Hanuman's help for something?" – people tended to cite a generalized "shakt" or "power" that is supplied by Hanuman to his devotees. I met only one believer who was as explicit as wildlife scientists about the fact that monkeys were a resource for spiritual power, a Connaught Place hang-about or bricoleur by the name of Danny. Danny made his living doing this-and-that (parking cars, delivering tea, odd construction work) in the vicinity of the Regal Theatre and the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir, where I spent much of my time in Delhi when I was not pursuing wildlife and animal advocacy NGOs. The chaiwala behind the shopping center, who lived downstairs from Danny and knew what I was up to, seemed embarrassed about him, as though he was a poor representative of whatever it was I had come to India to study, and he told me that he was just crazy. But Danny was also chatty, and we shared in common an uncommon name, so we talked often.

One day at the tea stand, I happened to mention the monkey catchers to him, and he told me that he thought it was a misdeed to remove the monkeys from the vicinity of the temple. He had another solution: "Build a big cage at the mandir." One could capture the Regal Building monkeys, and, instead of removing them to Ashola, hold them in bondage at the very center of the capital city. At this time, the plaza in front of the mandir was undergoing renovations ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, and it was easy to imagine a giant cage before the mandir's façade. The monkeys could be put to work alleviating the sin of busy bhakts full-time. And, Danny added, they could have "all the bananas they want." What Danny had in mind was to harness the monkeys as a conduit through which Delhi's devoted could receive Hanuman's grace.

Danny's big cage is Ashola's alter-ego, acting not as a wild zone where state power

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can be exercised and intensified, but as a domesticated version of the exchanges through which Hanuman bhakts access the monkey god's blessings. Both Danny's solution and Malik's are realist solutions to the problems of monkey management, which recognize the social value of monkeys, but reduce that recognition to an instrument in the pursuit of rational ends – the extraction of value for Danny, and the installation of a safe divide between urban species for Malik.



Figure 22. Is this what Danny had in mind? This man is passing some candies from a boy to a caged rhesus macaque at Jaipur Zoo.

An important difference between Malik's and Danny's solutions is the positioning of the captured monkeys. Danny would imprison the monkeys in the center of human worlds. His cage would sit before the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir, a major center of worship, which gets thousands of visitors on Tuesdays and Saturdays. It is in Connaught Place, which is one

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of New Delhi's affluent commercial zones, and Delhi, of course, is the capital of India. The plan favored by the Delhi government, however, has moved both the gift of food and the monkeys themselves to a point on the city's hinterlands. Residents of a state-sponsored jungle, Ashola's monkeys must be provisioned because this is the only way to keep them there. (Not that they can actually be kept there!) But in the act of capturing monkeys, the wildlife authorities of the National Capital Region recruit these sacred animals of the secular world – removed by law from the banal exchanges of private commerce – to enact a sort of state magic,<sup>204</sup> wherein they produce the power of the state to perform control over space and nature.

Perhaps the most material effects that are achieved by the circulation of labor, meaning, and food around the captive gods of Ashola are in the work of those who get their hands dirty, like Sonya Ghosh and Nand Lal. Monkeys may no longer be viable commodities for Indians seeking to sell them to international biomedical interests, but the monkey menace guarantees that monkeys remain intensely integrated into other kinds of modern, rational exchange networks. Monkey catchers like Lal in Delhi and Vijay Thakur in Shimla (see Chapter Nine) have a niche in these networks and for now manage to make a living in them. Like other predators, Lal is intimately tied to his prey, and subsists on them. But like any apparently inexhaustible resource, monkey bounties comes with a price – Lal has reportedly been beaten,<sup>205</sup> and he has been subjected to more long-term antagonisms by Sonya Ghosh. Ghosh and Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals in 2006 raised a

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204 Among the other things he's up to in *The Magic of the State*, Michael Taussig makes a claim that states derive their power from the embellishments and performances of state power rather than exclusively from material bases like violence and resource control. Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997). Cf. G. Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy: Volume I: Consumption* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

205 Cf. A. Bansal, "MCD's Lone Monkey-catcher Quits, Says Harassed by Activists," *The Express*, 2007, <http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=219001>.



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ruckus about the indelicate way that monkeys were treated by Lal and other MCD personnel involved in monkey-catching. Ghosh published photographs on the CWPA website (no longer available on the Internet), complained to journalistic outlets, complained to MCD officials about Lal's techniques, and filed a police report against Lal.<sup>206</sup>

When Ghosh has suggested that defending Ashola as a space for the monkeys is "the only way," she is not aspiring to enforce a stark separation between humans and rhesus in Delhi. I don't think she minds mixing things up in order to do what she must – after we had lunch at the Italian Embassy she gave me a ride in her car to a rickshaw stand, and I must say that though she apologized that the odor was recent, her car smelled deeply of dogs. It was the smell of dedication! In advocating for the Ashola sanctuary Ghosh is taking advantage of an historical moment in which judicial power in India has been broadened in an ambiguous way, and she is hardening some hard-fought gains against the vicissitudes of political will. (In Chapter Ten, I relate the story of how a similar plan in Shimla that would have translocated monkeys en masse to a monkey park – a plan that Ghosh was also in favor of – was abandoned for just that reason.) Given the current configurations of power in Delhi, Ashola-Bhatti was, in Ghosh's view, the only tenable solution. Dare she complicate that? Malik's attitude towards the identification of monkeys with gods expresses a similar pragmatism: The terminology and taxonomy might be fluid, but somewhere she must draw a

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<sup>206</sup> Some of Ghosh's photographs, taken in December 2006 as a batch of monkeys were relocated to the cages at Rajokri, depict the injuries inflicted over the course of moving the monkeys. Ghosh used them as material evidence of the harm caused by the monkey trappers, but they were probably not caused by Nand Lal himself. The facial injuries depicted are typical of monkey combat, and the large gashes across the monkey's back in another picture could only have been caused by a monkey's fangs. True, monkeys inflict these sorts of injuries on one another without help from MCD contractors, but normally the weaker monkey has somewhere to flee, and the stronger has little reason to pursue. These monkeys were caged together with no regard for their ranks and relationships. It was this sort of advocacy for monkeys in 2006 that convinced the judiciary in 2006 to initiate reforms in monkey capture and to call for their transfer from the jail of Rajokri to the monkey reservation in Ashola.

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line or lose her dedication to what is politically practicable in the Delhi context. And though Sonya Ghosh might resent being grouped with Lal and Malik, her dedication to Ashola also echoes this stress on what can actually be done in the given circumstances.

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Different political and ecological circumstances inflect upon what can be produced in each world. Delhi's monkey management schemes have been impelled by political sentiment that takes government efficacy over nature as granted, and in the menace narratives that stirred public sentiment, government efficacy over nature appeared as a crucial element of a globally relevant Indian modernity. Translocation, which is an act of geographical purification in the context of Delhi, emerged as "the only way."

Things are different in Shimla, where similarly complex political activity has yielded a different set of possibilities for monkey management, including culling and sterilization – this is the topic of the next part of the dissertation. The possibility of culling is opened by hill farmers' claims to the literal fruit of their labors and complaints about government's priorities. Sterilization and relocation to the point of capture is a management technique that is made possible by the entangled histories and lifestyles of humans and monkeys at holy sites like the monkey temple on Jakhoo Hill. The farmers' complaints and the monkeys' entanglement with sacred sites and the town itself are both linked to the landscapes they inhabit, and the management strategies enacted by the Himachal Pradesh Wildlife authorities operate off a principle of respecting those claims, rather than appealing to social constructs of an ideally modern urban landscape.

### Part III – Shimla and Its Environs



Figure 23. Shimla on a clear day, with the moon hanging over Christchurch. Taken from the vantage of a hotel rooftop on Ridge Road on the lower southeastern portion of Jakhoo Hill.

### **Part III – Shimla and Its Environs**

The next three chapters cover Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh, one of India's northwestern states. Along with Delhi, Shimla first came to my attention as a site of "monkey menace" journalism. Shimla's monkeys, according to these stories, harassed people at the markets, stole food, spread garbage, and urinated and defecated in inappropriate places; furthermore, stops along the main highway to and through Shimla, Highway 22, were plagued by monkeys who sometimes caused traffic accidents.<sup>207</sup> Many homes in Shimla have caged

207 E.g.: Tribune News Service, "Campaign to Curb Monkey Menace," *The Tribune*, 2004, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050102/himachal.htm>; J. Ghuman, "1,100 Monkeys Trapped," *The Tribune*, 2005, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050102/himachal.htm>; S.P. Sharma, "Monkey Menace: Govt Means Business," *The Tribune*, 2002,

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balconies and barred windows to keep out furred intruders. But Shimla is also the hometown of a famous monkey temple on Jakhoo Hill. Jakhoo Hill, where rhesus macaques and humans engage in a choreography of exchange, theft, reverence, and affection, offers an alternative model to the stark separations between the space of modern humans and jungle animals posited in the menace narratives.<sup>208</sup>

The first chapter in this section deals with the multifarious histories of Jakhoo Hill and Shimla. Since Shimla's days as the Imperial Capital of the British in India, the city has lost much of its prestige, but today, as back then, Shimla is the site of privileged exchanges and energetic accumulation. Though it is miniscule by the standards of the national capital, Shimla is still margins and overlaps all the way down. Each section of Chapter Seven is taken as a situation that echoes into the others at points of exchange, leisure, and consumption. I continue these themes into the contemporary multispecies world of Jakhoo Hill in Chapter Eight, where I describe how exchange conventions, in addition to being shaped by the desires and constraints of human political worlds, also emerge from the indigenous social practices of monkeys.

I discuss management of Shimla's monkeys in Chapter Nine. Like the situation in Delhi, Shimla's monkey managers are beholden to complicated, ongoing debates about how to manage monkeys. Whereas political necessity has resulted in an effort to remove monkeys wholesale from urban sites, Shimla's political-ecological landscape has generated a different set of demands and different management responses. At Jakhoo some monkeys have been captured, sterilized, and re-released to their home on the temple mount. In the fields of

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<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20020602/himachal.htm>; "Rs 148 Lakh Plan to Oust Shimla Monkeys," *Rediff*, 2005, [rediff.com](http://rediff.com).

208 Choreography: I have in mind here the "ballet" that Levi-Strauss encountered as he left his hotel in Calcutta, a dance of rickshaw pullers, beggars, vendors, tour guides, and other tourist industry operators and opportunists. Cf. C. Lévi-Strauss, "Crowds," *Postcolonial Studies* 2, no. 3 (1999): 299-302.

### Part III – Shimla and Its Environs

farmers in Himachal Pradesh, however, a different set of relationships with the landscape and a gripe about government priorities – man or monkey? – have set the stage for the government to periodically license farmers to kill monkeys.

The main difference between the management responses in Delhi and Shimla is the parties to whom the managers hold themselves responsible. Shimlan wildlife authorities' decision to concentrate state management efforts on sterilization and occasional culls is, like Delhi authorities' own strategies, partially a product of political necessity. But in Delhi, authorities work towards the enactment of an overarching notion of human-animal relations in the space of the city. Monkeys are redistributed, and sometimes injured in the process, but they continue their hijinx in both their new and old locations. Not only are the HP wildlife authorities more responsive to the situated needs of human actors in different locales, but sometimes they also manage to respect monkeys' entanglements with the human-altered landscapes.

Figure 24. Looking down the path from Jakhoo Mandir.



### Chapter Seven: Hill Histories

The highest point in Shimla is Jakhoo Hill, at about 8000 feet. Jakhoo hosts the monkey temple, a mandir dedicated to Hanuman. The monkeys of Jakhoo enjoy advantages that other monkeys do not, and as the city has grown and passed in and out of fashion with Indians, the British colonizers, and tourists from abroad, the Hanuman mandir on the mount has become engrained in both the symbolic and material landscape of the city. A discussion of how Jakhoo's primates flourish together has to take into account the economic, political,

## Chapter Seven: Hill Histories

and sacred histories that inflect so heavily upon the character of the humans who have built up the "human place" of Shimla.<sup>209</sup>

The first section of this chapter narrates Shimla's political-social history as a colonial capital. This is a story of a literally attractive place, a site of accumulation that has drawn people, resources, wealth, energy – and monkeys? – increasingly into the hills since the early Nineteenth Century. Nowadays, Shimla is no longer to the taste of global elites, but to the taste of a rising Indian middle-class. But, as the mythic history of Jakhoo that I narrate in the final section of this chapter makes clear, Shimla and Jakhoo are sites of heterogeneity, where multiple histories overlap, and multiple regimes of power exert ongoing influence.

The succession of divinities and builders who figure in Jakhoo Mandir's mythic history never really erase their predecessors, but draw upon and add to the accumulated after-effects of their own sacred worlds. Likewise, the tourist-world enjoyed by the Indian middle-classes draws upon and feeds into the lingering aesthetic of the sanitarium-world established by the colonials. The British no longer flock to the hills in droves and no longer lay claim to the pleasures that Shimla provides, but the niches – the worlds of leisure, order, and exchange – that they and the people they subjugated built there have been occupied by a new wave of affluent pleasure seekers. And all along there have been monkeys.

### **Colonial Shimla: From the Anglo-Indian Homeland to Shame-La**

According to the Anglo-Indian historian Edward J. Buck, Shimla was in the beginning of the Nineteenth Century an unremarkable village taken during the Gurkha War and granted to the Maharaja of Patiala in return for military aid. Buck records that a British officer who

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. Fuentes, "Monkey and Human Interconnections: The Wild, the Captive, and the In-between."

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passed through the area in 1816 reported "a dense jungle infested with wild beasts," but was taken favorably by the cool climate.<sup>210</sup> Shimla was definitively noted by colonials when two Scottish brothers named Gerard, who were engaged in a survey of the Sutlej Valley, set up camp at Jakhoo Hill. An entry in their diary from August 1817 reads, "Simla, a middling sized village where a fakir is situated to give water to travelers . . . We encamped on the side of Jakko, and had a very extensive and beautiful prospect."<sup>211</sup>

In the years after the Gurkha War, Shimla quickly gained a reputation as a hunting ground and a place favorable to British climatic tastes. In 1821, Captain Charles Pratt Kennedy was appointed Political Agent and Commanding Officer of the hill states, and in 1822 he built a house at Shimla. By 1824 the Maharaja of Patiala (who controlled the area at the time) was permitting invalids, weary military officers, and East India Company officials from the plains to build houses in the area free of rent, "and with no other stipulation than that they should refrain from the slaughter of kine and the felling of trees."<sup>212</sup> When, in the summer of 1827, the then Governor-General of India, the Earl of Amherst, visited Kennedy's residence with an entourage including 1700 coolies, he stayed for three months and set a precedent for the upper crust of the British India.<sup>213</sup> In 1830, the area had become so popular as a resort from the summertime heat of the plains that the colonial government traded control of several villages and a military position to the rulers of Patiala and Keonthal in exchange for the lands around Shimla and Jakhoo Hill, which were then set up as a sanitarium.<sup>214</sup>

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210 E.J. Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, vol. Second Edition (Shimla: Minerva Book House, 2005), 5.

211 Diary of the Gerard Brothers, from Mr. A. Wilson's "Abode of Snow". Quoted in *Ibid.*, Second Edition:4.

212 Colonel E. G. Wace. "First Settlement Report". Quoted in *Ibid.*, Second Edition:5.

213 P. Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, vol. second (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 16.

214 Colonel E. G. Wace. "First Settlement Report". Quoted in Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, Second Edition:5.



## Chapter Seven: Hill Histories

As the Punjab took precedence as a military matter mid-century, it became the practice for high government officials to make tours of the hill states, and each visit precipitated another wave of construction and development in Shimla. Roads were built and improved, and in 1850-51 Governor-General Dalhousie saw to the construction of a forty-one mile road to Shimla from Kalka, a city that lies at the base of the Himalayan foothills in the contemporary plains state of Haryana.<sup>215</sup> Though the Company's designs on a passage to Tibet remained unrealized until the Twentieth Century, Dalhousie's road from Kalka to Shimla made travel to the Shimla hills more convenient for plains-bound colonials.

After the Gurkha War, the main military concern of the East India Company in the western empire was with the Sikh kingdoms of the Punjab, to Shimla's west. The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 sparked political chaos in the Punjab lowlands, and the British took the opportunity to expand their influence into the region. The two Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-46, 1848-49) and a decade of British military development in the neighboring hill states followed. Cantonments and sanitarium were established throughout the Lower Himalayas, including a base at Jutogh, a little more than three miles from Shimla. During the 1857 Rebellion, Shimla remained quiet and the hill chieftains proved their loyalty to British interests by posting troops to safeguard the civilian population of the city from a possible mutiny by the Gurkhas, who had at this point in time fought as Company troops for the better part of the century. After a century of conflict in the region, the tactical advantage afforded by military infrastructure in the form of cantonments and sanitarium in the Himalayan foothills was highly desirable. Stations in the region around Shimla – a pocket of relative peace in the midst of a country in turmoil – allowed the Army to dispatch infantry regiments eastward into the Punjab, north in the case of a Russian attack from Central Asia, or southward to defend Delhi and

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<sup>215</sup> Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, second:28.

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other plains holdings if necessary.<sup>216</sup> The decision was made in 1864 to permanently establish Shimla as Army Headquarters.

It was also in 1864 that Governor-General Sir John Lawrence formally assembled the Executive Council in Shimla. Four hundred and eighty-four government staff, clerks, and servants moved from Calcutta into the hills and stayed there for six months. Historian Pamela Kanwar notes that the government had foreseen objections from the Company directors about the cost of the move, and had attempted to preempt them by arguing that of the four hundred thousand rupees to be spent during the six-month period, only about sixty-four thousand would go into transporting and setting up government, and that the cost would go down in the years to come. Topping the cost-benefit argument off, Sir Lawrence wrote, "I believe that we will do more work in one day here than in five down in Calcutta."<sup>217</sup>

Opinion in favor of the government's move was at other times voiced in terms of the supposed healthfulness of Shimla and regions like it. From the beginning, British involvement with the zone around Jakhoo Hill had been predicated upon the notion that Shimla and places like it were healthful to British constitutions. In the context of the war and monopoly logics that pushed British economic and territorial dominance forward, Shimla was cast as a necessary place of respite for the injured, ill, and over-worked. The search for temperate environments in colonial holdings was, according to historian Mark Harrison, in part a military and administrative response to the relative immutability of European constitutions posited by new racial-medical paradigms. The 19th Century establishment of hill stations in the northwest was buoyed along by novel ways of understanding the relationships between climate, race, and health, which had emerged alongside and out of the greater acquaintance with the environments and peoples of the subcontinent that came with the expansion of Empire.

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., second:37.

<sup>217</sup> From the letters of Sir Lawrence. Quoted in Ibid., second:38.

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Whereas in late 18th Century British medicine the human body had been thought to be able to slowly adapt to new climates, the first two decades of the 19th re-calibrated this "climatic determinism" around an essentialist "hardening" of racial categories in British scientific, administrative, and military discourses.<sup>218</sup> In the 19th century climate was still considered to be a major factor in health, but the environment's determining power was now mediated through race: The British races were born in temperate seasonal environments and it was in places like these where, it was thought, they would flourish.

Buck records that a Major Sir William Lloyd traveled through Shimla in 1821, and though he complained of the ascent, he found that "the mountain air seemed to have instilled ether into my veins, and I felt as if I could have bounded headlong down into the deepest glens, or sprung nimbly up their abrupt sides with daring ease." Sir William concludes, "It is impossible that Shimla and its sublimity can ever be effaced from our minds."<sup>219</sup> Kanwar quotes the Major's narrative further, allowing him to further explain his affection for the site: ". . . it reminded me of home, the days of my boyhood, my mother and the happiest of varied recollections."<sup>220</sup> Sir William's experiences of bodily invigoration and nostalgia for domestic life in Britain appear as common elements in the narratives of European travelers and settlers in Shimla and other hill stations.

Pamela Kanwar writes that the move to Shimla in the 1880s, though justified with the rhetoric of medical topography and racial nationalism, must be understood as reflecting "a sure and optimistic phase of the British Empire" spurred along by a growing sense of economic confidence and military security among Anglo-Indians at the time. She quotes a few

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218 M. Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism 1600-1850* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 19-20., 112.

219 Major Sir William Lloyd. "Journey from Cawnpore to the Borrendo Pass". Quoted in Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, Second Edition:5.

220 Major Sir William Lloyd. "Journey from Cawnpore to the Borrendo Pass". Quoted in Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, second:1.

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lines from Kipling's "A Tale of Two Cities" – here, Calcutta and Shimla – to express "the compelling irrationality of the rationalizations and the more telling reasons of confidence born of commercial prosperity."<sup>221</sup> Kipling describes Calcutta as a city flourishing as an entrepot, a place where there should be every reason for governance to take residence:

Though the argosies of Asia at Her doors,  
Heap their stores,  
Though Her enterprise and energy secure  
Income sure,  
Though "out-station orders punctually obeyed"  
Swell Her trade,  
Still, for rule, administration, and the rest,  
Simla's best.<sup>222</sup>

Where medical topography and military concerns may have founded Shimla and other hill stations, it's clear that they did not flourish as cities solely on account of their reputed salubrity and their tactical value. More than an escape from the plains, hill stations were spaces in which a society founded on British mores – or, at least, nostalgia for British mores – might flourish. With the increase in British population, came a growing sense that such places might be cultivated as islands of properly British society. By 1881, on the eve of the town's acceptance as the summer capital of the British Raj, the bureaucrat and statistician Hyde Clarke could simultaneously downplay the military foundations of many hill stations and portray them as alternate homelands:

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., second:45.

<sup>222</sup> R. Kipling, *The Works of Rudyard Kipling* (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2008), 63-65, <http://books.google.com/books?id=zsJYAIGVslEC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

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Within these [Himalayan Mountains] we have territories which form a contrast to our main Indian empire in the great river-basins, for whereas these latter are hot, unhealthy, and hurtful to English constitutions, in the hills we have cool and cold lands, with our own climates, our own fruits ripening, and children of our own blood thriving.

From the burning plains eager eyes have turned to the snow-clad hills from the early times of English empire, and our statesmen have looked forward with hope to the day when the Himalayan regions should be occupied by our people. It has been the yearning for health and for shelter from the sweltering hot seasons of Bengal, which have most moved these men, but some have thought that military colonies should be there placed, in which our men could be stationed.<sup>223</sup>

There was no rail route to Shimla until the end of the 19th century, and Dalhousie's Kalka-Shimla road, completed in 1851, remained impassable to wheeled traffic for the first decade of its existence. But treaties with the hill chieftains provided for the forced employment of fifteen to twenty thousand coolies who would transport goods, supplies, and travelers into the mountains. This practice was known as *begar*, and the provisions of the treaties were often extra-legally extended to cover private outings and hunts. Treaties designated limits on the number of persons who could be pressed into service and set forth rates of enumeration, but these limits were not always observed, and any wages that might be received for mandatory work were neither adequate nor guaranteed in practice. Most of the porters and other laborers who were pressed into the service of the British in Shimla were assembled from the areas along the route, but the opening up of the hill landscapes to a racialized vision of British life entailed a synchronized migration of servants and laborers from the plains into these areas as well.

Despite tight restrictions about who could own land or live in Shimla, the Indian population of the town swelled from the 1860s onward. From 1875 to 1881, the total

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223 H. Clarke, "The English Stations in the Hill Regions of India: Their Value and Importance, with Some Statistics of the Products and Trade," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 44, no. 3 (1881): 528.

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population is recorded to have jumped from 8,672 to 13,258 – but these were the figures of the imperial census, which was conducted in February, when the hill stations were relatively empty. A separate summer census conducted by the Shimla government itself put the town's 1878 population at 17,440. Though passenger trains would not ply the rail line between Kalka and Shimla until 1903, when the line opened for the transport of freight in 1891 it prompted a spurt of population growth in Shimla.<sup>224</sup> From 1889 to 1898 the summertime population grew from 24,179 to 33,174. Of the later count, only 4,126 were Europeans – the remaining 27,048 were Indians, who mostly worked as servants in the employ of Europeans. By 1911 there were 36,002 people in Shimla, and by 1921 there were 45,510.<sup>225</sup>

Of course, most of the people living in Shimla were Indians: In a 1904 census, 12 percent of the Indian population were government clerks, the majority of Bengali origin; 25 percent were shopkeepers, traders, artisans, and professionals including a few doctors and lawyers; 20 percent were unskilled laborers working as sweepers, coolies, and porters; the largest group were servants, who represented 37 percent of the Indian population.<sup>226</sup> The majority of Shimla's Indian residents were directly involved in supporting the lifestyles of the wealthy colonizers, and even those who had the education, skills, or finances needed to pursue their own independent interests (as clerks, merchants, and professionals) worked in

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224 V. Pubby, *Shimla Then & Now* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing, 1996), 45, [http://books.google.com/books?id=UrZ-ibfhMyMC&pg=PA45&lpg=PA45&dq=shimla+population+1898&source=bl&ots=\\_1FCyGq2rb&sig=tDZ\\_8gv\\_nDgyxZzSAnHq2jBG3A0&hl=en&ei=6jk\\_TLvpOZD2swOJw9D2CA&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CC0Q6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=shimla%20population%201898&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=UrZ-ibfhMyMC&pg=PA45&lpg=PA45&dq=shimla+population+1898&source=bl&ots=_1FCyGq2rb&sig=tDZ_8gv_nDgyxZzSAnHq2jBG3A0&hl=en&ei=6jk_TLvpOZD2swOJw9D2CA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CC0Q6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=shimla%20population%201898&f=false).

225 These numbers were extracted by historian Dane Kennedy from the Punjab Government's Gazetteer of the Simla District, 1888-89; from the Punjab District Gazetteers, Simla District Statistical Tables, 1936; from the Annual Reports of the Simla Municipality, 1889-90 and 1911-12; and from the Simla Municipal Corporation Records. Cited in D. Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1996), 92-93, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft396nb1sf/>.

226 From the Annual Report of the Shimla Municipality, 1904-5. Cited in *Ibid.*, 187.

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supporting roles to the British-dominated government, military, and leisure sectors.

In 1875 cholera came to Shimla, killing 135. Later that year a fire ravaged the crowded Indian Bazaar. Buck remembers the incident fully in step with Anglo-Indian sentiment of the time: "In 1875 a fire broke out in the premises of Messrs. Hamilton & West, and the whole of the houses including several squalid and unsavoury tenements in the upper bazaar were burnt to the ground."<sup>227</sup> This presented the municipality with the occasion not only to create some salubrious open space in the center of the rapidly growing city, but also to convert it into a place that was more European in character.<sup>228</sup> The sanitized end product was the broad, mountain-top esplanade known today as the Ridge.

Restrictions on the expansion of Indian-dominated sectors of Shimla effectively ghettoized Indian populations. In 1904 the Indian neighborhood in the Lower Bazaar had the highest population density in the entire Punjab region,<sup>229</sup> with an incredible 17.4 persons per house, versus a region-wide average of 5.7.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, Indians could not be effectively excluded from political life in Shimla. British hill society was a product of a setting where not only was there a gross disparity in the ratio of Indian to British residents – nearly seven-to-one in 1904 – but where upwards class mobility was a reality for some Indian merchants, government workers, and professionals. In the years after World War I, increasing numbers of Indian professionals and businessmen established themselves as property owners in

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227 "The municipality . . . wisely prohibited rebuilding, compensated proprietors for their lost sites, leveled down the crest of the Ridge, and planted the flourishing copse now existing between the site of the old Town Hall and the Church. Later, when the construction of the Town hall was decided upon, the upper road was galleried out, the result being the fine open Ridge now enjoyed by the inhabitants of the town." Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, Second Edition:200.

228 P. Kanwar, "The Changing Profile of the Summer Capital of British India: Simla 1864-1947," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (1984): 221.

229 At the time, the Punjab included all of what is today Himachal Pradesh as well as the Punjab of India and Pakistan.

230 Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, second:137.

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neighborhoods like Chhota Shimla and the Station Ward. Considered by some to be arrivistes, they were viewed as threats to the prestige of government and British Shimlans.<sup>231</sup>

The political life of the city changed rapidly after the First World War and the passage of the 1919 Rowlatt Act, which extended indefinitely the emergency powers granted to government by the 1915 Defense of India Act to curtail domestic dissent during the war. When the Rowlatt Act was used to justify Brigadier General Dyer's brutal dissolution of public assemblies in Jallianwala Bagh of Amritsar – it was a massacre, nearly four hundred people were killed – Mohandas Gandhi and the Indian National Congress responded by calling for a nation-wide non-cooperation movement. The result was a substantial disruption of British administrators' ability to rule. In 1921, Gandhi arrived in Shimla at the request of the nationalist politician Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to meet with the Viceroy Lord Reading. Reading may have wanted to bring the non-cooperation to an end in time for a visit from the Prince of Wales later that year.

The meeting did not go as planned for Reading, and the movement did not end until Gandhi called it off after the Chauri Chaura incident in 1922, when rioters imprisoned a number of Indian policemen in a station and burned them alive.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, Kanwar pinpoints Gandhi's five-day visit to Shimla and the various meetings he had with local leaders as an ordinary moment in the encounter between Shimlans and the anti-colonial movements. Gandhi's visit boosted public discussion about two critical issues that had been percolating in Shimla's public consciousness throughout World War I – *begar* and elective representation. Two members of the Indian professional class, Kedar Nath, a physician, and Harish Chandra, a court official, were crucial in rallying political opinion for elective representation in municipal

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., second:141-145.

<sup>232</sup> Chauri Chaura is near Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. B.D. Metcalf and T.R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 179-183.



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politics; in 1921 they achieved some modest concessions towards that goal. The American mystic and businessman, Satyananda Stokes, was more effective as an opponent of begar, which was outlawed in Shimla that same year.

By 1925 Shimla had lost much of its allure as a holiday destination, and pessimism about a sustained British presence in the country was starting to register in the halls of power. Urbanization seems to have dulled the setting's romance. The Thirties saw Government gradually begin to shift away from Shimla. Though the autonomy guaranteed by the Government of India Act of 1935 never came to practical fruition, it did significantly increase the voting constituency in India. The author of a municipal report suggested that government had been "influenced by the serious overcrowding in Simla and by the prospect of this problem being made more acute when the next and much larger Federal Legislature comes into being."<sup>233</sup> In short, the inclusion of Indians into the political process meant for the government reporter that government and the summer capital itself was going to get more crowded. It was not a utilitarian cost-benefit argument that saw government shift from Shimla, but fear of overcrowding. In early 1939, the migrant government population was reduced by two-thirds, and when the Second World War broke out that fall, Army HQ shifted entirely to New Delhi. Property values immediately fell.

The Shimla of Pamela Kanwar's account may have never recovered from the loss of Imperial favor in 1939. She illustrates its decline through the example of an unfulfilled development scheme: In 1914, the Secretary of State allotted forty-eight lakh rupees to be spent on improving Shimla's water supply and sewage system, on improving roads, and for building an electric lift on Jakhoo Hill. Serious improvements to the accessibility of water in

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<sup>233</sup> From the Draft Report on the Administration of Simla Municipality, 1939-40, pp. 3-4, Mela Ram Sood Papers; and Home Public, 5/7/42, 1942, NAI. Quoted in Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*.

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the city were made in the late Thirties, and, in the Forties, a Circular Road linking the Kalka-Shimla road to the Hindustan-Tibet road was built around the city. Yet, in 1937, only about half of the funds had been spent – and only about a quarter of that had been spent on the recommended projects.<sup>234</sup>

India won independence on August 15th, 1947. Between Independence and the inception of the new Constitution in 1950, the various provinces and princely states reorganized. The princely hill states around Shimla coalesced in 1950 to form the “part C state” of Himachal. These states were administered by an executive appointed by the President rather than by elected officials. The headquarters of this administrative unit was Shimla. At this time, Shimla was within the borders of Punjab state and also served as that state’s capital. In 1952, Chandigarh assumed the mantle Punjab’s capital, and Shimla was left in an even more ambiguous position in terms of being a seat of power. The government and borders of Himachal were reorganized in 1954 to absorb the hill kingdom of Bilaspur, again in 1956 as Himachal became a “union territory”, and again in 1966 when the Punjab was reorganized and acceded some of its districts to Himachal. Though Shimla retained its role as Himachal’s capital throughout the Fifties and early Sixties, power was firmly in Delhi. The territorial government that sat in Shimla was empowered only to pass by-laws that again rested on approval from the Centre.<sup>235</sup>

Himachal Pradesh achieved full statehood and integration into the union on 25 January 1971. In December of that year Pakistani and Indian forces fought the second Indo-Pakistan War, and it was in Shimla where Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President General Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed the 1972 Simla Agreement that established the de factor

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., second:244-246.

<sup>235</sup> M.S. Ahluwalia, *Social, Cultural & Economic History of Himachal Pradesh* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1998), 38.

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border between Pakistan and India known as the Line of Control. That line officially brought an end to the Indo-Pakistani War of '71, but, like the 1914 Simla Accord, it later became the source of strident debate and even more strife between the rival powers.

Kanwar writes of a regeneration in 1966 when the sections of the Punjab that included Shimla were integrated into Himachal Pradesh, but the image that sets the tone of her summary "Postscript" to her history of of Imperial Shimla is one of a city that has been – if not falling apart – then expanding in unplanned directions since Independence, and exceeding itself in unsustainable ways:

Simla spills over in many directions; the half-timbered Tudor mansion here and the Scottish castle there, peer from behind the thrusting new concrete structures. These spell the transformation of Simla into Shimla, from summer capital of the Raj to the all-weather provincial capital of independent India. The hill station built for the exercise of privilege, class, and eccentricity, is being turned into one of [the] high-density colonies to meet the demands of middle-class government employees, lawyers and bankers, contractors, shopkeepers and commission agents, and affluent fruit growers from the rural hinterland.

It is customary to highlight the meanness, squalor and vulgar health of the town, the smelly 'Shame-la', and to nurse imprisoned memories of idyllic days of the Raj.<sup>236</sup>

These shameful "memories," however, are not imprisoned, merely transformed. In the midst of expansion, the thrust of Shimla's story remains the same: Shimla, like Delhi, has risen to different kinds of glory over time as successive waves of occupiers have rushed upon the locale. Hill kingdoms and their exchanges with Tibetans and Chinese attracted Gurkhas, whom the British had to battle for the sake of their own poorly realized dreams of trade with Tibet, as well as for the sake of Western security. The British multiplied and drew hordes of public and private servants from near and far into the hills with them; together they brought the metropolis to the mountains. Premised as a resort and center of governance, Shimla went

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236 Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, second:248.

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out of fashion for a while when its status as an Anglo-Indian homeland seemed in question, but it never entirely lost its appeal to escape seekers, and it is to a new generation of romantics and merry-makers that the town must now look. To call Shimla “Shame-la” and to leave its history at that – as Buck and Kanwar did in their ways – is to deny the novel kinds of affluence that the most recent occupiers, the Indian middle-classes, bring to it.

### **Tourist Shimla**

Today, tourism is still a major industry in Shimla. Like any newcomer to the city, my mental map of the town was oriented between points that are of interest to tourists: Jakhoo Hill, site of the monkey temple; the plaza known as the Ridge, just to the hill's west; the colonial era Christchurch, built on the Ridge at Jakhoo's foot; the Mall and the Lakari Bazaar, two markets that connect with the Ridge; and the former summer home of India's colonial governor, the Viceregal Lodge, where the Indian Institute for Advanced Study now resides. By no coincidence, it's no problem to find monkeys in any of these places. Rhesus macaques walk amongst the crowds, and langurs often leap across the rooftops.

According to the City Development Plan published by the municipal corporation in 2006, about 1.8 million tourists had visited Shimla in the previous year. 96.6% of them were Indians, and 36% came from Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi. The authors of the CDP, Infrastructure Development Limited, identified the small percentage of foreign tourists – about 3.4% – as an unexploited resource for the local tourist industry. They noted that the city had become a “bag-packing” destination with tourists of all types remaining in town, on average, for a mere one and one-third days.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>237</sup> Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited, “Shimla City Development Plan,” ed. Himachal Pradesh Urban Development Authority, Municipal Corporation of Shimla Website (2006), <http://shimlamc.gov.in/MC/admin/Pages/page/CDPChap1.aspx>.

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Why so few foreigners? Why such short visits? Shimla is a quiet town compared to Delhi, and high in the Himalayas, one would think that it would be an ideal destination for foreign travelers. The few foreign tourists who do come to Shimla are in my experience mostly uninterested in the things that bring the 96.6% of tourists who are Indian – the town's ballyhooed "colonial heritage," pony rides on the Ridge, honeymooning, and the monkey temple. Some find it unconvincing as a "green" tourist destination (a strong point identified by Infrastructure Development Corporation). The foreigners I met were mostly on their way to somewhere else. Most were relatively young people in their twenties to thirties, and most of them were on their way further northeast towards Manauli where they sought natural beauty, parties, or drugs. Two Bostonians I met were planning to traverse the world's highest road, in Ladakh, by motorcycle. Other travelers might have been seeking an audience with the expatriate Dalai Lama in MacLoed Ganj, and still others would have been heading to the Great Himalayan National Park, which attracts backpackers, campers, and adventure seekers. None of the foreigners I met were staying more than a few days.

As a tourist site, Shimla did not usually appear to be of much interest to the international traveling classes. The draw of Shimla, what most of the 1.7 million or so Indians who visited in 2005 were probably after, was a romance of some kind. I imagine a three-way axis stretching between three distinct tropes of desires: the honeymooners, the family vacationers, and the weekend rowdies. The first kind of desire draws its bearers into the hills in pursuit of the trysts and frivolity enjoyed by the British occupiers and commemorated in Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Ballad of Jakko Hill".<sup>238</sup> But where Kipling wrote of the infidelities and inconstancies of the British, today's romantics and honeymooners nurture their fantasies on countless Bollywood movies depicting Shimla as a place where love soars and

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238 R. Kipling, *Complete Verse*, Definitive Edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 49-50.

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unrealized connections are made clear.<sup>239</sup>

Another aesthetic of desire that takes people into Shimla is the romance with life in the hills: the fresh air, the big sky, the quaint Victorian architecture. It is a romantic accession to the uncritical frivolity and affluence of the colonials who made Shimla their home. The fantasy and reality of privilege is lived out through shopping at the name brand outlets on the Mall, posing for family portraits on the Ridge in Pahari (hill peoples) festival garb, taking in the historical sites, and sending the kids for pony rides. A wooden trinket from the Lakari Bazaar allows these middle-class families to take the pastoral kitsch home with them.

The third corner of desire is a romance with the freedom and power offered by a cheap vacation in a town of tourists, and the privilege of being young, affluent, and male. The young men come to Shimla in groups and share hotel rooms. They appear to do nothing but drink and carouse. Fair enough; any college student or resident youth will tell you that there simply isn't anything to do in Shimla other than drink. There is a theater, and there is also one disco, but I had gone there dozens of times before I realized it was anything more than the most underpopulated bar in town. So the young males drink at their hotels, in the bars, and in the woods. They get rowdy; more than once I found myself butting heads with these weekending beasts, who spit, litter the rooves of hotels with their bottles and vomit, and sometimes give foreigners a hard time.

All of these people – the honeymooners, the families, the weekenders – came mostly from the nearby plains metropolises of Delhi, Ludhiana, Ambala, and Chandigarh. A vacation to Shimla might also be the purview of the international traveling classes, those who cross

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239 Cf. *Love in Shimla* (1960), *Bobby* (1973), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Jab We Met* (2007), *Tere Ghar ke Samne* (1963), *Black* (2005), *Maya Memsahib* (1993), *Darr* (1993), and *1920* (2008) for a few of the movies that draw upon (and contribute to) Shimla's reputation as a site of romantic liaisons and awakening to unrealized connections.

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borders on planes, but they were not the obvious majority of vacationers. The romance with Shimla town is a pursuit for the middle-classes. And the aesthetic sensibilities to which Jakhoo most appeals are those of the plains-dwellers suspended between the global and the parochial. The flora and architecture on the mandir grounds is neither pastoral nor wild – neither quaint nor thrilling. The way that the grounds around Jakhoo are managed by the temple staff, and the ways in which tourists use them, lend Jakhoo the character of a city park endowed with vistas, monkeys, saffron paint, sacred air, and less city. To Western tastes, it might come off as a gaudy tourist trap. As a point of passage for nearly everyone who visits Shimla – and, remember that, in turn, Shimla is a point of passage for journeys further north – Jakhoo is something of a cipher for taste. While visitors to the hill seem to agree by and large that the walk up the hill is pleasing for its lush greenery, its tall cedars, and its calming, eerie fogs, opinion is divided on the mandir complex itself. Monkeys notwithstanding, foreigners seemed underwhelmed by the architecture there. The motorcyclists from Boston had made it up the path from the Ridge to the mandir in a spectacular ten minutes (I took thirty if I was really hustling), but they had met with disappointment. “Did we miss something? That’s it?” they asked me as they passed me on the lawn of Rothchild Manor about a third of the way up the hill. At Jakhoo, there are no grandiose spires, no towering mountain-like peaks atop the mandir itself. There are but a few relatively simple buildings there, and as ornate as they are, they do not compare to the monuments that draw international tourists to Delhi, Jaipur, Udaipur, Agra, and Amritsar.

But in recent years, development has taken off on Jakhoo. Since my first visit there in 2006, a langurhaal or cafeteria for the distribution of prasad has been built, a dormitory for vendors and laborers has been set up nearby, work has begun on a sky-lift that will carry people to the mandir so that they can skip the fairly exhausting hike from town, and, in late

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October of 2010, a hundred-and-eight foot tall statue of Hanuman, sponsored by JHS Svendgaard Laboratories (a major manufacturer of toothbrushes and oral care products in India) was unveiled by none other than Abhishek Bachchan, and now rises out of Jakhoo's treeline to watch over Shimla.

The latter was an especially glorious addendum to the hilltop's architecture, and the choice of Abhishek Bachchan to unveil it was telling. Bachchan is one of the most popular actors in the world. He is the son of Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, and the grandson of the poet Harivansh Bachchan. His appearance at Jakhoo would have been comparable in America to, say, having Brad Pitt or Ben Affleck on call, especially if they happened to be the son of Al Pacino or Clark Gable. Abhishek is a *very big deal*, and he is as surely an object of adoration as Lord Hanuman – there is reputedly a mandir dedicated to his father in Mumbai. What sort of collusions must have occurred at the toothbrush company to bring Bachchan and Hanuman together?<sup>240</sup>

I have not been back to Shimla since before the giant Hanuman was erected, but I have seen photographs of it on the Internet, and it is fair to say that the face of the mountain has been considerably altered. Until the completion of Hanuman, the most visible landmark in Shimla from a distance was Christchurch, which is visible to train passengers a full hour before they reach Shimla. Jonathan Miles-Watson, an ethnographer of Shimla's Christians, has written in his blog, "Although Christchurch is the icon of Shimla, it is dwarfed by the mountains all around. The geography of Shimla mall soars up behind Christchurch like a wall which leads to Jakhoo peak, home of Hanuman." Whereas Christchurch was built as a material reminder of divinity, the divinity expressed by Jakhoo Mandir, hidden among the

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<sup>240</sup> Well, I'll tell you: The managing director of JHS Svendgaard is Nikhil Nanda, the grandson of deified Bollywood director Raj Kapoor, son of India's largest insurance agent, husband of Shweta Nanda (nee Bachchan), who is Abhishek Bachchan's sister.



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cedars and all but invisible from town, was one that was immersed in, and emerged from, its natural surroundings.<sup>241</sup>

Now, saffron-painted Hanuman-ji towers from the green treeline, standing alert but relaxed as he watches over the city. His pose is, possibly, a little nontraditional. Neither a fierce (*ugra*) warrior, nor an adoring devotee (*bhakt*) of Ram, Jakhoo's Hanuman-ji is clearly a protector of the city that he overlooks. He is one of a veritable proliferation of giant Hanuman murtis that have been sprouting up across India and the rest of the world since the late 1970s. In his essay, "My Hanuman is Bigger than Yours", Phillip Lutgendorf introduces us to the succession of increasingly taller Hanuman murtis that have been built in Delhi, Bangalore, Himachal Pradesh, Trinidad and Tobago, and Andhra Pradesh, where the current tallest Hanuman, a 135 foot tall titan, lives. And not to mention the 108 foot-tall robotic Hanuman mandir who stands over the elevated tracks of Delhi's Metro line just between Jhandewalan and Karol Bagh stations. Though he is careful to remark upon the multiple meanings that are applied to Hanuman in all his forms, Lutgendorf situates the building of giant Hanuman murtis by wealthy patrons in the context of a late twentieth-century Hindu revivalism, which "appeals to pervasive fears of loss of power; it warns of Hindus 'becoming a minority' in their own country and stridently calls for 'protection' (*raksa*) – of dharma, cows, and women."<sup>242</sup> It's difficult to deny that there is a singularly masculine aesthetic at work in the giant murti, one that appreciates superlatives, size, and physical presence.

The builders of Christchurch certainly had the visibility of their architecture and the eminence of their religion in mind when they placed it on the Ridge in 1857, and so there is a

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241 Jonathan Miles-Watson, "Hanuman Reshapes Shimla's Landscape?," *Landscape, Religion, and Identity in Shimla*, November 8, 2010, <http://shimlaproject.blogspot.com/2010/11/hanuman-reshapes-shimlas-landscape.html>.

242 P. Lutgendorf, *Hanuman's Tale: The Messages of a Divine Monkey* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 244-245.

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bit of irony that Jakhoo Mandir, which pre-dates the church, should have eventually co-opted that logic of visibility and manifested its own presence in an even more obtuse fashion. A news story detailing the unveiling ceremony represented opinion about the statue as being divided, quoting an elder resident as saying, "The silvery moon lighting up the lush green mountains at night was a sight to behold. Anything that cannot gel with the surroundings should be avoided."<sup>243</sup> Jakhoo Hill is a designated "green area": per municipal law, there is supposed to be no building or cutting of trees on the hill. Regardless, not too far below Jakhoo's peak, the mansion of a shipping magnate had been under construction for two years in 2009. Beyond the aesthetic, there is a further concern about maintaining the health of the local ecology in the face of new construction and tourism development.<sup>244</sup>

Formerly, the only time giants and dense crowds appeared on the hilltop was when it served as a center of celebration sponsored by the municipality or the state government, such as the Dussehra celebration Teresa and I attended in November. There was a sea of people flowing uphill. We rose with the crowds and took our time climbing the path, stopping at the rest stations to mount a tree or a foundation and to survey the humanity. Much of the district must have shown up, and we spotted only three other foreigners the whole time. The normal vendors were gone or absorbed into the crowds by the time we reached the maidan and located the giant effigies of the epic villain Ravan and his sons Kumbhakaran and Meghnath. Replacing the normal vendors were new vendors unfamiliar to me, hawking plastic toys including pop guns, monkey masks, and plastic weapons – clubs mimicking Hanuman's own, and bow-and-arrows sets that recalled Ram's and Lakshman's chosen accoutrements. Using a journalistic people-counting technique Teresa taught me, I estimated that there could

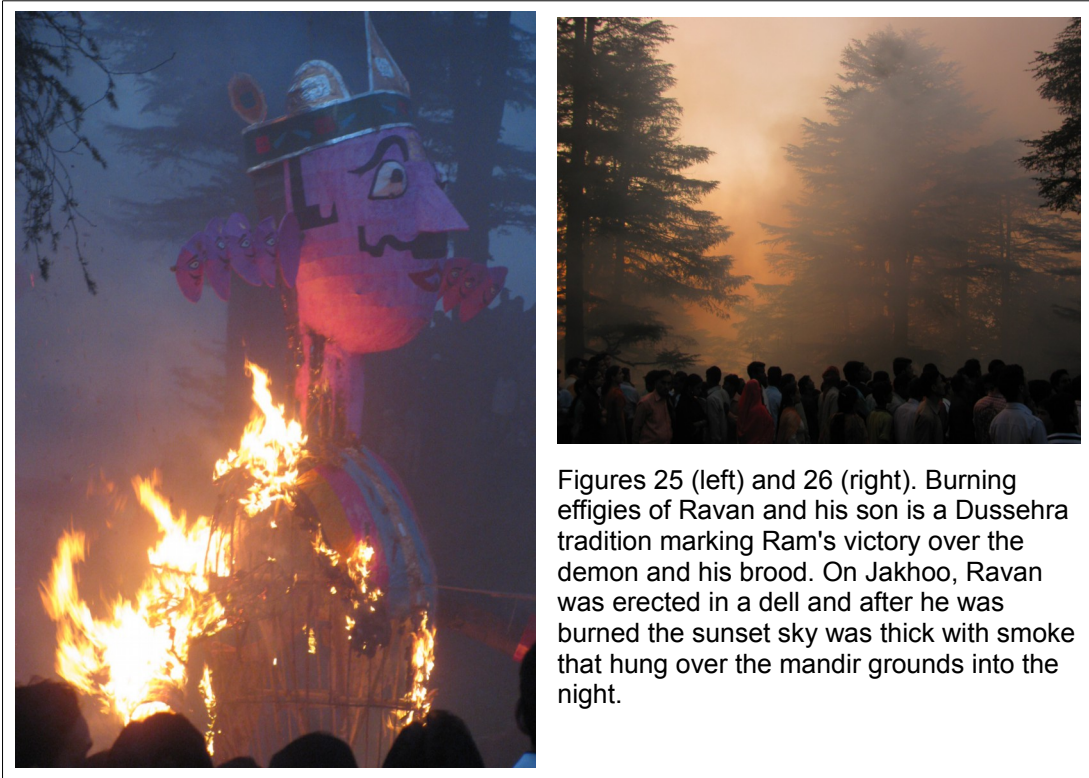
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243 Indo-Asian News Service, "108-ft Hanuman Idol to Attract Tourists in Shimla," 2010, <http://www.sify.com/news/108-ft-hanuman-idol-to-attract-tourists-in-shimla-news-national-kk3pEmfbcfh.html>.

244 A. Batra, "Himalayan Ecotourism in Shimla," *ABAC Journal* 21, no. 3 (2001).

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have been three thousand people in the space of the Jakhoo Mandir complex, which now seemed small.



Figures 25 (left) and 26 (right). Burning effigies of Ravan and his son is a Dussehra tradition marking Ram's victory over the demon and his brood. On Jakhoo, Ravan was erected in a dell and after he was burned the sunset sky was thick with smoke that hung over the mandir grounds into the night.

The chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, Prem Kumar Dhumal was on hand to flip the switch that would ignite the giant demons built thirty feet tall in bamboo and mache. Fire shot from the demons' eyes, the crowd cheered, and a cloud of thick smoke rose into the cedars. Higher still rose thousands of pale moths, fleeing their roosts in the trees as the smoke rose; higher than them, fireworks shot over the thousands of human heads thronging the temple grounds. When the giants were reduced to warm chunks and the fires began to fade, the police gave the go-ahead and hundreds of men descended down the slope to scavenge chunks of the defeated demons. Once the main part of the crowd had dissipated, Teresa and I ventured into the dell, and learned from the stragglers that they were dismembering the

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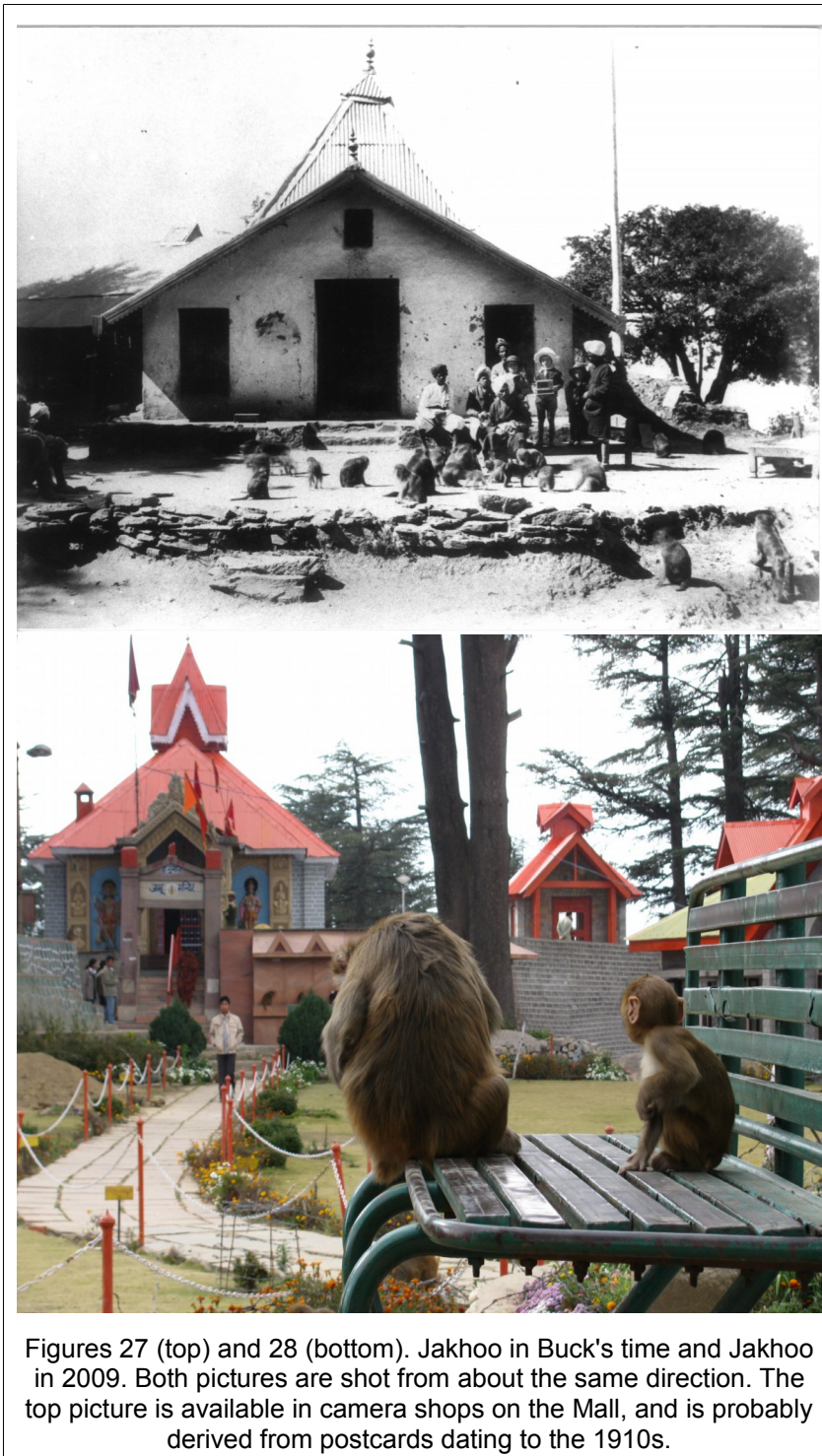
demon remains for good luck and strength over evil. This was literally powerful waste. In the wake of the crowds, the usually relatively litter-free hilltop was covered in a layer of ash and garbage. The garbage lingered for weeks afterward.

In Dussehra, Jakhoo's character came into into higher resolution. It is not just “a place apart” in the dichotomous sense of the hilltop versus the city, Shimla versus Delhi, the mountains versus the plains, cleanliness versus pollution. The temple site was not alien to what were (for myself and many others) the worst parts of the city – the crowds and the pollution wreaked by Himachalis on Dussehra. Jakhoo's and Shimla's history as a resort and pilgrimage site is on the order of the hierarchical, but it is also romantic, a place where disparate elements come together. These encounters produce sparks. Like a city, Jakhoo is at the top of a food chain – it is like a predatory animal in that it occupies a higher trophic level than its suburban and rural counterparts, the towns and villages of Himachal Pradesh. In Shimla, the prerogative to consume extravagantly and inefficiently emerges from its historical situation in the economy and politics of the hills and the rest of India. Yet, unlike the modern city, the most obvious signs of the temple's status as a center of resource accumulation and expenditure are ensconced in ritual and festivals – in Delhi, waste and extravagance are so commonplace as to go unnoticed or utterly accepted. It is on days like Dussehra and Hanuman Jayanti – Hanuman's birthday, when half-eaten plates of prasad<sup>245</sup> piled up and tantalized the monkeys – that Jakhoo attracts to itself the density of bodies, noise, mass, and offal that mark the continuity of its exalted status as extravagantly as the unveiling of any giant Hanuman by any Bollywood demigod.

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245 In this case, a hot meal of dal, bread, etc. Not the candy and chickpea offerings discussed in the next chapter, but divine leftovers nonetheless.

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Figures 27 (top) and 28 (bottom). Jakhoo in Buck's time and Jakhoo in 2009. Both pictures are shot from about the same direction. The top picture is available in camera shops on the Mall, and is probably derived from postcards dating to the 1910s.

### The Epic History of Jakhoo

Two hundred years after the Gerard brothers' visit, the fakir and the village they reported are gone, replaced by pandits and the municipality that employs them. And no longer is Jakhoo primarily a watering station – today it is known as a monkey temple and many would hold that its primary function is as a diversion for tourists. The details of Jakhoo's transition from watering hole to monkey temple are vague, and it may very well be the case, as most of Jakhoo's staff and regulars will say, that the monkeys were there right from the beginning. If there were monkeys at the site in the earliest days of colonial contact, then it is reasonable to suspect that in 1812 the Gerard brothers, who did not stay long, may have failed to take note of the monkeys, or may have seen their presence as unremarkable. Such anthropophilic monkey troops have been around for a long time. In 1808, Captain Thomas Williamson wrote in his *Wild Sports of India* that monkey-ridden way stations were a common sight:

The common kind of monkey, which is found almost everywhere, is the bhunder, or woodman. They, when erect, may measure about two feet in height: they are docile and affectionate . . .

In many places there are established revenues allotted for feeding whole tribes of bhunders. These generally depend on a faukeer, or mendicant priest, or on a milky, who has lands bestowed on him, by some bequest, as an object of charity. These having either a small hut, or being attached to some particular mausoleum erected in honour of their benefactor, maintain themselves and the bhunders by an appeal to all travelers; who, pleased with the familiarity of the monkeys, rarely fail to give a few pice, or small copper coin, part of which is disbursed at the shop of a neighbouring vendor of provisions, who always resides near such a regular scene of consumption in that line. The monkeys are very orderly; coming when called, and never molesting any person. It has, indeed, happened that these pensioners have taken offence at mere trifles, and done some mischief: their bite is very severe and they display uncommon unanimity and perseverance in their resentments.<sup>246</sup>

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246 T. Williamson, "Oriental Field Sports: Volume 2," 1808, 70-71, [www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/dcd/](http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/dcd/).

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More than a century later, Buck would write, "On the summit of Jakkho, about 8.300 feet, is a small temple dedicated to Hanuman, the monkey god, where lives a fakir, chiefly famed as the presiding genius over the troops of brown monkeys which practically own the hill top." Commenting on the Gerards' diary, he continued, "The shrine as it then existed is no doubt somewhat altered to-day, but it is a spot that all visitors seem to find of special interest. Simla children are occasionally allowed as a special treat to make the steep journey up the hill, where they throw biscuits and grain to the chattering monkey folk."<sup>247</sup>

In this way, we might begin to outline the history of the monkey temple, or the history of Jakhoo's rhesus as companion species on the model of Haraway's human-dog tales. But we could start even farther back, in the site's mythic prehistory. The pandits and the hill's regulars offer a deeper cosmogony of the world on Jakhoo Hill that is linked to the epic Ramayana.

Two eons ago, in the Treta Yug, during the war between Ram and Ravan, Ram's brother, Lakshman, was wounded in battle. Ram sent his loyal companion Hanuman, the monkey hero, to fly to the Himalayas in search of an herb, the sanjeevani bhooti, which would save Lakshman's life. On the way, Hanuman noticed a sage, Yaksh, engaged in austerities on a hilltop, and stopped there to inquire about the herb's location. According to the history offered in the back of a prayer pamphlet that was distributed at the temple on the occasion of Hanuman's birthday in 2009, the hill was originally twice as tall as it is today, but Hanuman's great weight forced it into the ground and left the impression of his sandals in the stone where he alighted. Today these prints are protected in a marble vault beneath the temple platform. For his part, Hanuman seems to have only noticed the sage's asceticism, and much impressed by it, he vowed to visit again once he had retrieved the herb.

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<sup>247</sup> Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, Second Edition:240.

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Some versions of the story mention that Hanuman was accompanied by a retinue of mortal monkeys.<sup>248</sup> Having traveled all the way from the battle site in the extreme south to the foothills of the Himalayas in the north, the monkeys were naturally exhausted by the time they arrived at Yaksh's hill. While Hanuman proceeded deeper into the mountain range, his companions remained behind to rest with the sage. However, the monkey god's quest didn't proceed as planned: He was delayed by a demon, and by the time he finally found the mountain upon which the bhooti grew, Hanuman had forgotten what the herb looked like and had to resort to carrying the entire mountain back to Lanka. Under the weight of a mountain and with Lakshman running out of time, Hanuman could not stop by Jakhoo on the return trip. Hanuman's simian companions were never reunited with him, and the monkeys who live in the vicinity of the temple in our times are often identified as their distant descendents.

Hanuman would not go back on his word, however. In lieu of a visit in the flesh, he gave the sage darshan<sup>249</sup> – that is, the god projected himself to the sage and granted him an audience remotely. As he did so, a swayambhu (self-manifested) idol appeared from the stone of the hill, as if the landscape itself was reacting to Hanuman's presence. Yaksh established a mandir to shelter this murti, and it remains today at the heart of the temple, where it continues to serve as the focus of worship. Like most swayambhu murtis, the image it bears is caked in layers of saffron paint and adorned with cloth and flowers – everything that would resemble Hanuman has long been obscured except the eyes, which form little recesses in the thick paint. The eyes remain because they are so crucial to darshan, which is a spiritual mode of seeing and being seen, and, as Diana Eck has it, the most ubiquitous

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248 I get some of these bits from one of the artists working on the Hanuman murti, a Mumbaiker, and from the younger of the three Pandit Sharmas. Pandit Sharma gave me the story, but also maintained that the monkeys who lived on the hill now were “just monkeys” – clever, but not divine.

249 Darshan is usually transliterated *darśan*.



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feature of Hindu worship.<sup>250</sup>

In gratitude for this great boon, Yaksh intensified his devotions to the point where he attained a sort of transcendence. As the prayer book relates, "the sage, having removed the marks of his own sandals here, became imperceptible."<sup>251</sup> But his erasure, like the obscuring of the image of Hanuman beneath saffron, was incomplete, for the contemporary name of the hill, Jakhoo, is said to be derived from the name of the sage.

This story – which I have amalgamated from the recollections of pandits and temple staff, from regulars on the hill, and from the prayer pamphlet – situates Jakhoo in a popular, sacred landscape that extends from the epics – from the core stories of Hinduism – as a side plot. Jakhoo seems to be a loose end that Hanuman's dharma would not permit him to wrap up. On this level, the narrative underscores the centrality of Hanuman to worship on the hill and the subordination of Yaksh. The name of the hill's original deity, Yaksh, can mean "sage," but in ancient temple architecture, yakshas are guardian spirits who appear in dwarf-like male and nymph-like female forms around doorways. They are also nature spirits, and they tend to be associated with natural objects or features in the landscape, such as trees, bodies of water, and hills.<sup>252</sup> In these cases, the beings denoted by the term "yaksha" seem to retain an underlying attachment to a certain place. If we take the sage of our hill as a member of this class of beings, then we may observe that he transcended his role as a familiar. Eck reminds us that darshan is a form of touching and that it is transformational,<sup>253</sup> so, having received

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250 D.L. Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, vol. Third Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

251 "तदोपरान्त ऋषि अपनी चरण-पादुकाए स्मृति चिन्ह यहां छोड़कर अदृश्य हो गए।" I translate "smriti chinha" as "marks," though "souvenirs," "remembrances," or even a compound neologism like "memory-marks," might be more accurate.

252 Cf. J. Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

253 Eck quotes Stella Kramrisch: "Seeing, according to Indian notions, is a going forth of the sight towards the object. Sight touches it and acquires its form. Touch is the ultimate

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Hanuman darshan – having been touched and transformed by Hanuman – Yaksh became "adrishya," which can be translated as "imperceptible," "invisible." We might say that he achieved union with Hanuman, or that he erased the vestiges of his own being in devotion and reached moksha, release from the world of banal distinctions. "Adrishya" shares a root with darshan, which is negated by the prefix "a," and so we might surmise that having been transformed, Yaksh himself became un-darshan-able. Sure enough, he is not worshiped on the hill that bears his name.

Images at either side of the outer doorway of the mandir let pilgrims know that Hanuman is the only tutelary who matters at Jakhoo. As they present multiple forms of Hanuman, they assert his effectiveness as an "all-in-one" god. Part of a series of renovations to the temple dating to the 1980s,<sup>254</sup> the two reliefs that flank the mandir entrance offer contrasting depictions of Hanuman-ji. To the right is an archetypal image of devotion: Hanuman stands with his hands embedded in the flesh of his chest, exposing the image of Ram and Sita that he bears on his heart. To the left is Hanuman in one of his fierce modes as a five-faced (panchmukhi) deity, an image that evokes Hanuman as a universal divinity. On the right, we have Hanuman as intercessor and servant; on the left as a supreme deity. The prayer pamphlet quoted above remarks upon Hanuman's encompassing character in the conclusion to its history of Jakhoo: "Whosoever accepts Hanuman-ji as the aggregate cause of the universe and does pooja-path<sup>255</sup> in this temple with a clear mind will be protected and their foes will be destroyed."<sup>256</sup> People who recite the Hanuman Chalisa do not necessarily do

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connection by which the visible yields to being grasped. While the eye touches the object, the vitality that pulsates in it is communicated." Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, Third Edition:9.

254 Again, according to the younger of the three pandits named Sharma.

255 "Pooja-path": the giving of gifts and the study of lessons.

256 "श्री हनुमान जी का जो भक्त सच्चे मन से इस मन्दिर में पूजा पाठ करता है, श्री हनुमान जी उनके सकल मनोरथ पूर्ण करते हैं तथा दुष्टों को संहार करके भक्तों की रक्षा करते हैं।"

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so for the sake of an individual task or problem, but more generally understand themselves to be the recipients for a vague kind of “power” to be drawn upon in all manner of trying situations. The Hanuman bhakt at Jakhoo, then, has access to as much as any other god can offer. Though Hanuman himself might disagree, there is as a result no particular demand on the part of the worshiper to deal too much with Hanuman's master, Ram, when both are avatars of chief gods (Vishnu and Shiva, respectively) and when both can provide the worshiper with access to higher realities.<sup>257</sup>

Read as a religious history, the local cosmogony seems to recall the incorporation of a chthonic deity into a more widely recognized religious canon. But we need not restrict our interpretation of the story to the merely historical. It can also be read as a contemporary metaphysics, as an ontological account of the moments of transcendence that instigated the site's history and the apparent accumulation of reputation, buildings, wealth, visitors, and monkeys at the temple complex in recorded times. For me, this reading follows from the assertion that the relatively harmonious relations that exist between the rhesus macaques and the people, dogs, and other creatures on the hilltop today are sometimes attributed to the effulgence of Yaksh's austerities. This latter sentiment was explained most clearly to me one evening at the hilltop Shivalik canteen by lifelong Shimlan and tour guide Nithin Sharma. Relating the story of Yaksh to me by way of commenting on the peaceful relations between religions and species on the hilltop, he concluded that the hill was draped in a “peaceful atmosphere.”

The history of the hilltop's radiance is not a matter of "present" or "not present," one

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257 This sentiment is not unique to Jakhoo. The poet Tulsidas, himself a Hanuman bhakt, wrote in the *Ramacaritmanas*, "मोरें मन प्रभु अस बिस्वासा। राम ते आधिक राम कर दासा॥" "My heart, Lord, holds this conviction: Greater than Rama is Rama's servant." The verse and translation come to me from: Lutgendorf, *Hanuman's Tale: The Messages of a Divine Monkey*.

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god (one history, one species) or another. Yaksh's incomplete erasure, and the way the sage's radiance continues to inflect upon relations on the hill, demonstrate that at Jakhoo "presence" is malleable.<sup>258</sup> In the cosmological tale above, everything at Jakhoo that attests to the centrality of Hanuman actually extends from side-effects and accidents. Given the incidental nature of the impressions around which the mandir has been established, it appears as if it and all the material and social edifices around it have been generated as the by-products of some larger operation. Hanuman's foray to Yaksh's hill is not mentioned in the Ramayana, and the entire narrative of Jakhoo's origins constitutes, at best, a deuterocanonical addendum to the epics. The very things that mark the hill as a sacred site – Hanuman's footprints, the swayambhu murti – are ancillaries to Hanuman's divinity. And in Yaksh's persistence as a name – Jakhoo – and as a radiance that permeates the relations that exist on the hill, we can detect the trace of the site's resistance to incorporation into comprehensive epics. The effects of the encounter between the sagely nature spirit and Hanuman have a life of their own, independent of the two characters' personal dharmas.

In 2008, an artist working on the construction of the giant Hanuman statue that now presides over not only Jakhoo but the entire city of Shimla told me, perhaps joking, that Jakhoo's monkeys were descended from Nal and Nil, the very monkeys who served as the architects of the bridge to Lanka. I found no further confirmation for the involvement of Nal and Nil, but whether or not artist-ji was pulling my leg, it seems entirely appropriate to consider the character of the contemporary temple site – and the city as a whole – as

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258 As a deity who has been thwarted in his attainment of moksha, Hanuman-ji outdoes Yaksh once again: When it finally came time for Ram and Sita to ascend, Hanuman was invited along, but he refused, instead promising to remain on Earth for as long as Ram's story would be remembered. As we have done a very good job of remembering Ram, Hanuman has yet to leave our plane of existence. The author of the Ramayana, Valmiki, met him, and in the following age, Hanuman appeared to the strongman Bhima in the vicinity of Narayanasrama forest. Today he resides somewhere near Lake Manas Sarovar in the Himalayas, and many contemporary gurus claim to have received his darshan.

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emerging from a constellation of relationships between marks of divinity, and the atmosphere generated by generations of devotees, as well as the designs of clever monkeys

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International trade, warfare, and the leisure activities of a succession of affluent classes have left a romantic sedimentation on the landscape of Shimla. The city's contemporary character as resort for the middle-classes and as a way-point for travelers, traders, and pilgrims is partially the result of these historical worlds. It is also the outcome of the amenable relations that exist there between rhesus residents and the various humans who either live there or pass through the locale. In the next chapter, I discuss some of the ways in which rhesus macaques extend their native political systems to humans, which is yet another manner in which rhesus participate in multispecies world building.

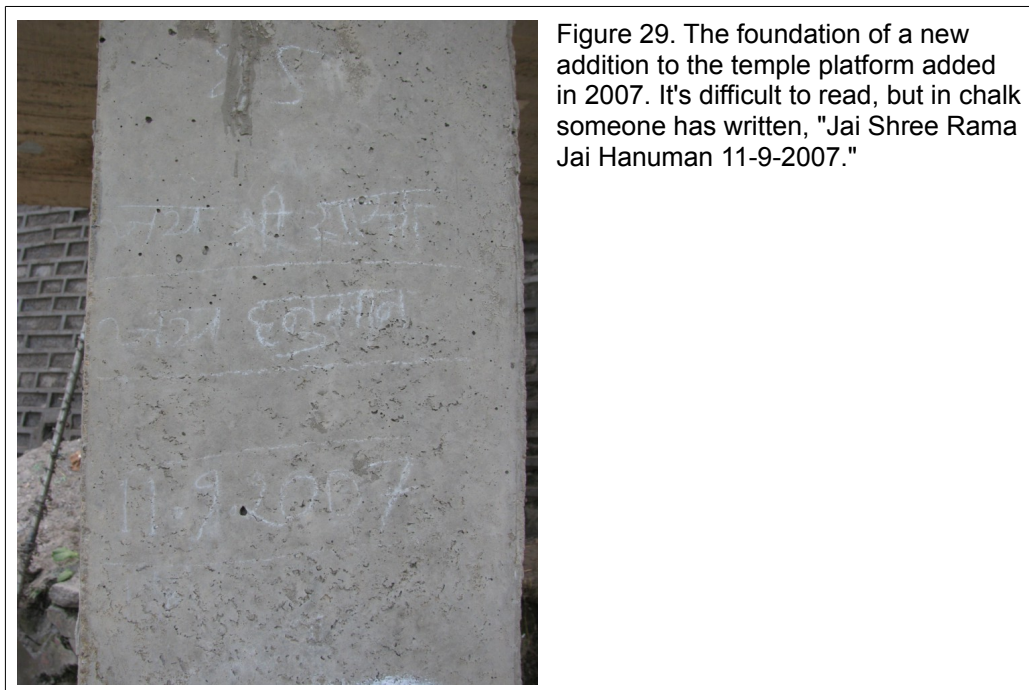


Figure 29. The foundation of a new addition to the temple platform added in 2007. It's difficult to read, but in chalk someone has written, "Jai Shree Rama Jai Hanuman 11-9-2007."



Figure 30. As a young monkey watches, a man sits on a bench at Jakhoo with his eyes closed, talking to himself or perhaps reciting a prayer. He swings his rented stick in tall arcs, tapping it on the ground as he speaks.

### **Chapter Eight: Etiquette and Exchange in the Monkey Kingdom**

In this chapter, I focus on the monkeys of Jakhoo Hill. Shimla and Jakhoo, as we saw in Chapter Seven, bear the weight of multiple, overlapping worlds of power, aesthetics, and exchange. Old gods and new gods exert their influence on the hilltop, and the lasting social and material artifacts of colonizers are partially assimilated to the tastes of the ascendent, independent former colonized. Not all of the overlapping worlds in Shimla, however, reach towards one another through different spaces in time. In the present, differential regimes of politics and etiquette bump up against one another from across space and species as well.

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These points of overlap between worlds are material and semiotic: Food, for instance, is a central figure in human-monkey relationships because it is significant to both primate species, though in somewhat different ways. For rhesus macaques, food is not only a necessity for life, but it also serves as a site for the exercise of monkey power and as a point at which schisms in rhesus society form. Food is attractive to monkeys, and they are drawn to wherever it is plentiful.

In terms of its meaning to humans, the monkeys' interest in food reaches the level of spoken discourse in at least two important ways, as “crops” and “prasad.” Crops in Shimla are susceptible to turning into something like the food waste that was discussed in Chapter Six, a “wild zone” or categorical outside which provides government with a staging ground for legitimating itself. But it is also a serious matter of livelihood and survival for farmers in Shimla district, whose crops are raided by monkeys. Food as crops – as a point of conflict that motivate human political action – is discussed in Chapter Nine.

On the other hand, “prasad” is discussed in the following section of this chapter. Prasad is the leftovers of the gods – offerings which have been sampled and transformed in an encounter with the divine – and is a more generally acceptable way for calories to reach monkeys. Both forms are transubstantiated food, and both forms are often taken by the monkeys without human permission, but they have different moral connotations. In Shimla as Delhi, the legitimacy of vying views on food exchange between species is at stake in public debates about what to do with the “excess monkeys” and crop-raiding “jangli janwar” (“jungle animals”).

This chapter focuses on instances where humans (like me) are interpellated into monkeys' ethical, political worlds. The term “interpellation” I take from the Marxist philosophy of Louis Althusser, who used the phrase to indicate how institutions of the state “hail”

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subjects, which is to say, how they interpose official meanings or ideology into the subject's rubric for self-understanding and action in the world.<sup>259</sup> Obviously, monkeys have no state apparatus of their own, but they do have power, and insofar as this power can be extended to other primates (like me), humans too can be interpellated into systems of meaning that are native to rhesus macaques.

The means of my own interpellation into monkey power were the politics of feeding, and the etiquette that surrounds such events. Politics and etiquette are "contact zones."<sup>260</sup> Mary Louise Pratt's seminal notion of a contact zone was meant as a successor concept to the linguistic idea of a "speech community." Rather than looking at languages as monolithic entities received and transmitted more or less the same by each of their participants, she

Figures 31 through 33. Monkeys take marigolds (left) and other devotional goods as well as prasad (center). Many use the handle-less spigots around the mandir grounds (right).



259 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewsters (Monthly Review Press, 1971), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>.

260 Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the 'Contact Zone'," in *Ways of Reading*, 5th ed. (New York City: Bedford/ Saint Martin's Press, 1999), <http://people.emich.edu/acoykenda/pratt.htm>. Cf. Donna Haraway's use of this concept: Haraway, *When Species Meet*. Also Cf. the related analytic of the "boundary object" discussed by Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer: Star and Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translation,' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39."



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imagined language as a zone where multiple histories and ways of reading, speaking, and writing came together without necessarily connoting any homogeneity across the various practices that created, and in turn emerge, from them. Contact zones may be mutually shaped by the effects of each species in the environment, or they may bear significance for both species, but in any case, they remain heterogeneous affairs that cannot be subsumed to the perspective or orientation of any one of its multiple players. The specialized society described in the sections in this chapter, "Jakhoo Hill" and "Something Overflows", is a contact zone in which the monkey and human participants are oriented to one another in such a way as to make it possible for the monkeys to exert dominance over the humans under some circumstances.

### **Jakhoo Hill**

Whether visitors hike the path or dish the ten rupees for a taxi ride up the longer auto route, once they are at the top of Jakhoo Hill they find themselves confronted with a gate and a long, final stairway. There are other ways to reach the summit – rugged little paths that cut across the hillside like a net, worn down by the zig-zagging courses of people and cows who are accustomed to walking up steep grades. But these paths are not usually known or accessible to visitors to the mandir complex, so almost every tourist and pilgrim at Jakhoo must pass through the gate and up these last steps. On the right as you step between the stone lions and warriors who guard this lowermost entry point is a stone wall and, on top of that, a chain link fence. On your left is a railing, and beyond that a steep slope fit only for monkeys and crows. The first landing deposits visitors on a broad lawn, where there is some plastic playground equipment. Younger monkeys often play here as their parents and elders munch on handfuls of grass. Lower down the stairs, on the slope, there are pines and a few

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examples of the deodar cedars that were so celebrated by Shimla's colonial founders. Higher up, on the right, stands now the 108-foot tall Hanuman murti that is, as ethnographer Jonathan Miles-Watson has pointed out to me, far too tall to realistically fulfill such a statue's purpose, giving darshan to hopeful bhakts.



Figure 34. Just inside the front gateway, a female macaque looks up the stairwell as some tourists come down.

Visitors nowadays will be impressed by the density of monkeys gathered at Lord Hanuman's feet, but the fact is that even before the giant murti appeared (it was completed after my research period had come to a close in early 2010), the stairway was one of the monkeys' preferred haunts. More intimidating or well-connected individuals and groups will

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occupy it for a while, taking a seat just off to the side of the path, on the ground, or among the beams that support the sheet metal canopy overhead. I especially came to associate this stairwell with three females who associated with one another here, and whom I started to call "Step Sisters", but many monkeys of different ranks, sex, and age frequented the area.

Though visitors carry all manner of snacks up the hill with them, the primary object of exchange in the stairwell and throughout the temple grounds is *prasad*. At Jakhoo Hill, this is sugar candy and dried chickpeas. In its most technical religious definition, the term *prasad* refers to a gift of food or some other item that has been offered to the deity, tasted by the deity, and returned to the worshiper in a transformed, blessed state. Proper *prasad* is the leftovers of a divine meal – that is, literally, the radiant excess of a gift that has already been consumed by the divinity – but at Jakhoo the term is applied to the candy in both its blessed and pre-blessed forms. Sold alongside votive oils and incense, these candies are ideally meant as offerings to Hanuman, the presiding deity on the hill. Feeding monkeys pleases Hanuman, and so Jakhoo's monkeys do not just benefit from the general sanction of *ahimsa*, but are also actively provisioned. The merchants of the Shimla vegetable market supply the *mandir* with bucketfuls of corn, which are distributed to the monkeys in a flat eastward portion of the hilltop – just on the other side of the lawn from the stairwell – that was sometime around 2006 named "Vanar Rajya" ("Monkey Kingdom")<sup>261</sup> and designated as a space for feeding monkeys, which has been technically illegal everywhere else in Shimla since 2004.<sup>262</sup> The identification between monkeys and Hanuman is strong at Jakhoo, and it was not uncommon for temple-goers to describe monkeys as "Hanuman ke roope" – "forms of Hanuman," a phrasing that can evoke variously and simultaneously the physical similarity between Hanuman and a monkey, and the idea that monkeys are themselves incarnations or

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<sup>261</sup> See Chapter Four.

<sup>262</sup> Tribune News Service, "Bill to Make Monkey-feeding Offence," *The Tribune*, 2004.

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aspects of Hanuman's divine personage.

If rhesus macaques are aspects of Hanuman, they aren't manifestations of his servile side. They insist on being fed, and they express their insistence through different techniques of solicitation and theft. From the parking lot and on up to the lawns of the temple complex, the terrain immediately to either side of the stairwell is only traversable by humans with some effort, and so it presents an ideal space for the macaques' more aggressive foraging techniques. Like other monkey species in the subfamily Cercopithecinae, including the baboons and the vervets, rhesus macaques have cheek pouches. When they are presented with plentiful food, they tend to forage in a "retrieve-and-retreat" pattern wherein they gather as much food as they can in their hands and cheeks before retiring to denser cover to eat. At Jakhoo this technique can be observed any time a large amount of prasad or corn is scattered for a group of monkeys – lower-ranking monkeys tend to snatch up as much food as possible and bound away. Feeding like this minimizes exposure to predators (of which there are few at Jakhoo) as well as to the aggression of higher-ranking troop-mates.<sup>263</sup>

Alternatively, higher-ranking monkeys tend to situate themselves, and their auras of dominance, right in the midst of the food pool itself. In those cases where their food source itself is walking, talking, and potentially aggressive – I mean, a human – the retrieve-and-retreat pattern unfolds into *snatching*, and this is the end to which the monkeys have repurposed the stairs. Snatching is a technique where a monkey takes something edible from another animal – at Jakhoo, this could be a human or one of the resident dogs – and flees to a spot where the mark can't follow. Thus, the reputation of some monkeys for being raiders and robbers.

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263 J.E. Lambert, "Competition, Predation, and the Evolutionary Significance of the Cercopithecine Cheek Pouch: The Case of Cercopithecus and Lophocebus," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 126 (2005): 183-192.

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Some people would object to labeling the monkeys in this disreputable way. In Hindi you can say *chheenana* or *jhapatana* and it's the same thing as "snatching" – but it's not the same thing as *stealing*. Once, when I said that monkeys "looted" people (*lootana*), a tout corrected me. He told me to "say snatch because loot is too harsh." That happened in Delhi, actually, but this sort of goodwill towards monkeys is widespread. Monkeys are thought of as *chatur*, which can mean naughty and clever, but which also suggests innocent mischievousness when applied to children or to the childhood forms of gods. As a child Krishna stole butter and shared it with his brother and his monkey friends – and images of young Krishna engaged in the act of theft (Makhan Chor, the Butter Thief), or as a very round infant with butter dripping from his fingers and chin, are the very archetypes of dearness (*pyar*) for many Hindus. If monkeys, like children, are thought of as untrustworthy, then they are also usually forgiven for it, though only a few of the visitors to Jakhoo whom I met expressed anything like the saccharine affection that the Butter Thief garners. So-called "cuteness schemas" – constellations of features that seem to trigger paternal feelings not just in humans, but also in rhesus and dogs, who have their own versions of the schemas<sup>264</sup> – are not to be confused for the dearness of Makhan Chor and Maruti (Hanuman's childhood name). Though the stories do yield moral lessons, contemporary permutations of these characters suggest that the adoration of Makhan Chor and Maruti, may have more to do with bourgeois aesthetics than religion or adaptive behavioral tendencies (see Chapter Four). The tolerance that people extend to cheeky monkeys is hard to distinguish from the pleasure derived from indulging them.

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264 W. Sanefuji, H. Ohgami, and K. Hashiya, "Development of Preference for Baby Faces Across Species in Humans (*Homo Sapiens*)," *Journal of Ethology* no. 25 (2007): 249–254; Higley et al., "Preferences of Female Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca Mulatta*) for Infantile Coloration."

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Figure 35. In a flash, this monkey, one of the Step Sisters, leapt from her ledge where she had been grooming her fussing infant, grabbed Teresa's glasses, and leapt back to her spot on the construction. This was the third and final time Teresa's glasses were stolen in 2009.

Unlike Krishna, who could be neither caught nor punished by his mortal caregivers, young Hanuman was struck down by Indra when he mistook the sun for a mango and tried to eat it; and when he used his divine powers to be naughty, he was cursed by the sages to forget his supernatural abilities. Likewise, monkeys are not allowed to get away with everything. At the foot of the hill and at Jakhoo's final stairway, vendors rent out rods to visitors for a cost of five rupees per stick, per day. These rods are less for walking than for tapping on the ground in front of approaching monkeys. I never rented a stick; I went right

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ahead and bought my own. After my initial encounters with the Jakhoo monkeys in 2006 I learned to keep my glasses in my pocket as soon as I reached the top of the hill, and to carry a stick with me if I meant to mingle with monkeys. I never hit a monkey. They seemed to know what the rod was about, and as long as I made an effort to avoid being surrounded on the lawn or in Vanar Rajya, it was easy to remind them to restrain themselves with nothing more than a few quick taps on the ground. Teresa didn't carry a stick and couldn't go without her glasses. The result: Her glasses were stolen three times over her two visits to Shimla with me in 2009.

On the other hand, no one among the temple staff or vendors carries a stick for anti-monkey purposes. Some of them are not bothered by the monkeys at all, but prasad vendors and canteen staff, who are compelled to defend foodstuffs, and the police, who are compelled to defend tourists, make better use of stones. A police officer, Thakur, who was stationed at Jakhoo for much of my research period, was especially feared by the monkeys. His aim was sharp and they gave him a wide berth. It was said, "Thakur-sahib *hates* monkeys!" After Thakur-sahib was transferred, the younger officer who replaced him, Madan, was of a less fierce attitude towards the bandar, going so far as to help with the daily monkey feeding in Vanar Rajya. Neither of them had need to carry a rod.

Faced with a staff who know how to draw the line with monkeys, the macaques turn to the tourists, and some of them employ a technique that's something like a *ransoming* scheme. In this case, the retrieve-and-retreat pattern favored throughout the cheek-pouch bearing world is applied to something other than food: at Jakhoo the object of the scam is usually a pair of eyeglasses, a scarf, or a shoe. Once, I watched one of the step sisters steal a sandal that a woman had left outside the mandir while she went inside to sing kirtans. She took the sandal, found a seat between my bench and another, and waited. For half an hour,

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she shifted the shoe between her hands and her mouth. When the woman returned, the monkey realized that the game was afoot and moved to higher ground on top of a nearby sign. In this case, I pointed the culprit out to the mark, but usually the job of clarifying the monkeys' demands to new visitors falls upon the people who would fulfill those demands, the regular prasad vendors. One of them, a former photographer and forty year veteran of the hill, Mohan, moved in and engaged the thief with two packets of candies. He retrieved the shoe with no trouble, and the woman paid him the cost of the prasad, ten rupees.

Figure 36. In 2008, I watched as this female (the same one depicted in figure 35) snatched an unattended shoe and then patiently waited about thirty minutes for its owner to return.



Most of the marks are unable to retrieve their stolen articles on their own. A lot can go wrong. If the visitor can't summon the courage to approach the offending monkey and directly hand the food over, other monkeys may intercept the delivery. Also, miscommunications can happen, especially with regard to eye contact, which many rhesus will interpret as



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aggression. There are signs posted in the entry stairwell and around the complex, which offer guidelines for interacting with monkeys, and many temple regulars are able to offer practical advice for the less savvy. Even other visitors, coming down the hill, routinely pass on their recent experiences and new wisdom to upward bound newcomers.

But there is no explicit rhetoric on how to negotiate a ransom, except: Get some *prasad*. For these reasons, intercession from one of the vendors or temple personnel is usually required to complete the exchange. No one ever imparted to me a secret technique for successfully delivering a ransom, but people who could complete the exchanges tended to express the difference as a matter of familiarity. The *prasad* vendors, the café staff, and the *taxiwalas* didn't explain their edge in terms of having mastered a particular technique for approaching monkeys, but they were ready to admit that the monkeys knew them, and knew that there would be consequences for any unwelcome *hijinx*.

The vendors don't part with their candy for free. Two packets of candy cost ten rupees, and some visitors understandably come to suspect that the monkeys and the vendors are in cahoots. The tenth edition of the Lonely Planet guide to India describes the situation at Jakhoo as, "a simian scam, they'll snatch spectacles off people's faces as the café owner will bribe them with food to give them up."<sup>265</sup> When I asked a long-time resident and tour guide about the monkeys' techniques, he intimated his suspicions that they had been trained by the late husband of one of the elderly *prasad* vendors, Aunty Gooly. Later, surrounded by her accompanying pack of dogs, I asked her. She laughed and denied it, saying of the monkeys and her husband, "They were just friends."

Nevertheless, some degree of incidental "training" may have transpired between the

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<sup>265</sup> S. Singh et al., *India*, vol. 10th (Melbourne, Oakland, London, Paris: Lonely Planet Publications, 2003).

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monkeys and the various human parties. Bruce Wheatley found that eighty per cent of aggressive solicitations (jumping and climbing on visitors) by long-tailed macaques at the monkey forests of Padangtegal and Sangeh in Bali were rewarded with food, either from a frightened tourist, or from a photographer or other entrepreneur who would bribe the monkey to release the tourist. But macaques were *never* rewarded with large amounts of food for non-aggressive behaviors.<sup>266</sup> Wheatley adds that the long-tailed macaques living at Sangeh – like the rhesus at Jakhoo – also stole items, or even ripped earrings out, and ran off into the jungle with them. He suggests that the behavior at Sangeh may be attributed to the special reinforcement offered by the photographers there, who like the vendors at Jakhoo, give the monkeys food to relinquish stolen items. Against the objections of other primatologists who might think of snatching and ransoming as unnatural in some way, Wheatley wrote: "Climbing on tourists or pulling down skirts is surely a novel way to get food, unlikely to be in the behavioral repertoire of monkeys deep in the rain forests of Borneo. However, it is a learned adaptive behavior for animals in a densely populated monkey forest."<sup>267</sup>

The social force of rods is at best tenuous in the midst of the other systems of power in play on the hilltop, as one of the Step Sisters showed me.<sup>268</sup> She had accosted a group of tourists from Delhi, including men, women, and a girl, and when I caught sight of them, the two parties were facing each other down on opposite sides of the stairwell. The Step Sister

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266 Long-tailed or crab-eating macaques are a very closely related species of macaque, *Macaca fascicularis*. B.P. Wheatley, *The Sacred Monkeys of Bali* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1999), 141.

267 *Ibid.*, 141-142.

268 A rod, a *danda*, is the mark of a protector or an enforcer: police, security guards, and house guards all carry dande. In Sanskrit philosophy, *dandaniti* is the "rule of the rod", the administration of punishment by state authorities as laid out in the Arthshastras, whose author Kautilya, is often compared to Niccoló Machiavelli in terms of their mutually brutal forms of political pragmatism. P. Bilimoria, "Early Indian Ethics – Vedas to the Gītā; Dharma, Rites to 'Right'," in *Indian Ethics: Classical Traditions and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. P. Bilimoria, J. Prabhu, and R. Sharma (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33-56.

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was on the slope side and the visiting group had drawn ranks behind one man who was holding his rod at the ready. The hair on the monkey's back bristled and she made open-mouth threats. Meanwhile her child played a little higher on the steps, unconcerned. I went over to the group to ask them where they were from. Maybe I was being too blithe. I may have moved too suddenly or scared the Step Sister's kid, who was some distance away from me; I remember the monkey child let out a squeak and, immediately, his mother jumped around and turned her threats towards me.

The rule of thumb is to avoid eye contact with monkeys. Eye contact is a key genre of communication for rhesus macaques. Looking is an aggressive act, and lower-ranking monkeys are obligated to not pay too much attention to higher-ranking monkeys or the things that higher-ranking monkeys want. I learned that if I quietly minded my gaze and I was sure not to watch the monkeys too intently or to meet their eyes, they were usually okay with having me around. My own studied inattention in the midst of monkeys might be taken as a submissive act – and insofar as I sought to avoid their violence, it was. For their parts, most monkeys tended to grant me the same courtesies (except for those who were actively soliciting me for food), but whether it was because they were being polite or because I was beneath their notice, I can't say. By the time the Step Sister had turned her attention to me, Teresa had joined me; as we had done before, we both turned our backs on the distressed monkey and tried to opt out of the confrontation. By avoiding eye contact and social engagement, by presenting no challenge at all, we were attempting to make a statement of our non-involvement.<sup>269</sup> It usually works, but bothering her baby was apparently the last straw,

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<sup>269</sup> The specific technique of ignoring an aggressive cercopithecine monkey comes recommended by a female baboon described by Dorothy Cheney and Robert Seyfarth in *Baboon Metaphysics*, who was able to avoid a violent escalation and a test of her status in the baboon hierarchy by resolutely refusing to pay attention to the hysterical threats of an immigrant male. Cheney and Seyfarth, *Baboon Metaphysics: The Evolution of a Social Mind*.

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and the monkey ran up on me from behind. She mouthed me on the ankle, through my jeans. I got the message and scooted up the trail, pushing Teresa along in front of me with one hand and waving my stick behind me with the other – and so much for keeping monkeys at bay. She didn't pursue us far, but only after she had gone over the edge and down the slope some distance did Teresa and I come back down the stairs to where the tourists were still waiting. The man who had been holding the Sister at bay asked me if I wouldn't mind escorting him and his family up the steps. I declined. When I later told the younger Pandit Sharma about my run-in with the monkey, he reminded me that she could have done much worse, and suggested that she had actually restrained herself.



Much worse does happen. In Shimla, the story of a man who was killed by macaques on the Ridge Road is still in circulation years after it happened: The victim was driving his scooter around the lower elevations of Jakhoo Hill when he saw an injured monkey on the roadside. He stopped his vehicle and went to help. He might have been particularly pious or

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courageously kind, or he may have been simply ignorant of the danger. The injured monkey's troop-mates were near the road, possibly high on an adjacent slope or just over the edge of the inevitable cliff on the opposite side, and when they saw the good Shimlan lifting their mate, they failed to understand his purpose and attacked him.<sup>270</sup> Violence on this scale is unheard of at the hill's summit, and I never personally observed anyone to be injured by monkeys there, but temple personnel confess that even at Jakhoo there is the rare monkey bite.<sup>271</sup>

What happened to me might have been similar to an encounter that Bruce Wheatley described in *The Sacred Macaques of Bali*. While studying the monkeys of Padangtegal, he came upon a high-ranking male who had recently been injured by a farmer. Three females, who had been grooming their injured friend, started to threaten Wheatley. Wheatley was cornered by one of them in a gorge, and so he "simply let her bite" him through the pants. Like the Step Sister, Wheatley's assailant only bit him once and not hard enough to draw blood. Wheatley considered the episode as a case of "redirected aggression from a farmer . . . in a symbolic sense."<sup>272</sup> Blowing off aggressive energies that cannot be otherwise released – for instance, against an armed farmer or a family of tourists – by picking on a lower ranking or out-caste party is a well-known tactic among macaques and other species of cercopithecines. It can serve to divert intensifying violence onto a third party or to punish the relatives of aggressors (if the aggressors themselves are too powerful), and it might help to reinforce social bonds between those individuals who join in the "scapegoating".<sup>273</sup> Which, in

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270 I get this story from Ajay at the Fair Deal shop, from the owners and managers of Doegar Hotel, and from the local editor of Punjab Kesari newspaper. Ajay and the editor recall that it was covered in local newspapers, but I never managed to locate a copy. I make no claims to the factual accuracy of my version!

271 Dr. Seth, the Ayurvedic physician who runs the municipal clinic on Jakhoo, said that there is at least one monkey bite every day at Jakhoo. No one else corroborated her claim.

272 Wheatley, *The Sacred Monkeys of Bali*, 55.

273 D. Maestriperi, *Macachiavellian Intelligence: How Rhesus Macaques and Humans Have*

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my case, is to say that I believe that, by this time in the fall of 2009, this monkey was getting to know me in a social sense: I was a human who spent a lot of time hanging out on the stairs. The Step Sister's child had already tested my tolerance by bounding against my back on an earlier occasion, and she had been on hand for that occasion (in fact, her proximity was the only reason I put up with it). And she definitely knew me as someone who sometimes waved his stick at monkeys trying to make a living. I suspect that in being party to the social relations opened to me by my interactions with her in the past, I had put myself into a position where, even if I did turn my back on her, I could not resist interpellation into her world of power and meaning. At Jakhoo, macaques and humans recognize one another as social actors and are sometimes integrated into partially combined, or mutually significant power structures.

To the monkey on the stairs, I may have presented either a likely scapegoat – her child, after all, could get away with teasing me – or a meddler who had had it coming. In any case, her single half-hearted bite was, I believe, reckoned to put me in my place without escalating things to a point where the advantage would be mine. She could have pushed the attack and easily injured me if she had really wanted to, but the dangers of pursuing a large, weapon-wielding animal like me would have been clear to her, even if she did feel that she had some other sort of advantage.

This is not an apology for the violence of the monkeys of Jakhoo and other monkey temples, but an argument for their relative conviviality, their willingness to mind their associations. If Jakhoo's macaques don't have street dogs' refined capacities for flattery and cooperation with humans, then at least some of them have the ability to carefully manage the line between calculated attention-getting and overt aggression – drawing the gazes of

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Conquered the World (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 52-54.

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humans as well as monkeys, but without activating their dangerous consequences.



Figure 39. Madan, a young policeman, does the mandir staff, Hanuman, the monkeys, and myself a service as he feeds a gathering in the Vanar Rajya.

Several factors play into the legitimacy of the monkeys' partial domination over humans on Jakhoo. Hanuman's favor is the most cited explanation of why humans would deign to accede to manipulation by monkeys. The prevailing atmosphere of non-violence on the hill is also commonly mentioned. Perhaps what makes Jakhoo work most of all is not the social constructs of religion and ahimsa, but the quality of the relations that actually entail between actors on the mandir grounds. With patience the interests and mores of both kinds of primate actors can be rendered partially intelligible across species. Most players get what they want: food, a few rupees, a close encounter with a cute or sacred monkey, a brush with another life and world, space to move in, things to climb on, a taste of divinity and animality, something to write about. Jakhoo works for many reasons, but one is that the actors who go there not only tend to prefer these regularized exchanges, but also have some grounds upon which to interact meaningfully with the others.

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### **Something Overflows**

This section is meant to accomplish a few different things. First it is meant to give me the opportunity to say something more about the etiquette necessary to negotiate the zone of human-rhesus power. It is also the story of some of my attempts to circumvent the rules of rhesus society in the pursuit of my own notion of justice, specifically my desire to feed lower ranking monkeys and take up for the underdogs. It is also a meditation on the limits of my own human capacity to fathom the relationships between monkeys; and on how even when I obeyed the rules to the best of my understanding, something still overflowed, and miscommunication and violence popped up. Nevertheless, when Teresa and I adhered to the etiquette of rhesus macaques – and, no doubt, when the monkeys acted within limits acceptable to our human mores – things usually went more smoothly.

But this is really about the female monkey with the hairy face and the white mark over her eye, the one who sometimes appears in my notes as "Chewbacca" or, more formally, "Chewbacca Monkey." That name wasn't really a name. It was an attempt at labeling a collection of traits that I recognized and appreciated when I met them: hairy face, white dot on her forehead, crooked tail, crooked gait, splotchy skin, elderly female who had gone into estrus so many times that her entire rump was basically bald. "Chewbacca" refers to her hairy face specifically, but this particular trait wasn't especially unique. In contrast with the monkeys of Delhi, many of the elder rhesus females I met in Himachal Pradesh had quite hairy faces. Yet, even combined with other traits, this constitutes such a vague description that it would have been of no help to anyone but myself in making an identification. So perhaps calling her Chewbacca, or anything at all, was useless. But I liked her, and that much demanded a name.



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Figure 40. Chewbacca Monkey didn't mind looking in the camera. Teresa noted that many other macaques we encountered were disconcerted by the staring "big eye" of her camera.

I liked meeting her on the lawn of Vanar Rajya at Jakhoo, I liked her composure compared to the other monkeys'. It was evident in the way she would approach me, raise her eyes to mine, and then calmly look away. Not-looking is good monkey manners, of course, but her gaze was unruffled and unhurried, unlike the gazes of other, fidgety, hungry souls. I saw this calm mostly in older monkeys, like Babu, or in males in their physical prime, like Sundarloo. Babu was the ranking male of the temple troop for the period of my research; Sundarloo was also a big, strong guy with friends. But Chewbacca Monkey, I guessed, was somewhere lower in the hierarchy, and definitely not as tough. The Step Sisters tolerated her feeding among them – they were probably related somehow – but I never saw Chewbacca harass another monkey. Chewbacca's social world was someplace that I could just barely make out: Though I reckon my theoretical grasp of macaque sociality is fair enough, most of

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the monkeys I encountered were as undifferentiated as the human faces which composed the crowds I strolled through on the Ridge, or dodged through in Delhi, or passed on the highway in San Jose. But Chewbacca stuck out on account of her pacific approaches, which contrasted with the pushiness of her troop mates, and her gentle solicitations. Offering food to her was a pleasure for me. The reason I need to talk about her is because she was injured, and I had initiated the situation that resulted in her injury.

First, I need to explain that I liked feeding the monkeys. One commentator on a funding application I submitted suggested that my methodology was flawed because, among other reasons, my schedule hadn't taken into account the need to habituate my monkey interlocutors to my presence. A description from a manual of field methodologies suffices to communicate the general goal of habituation: "Repeated neutral contacts between non-human primates . . . and humans can lead to a reduction in fear, and ultimately to the ignoring of an observer."<sup>274</sup> In Connaught Place, maybe, habituation would have been helpful in observing its paranoid, oppressed monkeys. But so would have been some parkour training, so that I might have had a snowball's chance at following them anywhere. But habituation was out of the question at Jakhoo for what I thought were obvious reasons. Telling me to habituate the Jakhoo monkeys was like telling me that to learn anything about the touts, vendors, and beggars in Delhi, I'd need to find a way to blend in. This is also like saying to the lamb that, before he can properly study tigers, he must find some way to get the tigers to accept him.

The monkeys welcomed me with open arms, and I made the best of my time as prey,

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274 E.A. Williamson and A.T.C. Feistner, "Habituating Primates: Processes, Techniques, Variables and Ethics," in *Field and Laboratory Methods in Primatology: A Practical Guide*, ed. J.M. Setchell and D.J. Curtis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 25-39, <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/1218/1/WilliamsonFeistner2003%5B1%5D.pdf>; W.H. Thorpe, *Learning and Instinct in Animals* (London: Methuen, 1963).

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a source of food, a medium for monkey sociality, and sometimes as a competitor. I didn't mind the monkeys' impositions, usually, which at least gave me research material and something to talk about (over and over again, both in India and in the US), even if they did raise my chances of injury and disease.

I love feeding the monkeys, and when I say to someone that "I love monkeys," this is what I am thinking of: I am thinking of fine, dark fingers covered by furry gauntlets. I am thinking of these surprisingly mobile digits, animated with precision and crowned with perfect black nails, and I am thinking of the short distance from here to there. I think of the dawnings of co-recognition and sometimes respect. I think of how some of the monkeys at Jakhoo knew me, and I think of how familiarity breeds contempt, because I doubt any of the monkeys liked me. The Step Sisters, for instance, did not like me. But the monkey children were mostly curious, and some could be coaxed into playing with me in a way: I think of catching the attention of a little boy monkey, and purposefully making a to-do over a deodar twig I had found, tossing it and catching it, tossing it and catching it, several times in front of him, and then finally letting it drop. The little monkey watched me from the other side of the fence, the beam of his eyes arcing in the air with the twig, and then crashing with it to the ground, over and over. When I walked away and left it there on the ground, I looked over my shoulder to see my hypothesis confirmed: My interest in the stick was enough for him to become interested in it too. Our presence together in the flesh was enough for my curiosity to transmit to him and become his own. He went to it, worked it over in his tiny hands. He tasted it and then discarded it. (This is the extent of my scientific interrogations of monkey society.)

When I say I love monkeys, I think of the stiff bristles and furry lips of Sundarloo as he took hold of my hand in his and picked out a few sugar candies that were stuck in the

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creases of my palm,<sup>275</sup> and I think of those wicked-long fangs he kept in his mouth. I think of sitting on the northeast side of the hill, away from the other humans, and looking up from my notes, and seeing that I was surrounded by monkeys, and going back to my notes. Not *just* going back to my notes as if nothing was happening, but looking down and away; not-looking, like a polite monkey. I think of the shrieking and huffing as a battle broke out a few meters away, practically on the next knoll, and I think of how I did not look at this hungama as I carefully, carefully skootched away from it on my butt. *I am not a part of this, I am not a part of this* was the message I wanted to convey to the monkeys, because violence can spiral so easily through the channels of scapegoating, resentment, and randomness. The irony is that in trying to send this signal to the monkeys, in my fear of them, I was acknowledging to them and anyone else who might have been looking (the crows and koels, perhaps some tourists with a view high on the hill), that *I am part of this (in a different way), I am part of this (in a different way)*.

I think about how my pleasure in feeding monkeys and my love of individual monkeys superseded my respect for their society. I think about my rule for feeding macaques: Always throw the food to the ranking monkey. Too often I had seen what happens when I decided to spread the wealth around by tossing some feed to someone other than the bully who had been monopolizing the main pool. What happens when a lower-ranking monkey dares to collect a little gram in the presence of a chief is this: He gets the disrespect slapped right out of him! So, always throw the food to the ranking monkey. (The Himachal Pradesh wildlife department faced similar difficulties in their effort to set up a “primate park” at Tara Devi, which would have included daily provisions for the corralled troop, cf. the section, “The Raja

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275 For the record, I washed my hands after monkey feeding sessions, and used hand sanitizer whenever I had it around. The habits I had developed for eating in human places with an abundance of microorganisms unfamiliar to my home situation were also useful for negotiating the worlds of monkeys.

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of Jakhoo" in the next chapter.) Identifying the ranking monkey takes practice, but he or she is probably the one in front, tugging on your pant leg.

You could try to be a little more sly – that is also well within monkey mores. After I recognized the problem with trying to be equitable in my feeding, but before I had instituted my rule, I found ways to sneak past the troop's hierarchy, like tossing higher ranking monkeys a bit of food waaay over there, and then offering a little handful to the inferior juvenile behind my back. The trick was to get the food behind my back in the subordinate macaque's line of vision, but not the other monkeys'. Sometimes it took a few attempts to make it work out, and it was always better if I was sitting on a wall or beside a tree, where there would be some cover. This was the same way I would distract the temple dogs, Sheru and Lucy (and any of their friends, or Aunty Gooly's pack), if they were around for the monkey feeding. The dogs also loved prasad.

This may sound like meddling to some primatologists, but ethnographers in the cultural anthropology tradition (despite all the hoopla around objectivity in classical ethnography) have always been more like Captain Kirk than Mister Spock in terms of their adherence to the Prime Directive against the introduction of foreign elements into alien societies. My affection for Chewbacca is not quite like what drew Kirk into association with alien women, however. In Kirk's case, it was the classic lust of the masculine representative from the galactic center to bring the fringe life-form to bed.<sup>276</sup> In my case, it was my (and

<sup>276</sup> These are references to the late-Sixties American sci-fi television serial, *Star Trek*. Characters in *Star Trek* included the captain of the USS Enterprise, James Kirk, and his first mate, Mr. Spock. As officers charged by the multispecies, multicultural, multisolar political body known as the Federation to explore the farthest reaches of space, Kirk and Spock were both beholden to an ethical program known as the Prime Directive, which forbade undue interloping in alien societies. The Prime Directive had a lot in common with the observation practices of culturally relativistic, early-20th Century ethnographers, as well as with the primatologists' ethic of habituation: observe, but don't interfere. While Spock was a rational thinker who valued logic in his choices, Kirk tended to think with his heart. Both men frowned upon evildoing, but Kirk's passionate personality tended to impel

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everyone's) inability to adhere to neither the moral injunction against interfering with my subjects nor the legal injunction, not much enforced on the temple grounds, against feeding the monkeys anywhere in Shimla except in the Vanar Rajya. My passion for meeting these very strange people, the "monkey folk" or *bandar log* as Rudyard Kipling called them – my own pleasure in the sensation of an always impromptu intimacy of lips, fingers, candy, and fruit – interrupted the rational application of reason in my research method. But unlike Kirk, my cavalier attitude sometimes had consequences for my erstwhile alien lovers.

This is what happened with Chewbacca Monkey. It was early December. I remember that Teresa was getting bored of Shimla, and we had been meaning to make a gift to the monkeys before we left. So we brought them a present of fruit as well as a few packets of prasad that had been pressed upon us by our Deedee. We chose a spot below the maidan just inside the lawn at Vanar Rajya to deliver the goods. Teresa stood behind me with her camera, and I in front with my rod in one hand and a bag of fruit in the other. We noticed Chewbacca on the lawn, which was a relief to me, because a few days earlier we had seen her far away from the Monkey Kingdom with a male I didn't recognize. I said to Teresa, "Oh, so she was just out on a date." We had been wondering whether she had fallen out of favor with the temple troop, or whether she was just practicing a little "consorting behavior," which is nothing more than what I've already implied: going out somewhere far away from the rest of the troop with the sexy other monkey of your choice. Her consort was nowhere around.

I thought I was doing well. I had not tossed any gram or fruit to shy monkeys with dodgy gazes. I gave nothing to cringing monkeys who looked fearful of the others. I refused to feed the monkeys who were displaced from their spot within range of a candy-toss. I withheld presents from the monkeys who were not willing or not able to be visible.

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him towards interference in what he perceived as indigenous injustice, in spite of the Directive.

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I threw some roti left over from lunch to three youngsters, and just at that point a big adult male – one of Sundarloo's pals I thought at the time – came barreling down the stairs from the maidan and onto the lawn. He came yelling at the kids, who dropped their bread and jumped back. Teresa stepped into my back, and we both turned away from the charging monkey. One of the kids crouched with his rump in the air away from the interloper, and he shrieked. It was a call for support. Two females came to his side immediately, screaming at the male. While all this was going on, Teresa and I were stepping back. I had wrapped the top of the food bag in my fist and lifted the tip of my monkey stick from the ground. The children's support bounded forward and faced the male aggressively, crouching on all fours with their mouths open and their teeth showing. Now, he was forced to back up. I don't know what happened after that. Farther away now, we two humans were separated from the ruckus. Teresa and I backed off towards the maidan as the rest of the simian crowd on the lawn joined one faction or another in the screaming and slapping. Shortly, a group of females drove the offending male down the slope from the hilltop, and the entire mass of the present troop followed them. In a few seconds, Teresa and I were left standing on the edge of the empty Kingdom, with only one or two young, uncertain monkey faces looking toward us. Hoots and hollers echoed through the conifers towards us.

It's hard to tell what happened. Had I been feeding some lower ranking monkeys who should not have been getting their fill? Maybe the mistake wasn't mine, but was rather the male's – it's possible he misidentified the kids or saw an opportunity to assert himself over someone he didn't think was going to receive as much support as they did. Perhaps the children just happened to be in a precarious position in the hierarchy, and my present of fruit had been the occasion of a rupture in the standing social order. Maybe the male had just come on too strong, and had just been too viscerally scary for the higher-ranking youngsters

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to stand up to, despite their operational rank. *Someone* had made a miscalculation of some kind.

Figure 41. Chewbacca injured.



Among the monkeys, there are more chases and routs than anything else on Jakhoo. Monkeys returned to the Rajya, and we fed them. Things seemed fine. Teresa photographed them. We cooed over the young ones and enjoyed their monkey faces and their monkey hands, so similar to ours. We had our bit of fun in the occasion of sharing, hand to hand or hand to mouth.

When we were on the last orange, we saw Chewbacca. Her right shoulder was gashed. Her face was just as sweet and ugly, but her expression was depressed. I *do* know what happened. She had come to some monkey's aid, or been enlisted, or been scapegoated as the conflict rippled through the ranks and the alliances; she had been the one to take the hit. There was a bit of blood around the cut, and it looked wet, but it was not bleeding. I knew



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that I shared in the responsibility for her wound – which could have later parlayed into an infection or nerve damage – and I wanted to make it up to her. This is where my field notes betray what a fool I really was: "I tried to give her an orange slice. By this time my last orange slice. I tried to hand it to her, but she wouldn't approach me." There were no other adult monkeys nearby except for "some other, higher ranking bandar [who] was watching" from the maidan. "I tossed it at her feet. A juvenile took it."

I didn't see her after that. It could have been bad luck on my part, as it was random whom I ended up seeing on any given day. My time in Shimla was coming to a close at that point, and I was spending less time on the hilltop. One does not get to be an old monkey, I told myself, without having a few scars. I'm sure she was tough. I'd like to think that the next researcher at Jakhoo might take note of an elder female with a scar on her right shoulder, the mark that Teresa and I left. But it was an awful gash. I'm so sorry.

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Of all the times I meddled in the rhesus's affairs, it was one of the occasions when I was actively adhering to the monkeys' political system (as I understood it) that relations broke down in this disastrous way. But time and chance happeneth to all primates, and in the violence that ensued, there is no argument against interacting with monkeys, nor even necessarily against my attempts to work around the mechanisms they have for enforcing their native hierarchies. The monkeys on Jakhoo expect to be fed, and provisioning by humans is one of the centerpieces of their world. The act of provisioning is what has allowed the monkeys' and humans' worlds to knot so tightly together on Jakhoo and in places like it. There are moments of overflow, but food exchanges are the bases of the bonds that have resulted in the stability and flourishing of Jakhoo's multispecies society.

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The humans and rhesus of Shimla district exist in distinct worlds which overlap at a number of points. Many of these points of overlap extend from the great deal of shared anatomy and behavior that they have inherited from their shared primate lineage, but rhesus and humans are also both capable of forging new overlaps, new coherences that cross worlds on the levels of the social, traditional, and political. In Shimla, as in Delhi, both species make a great deal out of food, and organize their lives to no small extent around the problems of getting enough it. Food is not just a base, material concern of these primates, what Marx thought of as an animal need, but also a point for the elaboration and re-organization of their societies. Humans have their agricultural practices, and commensal rhesus have their own practiced techniques for obtaining cultivars from humans. As the humans and monkeys on Jakhoo and elsewhere in Shimla meet over food, they also extend their social sensibilities – their political systems and mores – to one another. Sometimes, the gift of inclusion is irresistible.

This chapter has discussed some of the ways in which etiquette and power in one world can unfold through face-to-face exchanges between species into effects in other worlds. The next chapter continues the analysis of cross-world coherences by examining the political practices and management techniques of those charged with governing the monkeys of Shimla.

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Figures 42 and 43. This monkey is issuing a very clear threat at one of the trappers who captured her troopmates at the State Assembly Building, Shimla.

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The moral valence of the transubstantial food exchanges that occur on Jakhoo are not at the mercy of human politics only. The quality of these interactions, and the ways in which they influence the construction of the worlds that humans and monkeys make for one another, also bears upon the agency of humans. In particular, the varying regimes of politesse or lack thereof that entail between humans and monkeys shape the possibilities for government action against monkeys. While the Wildlife Department by law retains the exclusive right to act upon the monkeys, who are protected as wildlife, the actions that the

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authorities can take on behalf of either monkey or human are also limited by the privileged status of the relationships that exist between monkeys and humans not just at Jakhoo, but across India.

Faced with the complaints of the region's food producers and their political advocates against crop-raiding monkeys and other "jungle animals" (described in "Common Man vs. the Jungle Animals") the Wildlife Department of Himachal Pradesh is compelled to act. Though animal advocates from the Centre exert their influence in Shimla, the Shimlan pro-monkey sentiments are unlike the animal rightism that I encountered in Delhi. The commonplace declaration that there are more monkeys in Shimla than there are people is a clear overstatement, but no one can deny that the monkeys are an engrained part of the municipality's territory. With the failure of the Delhi-inspired plan to set up a "monkey park" along the lines of Ashola Bhatti at Tara Devi (described in "The History of the Present Idea"), Himachali wildlife authorities have resorted to a plan that subjects the rhesus of Jakhoo and Shimla to violent state power, but does not deny the monkeys' claims to their part of the living relations that make the local ecology and economy work (see "The Raja of Jakhoo").

The authorities' current plan is the systematic capture, sterilization, and re-release of rhesus macaques. It's uncertain whether the current management plan will work to calm some of the tremors in an already mostly stable ecological and economical situation, or if it will ultimately fail to assuage the multiple, often contrary, interests that define government's political and demographic goals. There is a lot of work to be done before anything certain can be known about the effects of sterilization on the societies of Shimla and Jakhoo's rhesus, but despite the uncertainty and ethical difficulties presented by this plan, I offer Shimla here as a site where, for now, for the most part, things appear to work out without recourse to stark divides between human and animal, city and jungle.

### **Common Man vs. the Jungle Animals**

My adoration and guilt regarding Chewbacca Monkey, and my affection for monkeys in general, are not ubiquitous sentiments among the residents of Shimla district, despite how important Jakhoo Hill is to the Shimlan tourist economy. Some people simply have better things to worry about than pleasing tourists and giving up their hard-won food to monkeys – farmers, for instance. Farmers in Shimla, like their ilk in other parts of the country, are plagued by the depredations of crop-raiding macaques, pigs, and jungle fowl. Out of step with the stereotype of the pious Hindu, these people and their advocates seek to denude monkeys of their sacred status, regardless of whether that sacrality is the product of religious traditions (Hanuman worship) or state protections (conservation). Allied with expert advocates and politicians from the communist party, they generate complaints that have real political power over human worlds, and which exert an undeniable force on the Himachali wildlife managers in particular.

The Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti (Himachal Knowledge and Science Committee), the Himachal Communist Party, and the Kheti Bachao Sangarsh Samiti (Committee for the Struggle to Save the Fields)<sup>277</sup> are core promoters of the political campaign against crop-raiding monkeys. The HGVS is a branch of the nationwide NGO, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, which was originally founded to help alleviate poverty and to promote a democratic social order in general through education. State-level units of the BGVS adhere to this basic program, but also champion other causes. The HGVS in particular works with other NGOs and the Himachal Pradesh Communist Party to support farmers' and workers' rights in the state. KBSS, on the other hand, has formed specifically as a platform for Himachali hill

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<sup>277</sup> Though, the "Save Our Fields Battle Committee" is also a fair rendering.

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farmers' issues.

The KBSS and the HGVS are probably the two most vocal, most organized proponents of monkey control in Himachal Pradesh, and among them Dr. Kuldeep Tanwar is one of the most active individuals. I had been in touch with Tanwar on-and-off for months, but my first sustained exposure with his notion of human-monkey relations was at the October 26th "agitation." It started as a march from the Panchayat Bhawan on Highway 22, and up the winding, sometimes steep, and often cramped city streets of Shimla to the Kali Bari, the House of Kali. Much of the debate about what to do with the monkeys of Shimla district – as it was framed by farmers, their advocates, and interested politicians at the two rallies I attended in October and December of 2009 respectively – was in terms of a conflict of interests between two ill-defined, but well-known parties: the "aam aadami" and the "jangli janwar."

The aam aadami is the "common man" who is the figurative grounding for much of Indian politicking. He benefits from neither corruption nor the extravagances of elites. The left claims that it will provide for him, the right claims that it will protect him, but somehow the aam aadami is always there at the bottom of the human political hierarchy. The aam aadami is always neglected, threatened, abused, and poor. He is a sympathetic character because we are all the aam aadami – not counting rich urbanites, NRIs, and foreigners. At the HP farmers' rallies, the aam aadami was cast as a farmer victimized by jangli janwar, or "jungle animals."

Several local politicians and a few prominent farmers had been invited by Tanwar to speak out: I heard about the red tape which kept farmers from receiving government reparations for livestock lost to predatory, protected leopards, and about the depredations of wild fowl and feral pigs. While the agitators were still gathering a few hundred meters below at the Panchayat Bhawan, Narayan Trishit, a former school principle and current panchayat member in Junga ward, told me that the jungle animals had "declared war upon us, the

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farmers." He had not sown his own fields for fifteen years, he claimed, expressly because of the depredations of wild animals. "Of course it was a war!" he assured me, "Naturally we had to be against them." When Trishit took the podium at the Kali Bari's meeting hall atop the Ridge, he roared into the microphone, "rise up farmers!" and implored the audience to seize their right to work from the jungles, from the government. He continued his speech for several minutes, shouting so loudly that I lost most of his meaning as his voice reverberated in the meeting hall and shook the microphone on my little recorder.

Though the publicized topic of the agitation was (according to Tanwar) "jungle animals in general," special ire was reserved for the monkeys. A woman from the audience, introduced as Mina-ji, took the podium and complained that there had been eight people bitten by monkeys near her home in the previous months. Her bangles shook as she scolded the Wildlife Department, so angry she was that her children had to walk in fear of monkey attacks. Tanwar himself spoke for more than half an hour, criticizing the Wildlife Department's ongoing monkey sterilization project as a *failure* in terms of the government's responsibilities to the farmers, and he wondered aloud – just how many *years* will it take for this tactic to bring the population of monkeys down? Ten percent of all crops grown in Shimla district were lost to raids by deer, monkeys, pigs, and other animals, he told us. (Trishit had suggested that as many as twenty to thirty million rupees worth of produce was laid waste each year by wild animals in the district.) A former Wildlife Department official himself, Tanwar compared monkeys to dacoits, and asked that the state enact a protocol of "scientific culling" which would identify and eliminate troublesome populations and individual monkeys. He likened the procedure to how the police track down and eliminate "terrorists" and "shooters." He reminded us of just how many monkeys we were talking about – more than four hundred and

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fifty thousand in Himachal Pradesh by the Wildlife Department's own estimates.<sup>278</sup>

As discussed briefly in Chapter Five, one means by which state authorities and other agencies can use to adjudge the efficacy of government programs is a census. Through population counts, actors within state apparatuses may recognize and quantify their effects. As with Delhi, however, Shimla's monkey numbers are indeterminate – as crowds, monkeys can appear as transient individualities, who can coalesce and trade places, disappear and reappear. Tanwar's own estimate of the monkey population was unofficial, but nevertheless authoritative in the context of the farmers' agitation. The number had found its way from someone in the Himachal Wildlife Department to the newspapers around 2002, during the height of the monkey menace in Delhi. It was strictly an estimate, not a count, and it is highly disputable. Primatologist Jack Fooden's 2000 review of the rhesus literature estimated that there were perhaps a million rhesus in the world with about five hundred thousand living in India. Southwick and Siddiqi estimated in 1983 that there were about three hundred and fifty thousand in the whole country.

According to Sandeep Rattan, a doctor with the Wildlife Department's veterinary unit and one of the primary movers of the sterilization campaign, the Department carried out a rigorous census of Jakhoo Hill itself only a week before the agitation. Their best estimate was that there were 478 monkeys on the hill (more on this in "The Raja of Jakhoo"). Counting rhesus macaques and generating monkey-related statistics is a chancy affair, and the product of the effort is unpredictable. Large groups of rhesus macaques are not easy to tally, and I often encountered groups of them that were so large that I had no hope of counting them without help. Teresa taught me a "journalistic" technique for counting crowds and troops:

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<sup>278</sup> Chief Conservator of Forests (and former Chief Conservator of Wildlife) Vinay Tandon, explained that these numbers were spurious. See the following section, "The History of the Present Idea" in this chapter.



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We'd figure out how many heads there were in a given space, and then estimate the number of the crowd by counting the number of spaces of that size the crowd managed to completely fill up. While I tried to discern a lower threshold whenever I counted monkeys or people, both kinds of primate are notoriously obliging to parties who need over-estimates for political purposes.

The turnout at the October rally had been nothing exciting – there were no more than fifty-five people in the audience. However, the December rally was no longer a mere agitation, but a "People's Parliament" sponsored by KBSS. This gathering took place in the same auditorium, but it was much larger. Using Teresa's journalistic technique, I counted at least three hundred people filling the meeting hall and leaking into the street before the temple. On stage, important speakers sat in chairs arranged in a neat semi-circle: someone from the state animal husbandry department; a handful of Wildlife Department officials; some panchayat members; a young, chubby man in white pajamas and Nehru hat, playing the script of the honest politician a little too closely; prominent organizers and activists from the ranks of the KBSS and the Communists. The board had been gathered to hear the complaints of the farmers, which Om Prakash Bhuraita and the KBSS had distilled into five requests to government:

- 1) that destructive jungle animals be declared *vermin*
- 2) that these animals be subject to *scientific culling*
- 3) that the ban on the export of monkeys be lifted
- 4) that guards for crops be included in NREGA
- 5) that fair compensation be given for crops destroyed by wild animals.

Each request was aimed at some extant but underused bureaucratic apparatus. The

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remainder of this section focuses on interpreting each of the farmers' requests.

The fourth demand is the simplest, and appears to serve the interests of everyone involved. NREGA is the Mohandas Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which allots seasonal workers government employment when they are not occupied with other work – usually road construction. If enacted, this demand would afford unemployed workers the opportunity to make a small government income by guarding farmers' fields from monkeys. Presumably, they would employ the standard monkey-fighting techniques of wielding rods, stones, and slingshots. This would decrease losses of labor, food, and profit by farmers, employ the unemployed, and manage monkeys in a way that, while somewhat violent, would not have to result in monkeys' deaths.

The fifth demand, the demand for fair compensation, is also fairly straightforward. Government bodies such as the Wildlife Department legally reserve the exclusive right to act upon most wild animal populations, thus disallowing the common citizenry from harming wild animals or interfering too much in their lives. But some protected animals, like leopards and bears, fail to respect humans or their property in a reciprocal way. For this reason, there are provisions for the remuneration of livestock and property lost to protected predators. There are forms to be filled out, and there is an entire process that must occur, including visits by rangers who are meant to confirm that the loss of the livestock or property was in fact due to the actions of a protected species. Farmers I spoke with and speakers at the agitation told me that the process was long and ineffective, and that compensation was not always sufficient. Nevertheless their fifth demand was for the expansion of this bureaucratic provision beyond livestock taken by predators to crops that had been ravaged by monkeys.

The remaining three demands are related, and all pertain to a shift in the legal classifications that define the possibilities for government action against nonhuman animals.

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The first demand, for the reclassification of monkeys as "vermin," refers to their protected status. "Vermin" is a technical term, and the sense in which it is used in the debates around jangli janwar originates in the Wildlife Act of 1972.<sup>279</sup> Vermin are all members of the legal taxon "schedule V" – V for 5, and for vermin – which includes mice, rats, fruit bats, and crows. Three qualities seem to unite these nonspecific categories: they feed on humans' crops, they are not endangered as a species, and they are plentiful. The Wildlife Act is vague about the original criteria for inclusion in the category, but a thorough perusal of the Act's definitions teaches us that vermin can never be livestock, can never be considered trophies, and can never be considered "animal articles" of value. This rule may be meant to see that animals in this otherwise unprotected category are protected against rapacious economic interests – poachers and unyielding masters – or it may, conversely, be to say that no animal that is of any value may be included in this unprotected category.

But rhesus macaques are not livestock, trophies, or articles of value. They do not generally work for humans, and because they were moved in 1979 to the protected schedule II (per the terms of the ban on primate exports from India), they are already legally exempted from economic exchanges. Though it is not stated outright that vermin are unprotected, they are not mentioned in any of the sections of the Act that guarantee protections. Importantly, section 62 of the Act gives the Central Government the power to declare as vermin "any wild animal," other than those already included in the two precious categories of "schedule I" and "part II" of "schedule II." Rhesus macaques are listed in "part I" of "schedule II," which means that though they are protected by the law as a potentially endangered species, they are also eligible for reclassification to schedule V if need be. (The terminology of schedules here can be confusing. See the attached appendix for clarification.)

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<sup>279</sup> Discussed in more depth in Chapter Five.

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In conversations with wildlife officials, explanations of how the government reschedules animals usually evoked something along the lines of a standard laid out in the section 11, which gives the Chief Wildlife Wardens the discretion to permit the hunting or slaying of any animal, provided that the animal is a danger to human life or property, or is disabled and beyond recovery. If section 11 is the section that describes the legal process to render a protected animal killable, then it is striking that there is no mention there of schedule V animals. In fact, there is no positive standard laid out in section 62 or anywhere for the process of shifting otherwise scheduled animals into the category of vermin.

That the culling be "scientific" is not a stipulation of the Wildlife Act. Rather, it is a keyword used by Wildlife Department officials in Himachal to describe selective killings meant to destabilize target populations without unduly harming others. As a stipulation suggested by the KBSS and the HGVS, "scientific culling" has the connotation of expertise and authority, which is to say that it is an assurance that the killing of monkeys should not be unrestrained. The Wildlife Department had not recently carried out any cullings of their own, but they had in the past given out licenses to farmers to shoot crop-raiding monkeys. As Vinay Tandon, the one-time Chief Conservator of Wildlife in HP and then current Chief Conservator of Forests, had told me, few people were ever interested in acquiring a license to kill monkeys. And so, he wondered, why should they meet this demand and declare monkeys, as a category, to be vermin? (In the days after the December People's Parliament, the Wildlife Department would hand out a few licenses, and a few monkeys would be killed. But, as has happened before, persons with the will to shoot monkeys are not as common in Himachal Pradesh as the farmers' advocates would have liked.)

It remains to be seen how reassigning monkeys to the category of vermin on a large scale would interact with desires for a reignited trans-Pacific trade in rhesus macaques. But

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the coincidence of "the farmers'" first and third requests suggests that the total economic desacralization of the monkeys is someone's goal. Could it be that the monkeys are being set up as jangli outsiders only so that they may be tamed as a crop? As unprotected revenue generators? While it might be fair from one point of view to see the monkeys of Shimla district as an untapped natural resource waiting to be exploited, it is uncertain how the gains from the monkey trade would be distributed, and how, desacralized, the monkeys would be managed.

Figure 44. Caged house on Jakhoo Hill. One of many monkey-proofed homes around Shimla. There are many houses in the monkey-bearing neighborhoods of Varanasi, Vrindavan, Delhi, and Bundi with similar caged porches.



Though the specific discourses mobilized by the farmers and their advocates are an appeal to an expressly human political system – the bureaucratic apparatus – their complaints are one of the motivators for a large-scale re-interpretation of human-macaque relations in Shimla. Insofar as the government management spurred on by farmers' complaints is a significant force in the co-construction of humans' and monkeys' niches in their material and semiotic environments, the farmers' anthropocentric complaints are one point at which human affection and disaffection inflects upon monkeys' lives. The farmers' complaints are part of a complex of sentiment that – together with the demands of pro-

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monkey advocates, Hanuman devotees, and all the less formalized pro-monkey feeling that echoes from romantic pretensions and interindividual exchanges – impact monkeys' worlds by exerting pressure on wildlife governance.



Figure 45. Highway 22, photographed from the eastern end of Shimla town. In this picture it can most easily be traced by the light-colored vehicles on the road itself, and by the railings of the cantilevered sidewalk that runs alongside it up until the road disappears under a parking garage.

Toward the upper left, the two yellow spires of Christchurch rise. Jakhoo Hill occupies the upper right portion of the picture. The mandir is hidden at the top.

(This photo is from 2009. Since 2010, the skyline has included a giant orange Hanuman murti emerging from a point high on the hill.)

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### **The History of the Present Idea**

If the farmers' rallies achieved the goal of securing permits for farmers to kill crop-raiding monkeys, then they did not see to the removal of monkeys' protections on a larger scale, as Tanwar had hoped. On the other hand, parties more remotely related to the KBSS and HGVS – specifically bureaucrats installed into the Himachali Forest Department by sympathetic politicians – may have done more to undercut the special protections granted to monkeys. Or they may not have: Where Sonya Ghosh bemoaned the failure – or, in her words, sabotage – of a “monkey park” in HP along the lines of the Ashola Bhatti model, the alternative strategy that HP wildlife authorities ended up pursuing may be, in the long run, more sustainable and more respectful of the integration of rhesus societies into the multispecies societies of Shimla and beyond. In the following section, I focus on a single interview I had with the former chief of wildlife conservation for Himachal Pradesh, Vinay Tandon, who offered to me an in-depth narrative of his department's attempts at managing monkeys and navigating the vicissitudes of pro- and anti-monkey sentiment. Rather than advocate for one specific technique of monkey management as the magic bullet that would cure human-monkey relations of their troubles, Tandon stressed the maintenance of multiple, already-functioning situations.

While I had been visiting Shimla in July of 2009, Ghosh sent me another text message. In a string of abbreviations, she told me that I should get in touch with Vinay Tandon at the Forest Department and ask him about a primate park at Tara Devi, which had been started, but had been, “in a way sabotaged by some people.” Tara Devi is the name of a goddess who has a mandir about eleven kilometers from Shimla.<sup>280</sup> Tara Devi was well known

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<sup>280</sup> Though Tara Devi is crawling with monkeys, the goddess to whom the mandir is dedicated is not the vanar chieftess, Tara, wife of Vali. This Tara is a goddess of Bengali origin, so she may have come to Shimla with the bureaucratic functionaries of the Colonial government.

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as another place one could go to meet and feed them.<sup>281</sup> Tandon was the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in Himachal Pradesh and the former Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Wildlife. In 2009, both were high positions in the administration of the HP Forest Department with distinct spheres of influence.

Assured that Sonya had paved the way for an interview, I called Tandon's office immediately. I introduced myself and my research, and told him that Sonya had sent me. Silly, I took Sonya's comment about "sabotage" literally and asked Tandon, "Was the park vandalized?"

In a sense. It was a long story. When I asked him to tell me what failed at Tara Devi, Chief Tandon literally began with his own childhood. There were always monkeys in Shimla, he told me later when I came by his office. They were just part of the standard complement of critters that went unnoticed in the world. "Fifty years ago they weren't really living off of the forest, either," he added. "People had a high tolerance. It never became an issue." Monkeys stole clothes and snatched food – I understood him to mean that people were not necessarily in denial of the problems, but were failing to assemble the monkeyshines into a political issue worth organizing over. That is, in Tandon's childhood, monkeys were not the subject of an ongoing complaint engine capable of motivating government action. He said, "there was no issue, really." Monkeys achieved the status of an "issue" only more recently – and, Tandon suspected, owing in some part to ill-conceived monkey management in the past by the Wildlife Department. But these proximate mishaps were made possible by a rapid shift in the demographic context. In the Forties, Shimla experienced urbanization as it, like other cities in northeastern India received the refugees of Partition. Between 1941 and 1951 Himachal

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<sup>281</sup> There is also a third well-known site, the Hanuman Mandir on "Monkey Point" in Kasauli, which is more than seventy kilometers from Shimla, and much nearer to Chandigarh. It is on an Air Force base.



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Pradesh's urban population went up from around 86,000 to 154,000. Urban growth rates jumped from 3.8% annually to 6.455 in that decade, and have, according to the State Development Report for Himachal Pradesh, remained relatively steady since then. Though urban populations remained a fraction of the state's total population – in 2001 there were about 600,000 urbanites in Himachal Pradesh out of a total population of around 6 million – they nearly doubled between 1971 and 1991, and are expected to have doubled again by 2011.<sup>282</sup> As a lifelong citizen of Shimla, Tandon had witnessed these shifts.

At some point during his youth, “Shimla started growing big and fast and became the semi-monstrosity you see today.” There were two ways in which Shimla had grown monstrous, according to Tandon. Firstly, garbage, which was of particular relevance to understanding contemporary human-monkey conflict. It is disposed of in Shimla, he said, as it is in any other place in India, which means that most people drop it wherever is convenient and out of the way. Despite the bourgeois emphasis on cleanliness in Shimla town proper, any hillside in the district was liable to be littered with garbage. “Look out any window,” he told me, and we did look out the window of his office and onto a hillside just below the campus for a private school. It was strewn with chip packets and paper garbage. From the other window, there was a constant cascade of car horns and motors, the sonic impression of the second deformation to Shimla's landscape: Highway 22 – which stretches from Ambala, through Kalka and Solan, through Shimla, and right up to the border with China – was already familiar to me from newspaper articles detailing the drive in 2004 to rid it of monkeys who had grown accustomed to receiving handouts from tourists, pilgrims, and truck drivers. As traffic on 22 increased, so did the number of dhabas or roadside canteens catering to truckers and

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<sup>282</sup> 242,000 in 1971, 449,000 in 1991, 789,000 in 2011, and 1,045,000 in 2021. Meenakshi Datta Ghosh and JP Vijay, “Himachal Pradesh Development Report” (State Plan Division, Planning Commission, Government of India, 2005), [http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/index.php?state=sp\\_sdrhp.htm](http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/index.php?state=sp_sdrhp.htm).

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tourists. “All these places are cooking food,” Tandon said, “the peelings and leftover food are tossed on the roadside, generating heaps and heaps of garbage.”

He continued, “The moment food becomes plentiful, primate populations go up.” He pointed out that the garbage generated was also food for stray dogs, who were likewise becoming more of a problem. But dogs, being something other than a “wild” animal species, were the responsibility of the municipal corporation, not the Wildlife Department. But the monkeys are like that too!, I interjected. Tandon agreed. “These guys aren’t actually wild, they’re – what do you call – commensal. They wouldn’t survive in the wild for three days. Anyway, the municipal corporation has washed their hands of the monkeys!”<sup>283</sup>

The Wildlife Department’s first attempt at dealing with the profusion of monkeys along Highway 22 came in 2003. It began with a census, which was like the wall around Ashola, mostly a formality. It was “some guesstimate kind of business,” Tandon said, conducted without any rigorous methodology – at least none that could be reproduced later, when Tandon took the seat of Wildlife Chief. “They arrived at a figure which was 317,000 monkeys in Himachal. Three point one seven lakhs!” Taken with Jack Fooden’s estimates in 2000 that there were 500,000 or so rhesus macaques in all of India, or against Southwick and Siddiqi’s estimate that there may have been 300,000 rhesus in all of India at the inception of the export ban, this number is simply unbelievable. Yet, this is the number that proponents of “scientific culling” like Kuldeep Tanwar. This is the number that would get passed around the newspapers for the next few years, and which would penetrate into the national news of the “monkey menace” that was at its height in the first half-decade of the 21st Century.

Though formal and perhaps of limited empirical value, these numbers were effective

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<sup>283</sup> This did not keep them, he added, from requesting that the Wildlife Department make their monkey sterilization equipment available to the municipality for sterilization city dogs!

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tools in the political discourse wielded by those who desired monkey management. Tandon ventriloquized the collective voice of government: “So what are you going to do?’ – It was a reaction. You know political narratives – ‘Do something!’ So they did.” In December of 2004 monkey trappers were contracted to remove as many monkeys as possible from the stretch of Highway 22 that passes through Shimla, and everything along the southwestern length connecting it to Haryana. Newspaper stories from the time report that as many as 1100 monkeys were trapped between December 21st and January 1st,<sup>284</sup> but Tandon said that they had caught more than two thousand. Whatever the number, many hundreds of monkeys were simply ejected from the state of Himachal. “They put them in trucks and they took them to the border between Himachal and Haryana, and they left them there.” More monkeys filled the ecological vacuum left by the trapped monkeys’ departure, and, worse, the translocated roadside monkeys, having no other skill set, immediately went to work raiding villages at their new location. “It got back to the government – ‘What the hell are you doing?’ – because these monkeys can’t have lived in the wild on their own anyway! So immediately they stopped this translocation business, they had to call it off.”

*Do something! What the hell are you doing!* The Wildlife Department needed options. When Tandon took the office of Additional Chief Conservator of Wildlife in the summer of 2006, alternate ideas were being floated. Sterilization was seen as a viable way of keeping monkey populations down, and the center at Tuttikandi was built (discussed below in “The Raja of Jakhoo”). But it was a slow process, and as the wheels of bureaucracy ground alongside the need for research, other strategies gained favor outside of the department. Among them was culling. Under pressure from the Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti and farmers’ NGOs like Kheti Bachao, Tandon traveled to a meeting of representatives from

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284 Ghuman, “1,100 Monkeys Trapped.”

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twelve panchayats<sup>285</sup> who were asking for permission to shoot monkeys. “I went there, and there was this huge crowd of people – half of them with guns – and they were waiting for me to arrive. They said, 'Since we are poor people, the department should supply us ammunition. We've got the guns!' In most places no one is willing to shoot monkeys. But this gang was.” It is within the powers of the chief wildlife conservator as described the Wildlife Act to permit the killing of wild animals who threaten human life or property. “So we said, 'Okay, you want to shoot monkeys. They're eating your fields. Okay.'” Between two and three hundred monkeys may have been shot – despite a formal requirement that any monkey killing be cleared through the range officer, there was no firm record of the exterminations.

Once the culls made the news, it was impossible to keep the Centre's Animal Welfare Board out of it. Sonya Ghosh organized press conferences and sent agents from the AWB to investigate the incipient sterilization center (more on that in the following section). “She wanted to have me locked up!” Tandon declared. “I said to her, go and look, go and see what the people are saying.” She took Tandon's advice and met with, in her own words, “those awful farmers,” convincing them of nothing, and coming away convinced (in my opinion) of only the ill intentions of Kuldeep Tanwar and his allies. Tandon recollected that Ghosh tried for a few months to drag the Himachal Wildlife Department into court on the grounds that, as is done with man-eating leopards, individual monkeys ought to be identified and targeted rather than whole groups. The courts were not sympathetic to the AWB's reading of the Wildlife Act's provisions for exterminating dangerous animals, and allowed the cullings to continue.

The wildlife department had also integrated education of the human populace into its strategy for monkey management. Publicity posters had been distributed, a street theater group had been dispatched to perform at dhabas and stops along Highway 22, movies had

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<sup>285</sup> A panchayat is a political units of several villages that is represented by a council.

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been screened, and bulletin boards had been erected along 22 and other local roads. Each medium transmitted essentially the same lesson: Pick up your garbage and don't feed monkeys along roads; it creates problems for humans who are milked against their will by their local monkeys, but it's also bad for the monkeys, too. "These chaps," Tandon said, describing the roadside monkeys, "they were bandar from Shimla and other towns on Highway 22. They have now become dependent on people throwing them food from buses and passing cars. They are always waiting for food to be thrown at them. And of course in the process they are getting diseases, they are eating salt and chilis, and I don't know what, so now they're in a bad shape. All the monkeys along the highway are badly sick."

But accepting food from humans was the only way of life that most of Himachal's monkeys knew. The trick, as Tandon would have had it, was to manage the relation, not to attempt to cut one party of another out of it. He gave me truckers as an example. Truckwalas were particularly guilty of provisioning monkeys, "but now these truckwalas have got their own points along the highway where they go and deposit food for the monkeys." It was unclear whether the truckers' segregation of their feeding activities was their own – or anybody's – intention, or whether it had come together "naturally." But the net effect was that the interaction between truckwalas and monkeys was now localized, and perhaps easier to keep within tolerable boundaries. "All the monkeys know that there are certain trucks that come there and deposit vegetables. And they're waiting. So the truckwalas also get a big kick! Anyway, that is of course how to manage a conflict."

On the other hand, the feedback Tandon received from the farmers who carried out the culling was, "No problem! The monkeys have disappeared!"

"So they didn't come back?"

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“They ran away. All the monkeys in that whole area cleared out and weren’t seen for six months!” With a little success, the communists and farmers’ representatives stepped up the agitations, and Ghosh eventually tried another tact with Tandon. She asked him to visit Ashola in Delhi. “It was a pretty big area, twenty-six square kilometers, pretty huge. It’s actually quite a good place for monkeys provided you could feed them. What I wasn’t told” – and what the HP authorities would only learn a little later as they initiated their own “primate park” at Tara Devi – “was that a lot of the monkeys were running away, and they were going and raiding the nearby fields. I don’t know, but I think it’s quite difficult to feed a couple of thousand monkeys at one time. It’s kind of impossible.”

Rather than attempt to fully enclose the monkeys at Tara Devi, as Delhi’s wildlife authorities had attempted to do at Ashola, the HP Wildlife Department settled for a two-fold strategy of sterilizing all of its translocated rhesus – the sterilization center at Tuttikandi was by this point (in 2007) up and running – and attempting to get the monkeys to actually desire to stay in the designated park area. The second part of this strategy centered on feeding, but its success, as Tandon told me, “has little to do with food. It’s the group behavior, which we knew nothing about when we started this.” The initial calculations of how much food should be distributed to the monkeys were based off of laboratory figures for a monkey’s daily diet. They would multiply that number by the number of monkeys at Tara Devi and distribute that much food. But there was a problem: “It’s the alpha. How much food should we throw to the alpha? None of the others will come around, they will just pinch the food. We daily fed the alpha and others ate nothing – for half an hour, forty minutes, it’s just the alpha and he’s stuffing himself! You must have seen that!” I confessed I had, and I told him about the trickery I employed to provision the juveniles and low-ranking monkeys. The Wildlife Department had to make use of a more obtuse tactic of spreading the food over a very wide area, in the

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process creating some waste, in order to ensure equal distribution. “So that way at least everyone is getting something. It’s more equitable.”

Things were complicated further for the HP officials when they attempted to train another group of monkeys in a nearby village to go to the monkey park to receive handouts. The first step in this plan had been to send a researcher hired for the purpose to the village. His job was to feed the monkeys. He would signal his intention to do so by whistling for them. Over the course of almost two months, more and more of the village monkeys had learned that when they heard this man whistle, they’d be fed, and the researcher managed to accumulate quite a following. Slowly, he began whistling further and further from the village, until he had managed to bring the monkeys’ daily feeding session to the border of the Tara Devi park.

The problem was that Tara Devi already had its own troop of monkeys, composed of individuals who were accustomed to feeding around the temple complex there, as well as a few other individuals trapped from other locations who had managed to achieve a measure of tolerance among the monkey society at Tara Devi. When the lone researcher finally managed to get the village monkeys to the state-approved feeding zone, the park monkeys were waiting for them. “The residents just chased them away,” Tandon said. The HP Wildlife Department found themselves having to manage nonhuman political affairs: “We were at that point trying to settle conflict between two troops of monkeys!”

But the researcher abruptly took a job elsewhere, short-circuiting the training, and the village monkeys returned to their lives of crime away from the grace of goddess and state. Wildlife’s efforts at integrating the two troops came to an end. But, Tandon was sure to point out that the monkeys at Tara Devi, with time, had taken in the small number of refugees who had been captured and sterilized without the company of their own troop. “We found out that

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different troops of monkeys can coexist. There needs to be sufficient area in terms of territory and foraging, but groups, we noticed, after a time, they stop fighting. It was amazing.” Despite the researcher’s inability to coax the village monkeys to the primate park, Tandon asserted that, “What was clear was that this thing can be made to work.” He suggested that an expanded program of introducing natural food sources like a wild fruit plantation – as Iqbal Malik advocates for Ashola – might be just the trick to keep the monkeys occupied in the space of the park. Ropes were tied from trees and a pond had been installed to keep them entertained while they weren’t feeding. “They’re restless creatures, but this can work. This is what we learned.”

But it didn’t work out. Tandon was shifted from Wildlife to Forests, where he assumed his then-current role of Chief Conservator of Forests – though his new job description lacked the “Additional” component of his former title at Wildlife, he no longer had oversight regarding wildlife management. “The new fellows came to the department, and for whatever reason they promptly got the primate park shut down. For some time the monkeys were fed, a month or two. Now – now I don’t even know what happened to them.” He didn’t have much to say about the “new fellows” and I didn’t press him to admonish his colleagues on the other side of the wildlife and forests complex. I would eventually gather that Sonya had considered the failure of the “monkey park” (which was not really a “park”) at the Tara Devi temple complex to be a case of political sabotage. The “some people” she had mentioned in her text message included, I believe, members of the communist party in the Himachali government who were sympathetic to the views espoused by the farmers and their advocates. The story I suppose Sonya meant for me to follow was that these parties had dismantled a promising project and shifted the emphasis in the Wildlife branch of the Forest Department towards culling. Sonya, a strong advocate of translocating Delhi’s monkeys to the state-managed jungle of Ashola,



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would have been vindicated by Tandon's assertion that the experiment at Tara Devi was getting results until it was defunded.

But the story that Tandon told me was more complicated than a simple demonstration that a primate "park" could work. "The problem," he said, "is the sustainability of the present idea." He immediately clarified: "The sustainability that they will be fed." "The present idea" was not merely a matter of humans' political will, but included the monkeys' commensal relationships with the humans at large in their environment, and the sustainability of intertroop and inter-individual relations between monkeys. It also was amenable to the variety of differently working relationships that existed across the state – the exchanges at Jakhoo, the passage of food from truckwalas to monkeys at regular locations, culling by afflicted farmers, and the monkey reserve at Tara Devi. What I had taken from Tandon was the need respect the heterogeneity of relations, rather than to attempt to impose a single master relationship, like the separation of human and monkey proposed by Ghosh and the Animal Welfare Board.

Given the unavailability of sufficient numbers of workers to count the monkeys or otherwise describe them in a way that might be useful for reckoning government efficacy over them; given the mutability of macaque numbers, Tandon's concern for emphasizing already extant relations that appear to work out for the most part – the present situation – may be the only viable recourse for governance over monkeys in Himachal Pradesh. I interpret Tandon's accountability to the demands of human polities and to the etiquette and interests of disparate monkey factions, as an acknowledgment of the multiplicity of agencies and material arrangements that allow for the synergy expressed at sites like Jakhoo and Tara Devi. This synergy is not the privilege of sacralized monkeys on the hilltop, but also exists at truck stops on Highway 22, in the desire of tourists to feed monkeys throughout Shimla, and in the relative conviviality of all the monkeys who live among Himachali humans.

### **The Raja of Jakhoo**

Though the monkey park at Tara Devi has been dismantled, the other monkey management strategy initiated under Tandon's tenure in Wildlife, sterilization, has been accelerating. The translocation element of the state's strategy has been abandoned, and, ideally, sterilization allows for the state to impose a cap on the monkeys' reproduction without disrupting the conventions of exchange that are already present and already sustaining the positively evaluated, localized relationships that exist alongside the more problematic ones. The next section is meant to mirror the opening section of Chapter Three, "The Killer of Laxmi Nagar". It traces the trajectory of a better known and beloved monkey, a leader among Jakhoo's upper classes, as he was passed through the sterilization apparatus of the Himachali Wildlife Department. Though I know exactly where he ended up – back at home among his subjects on Jakhoo – his ultimate fate is perhaps as uncertain as the fates of the monkeys who, along with the Killer, were dropped from Rajokri to Kuno.

When I first met the king of the hill, I dubbed him Gorilla because he was very large and the hair on the back of his head rose into a shape like a cone that gave me the impression of a sagittal prominence such as one finds on the top of a gorilla's skull. The first time I noted him, he was involved in a dispute at a watering hole (more like a recurrent puddle) near the top of the footpath up Jakhoo, just before one reaches the little parking lot near the top, with Baba Balak Nath Mandir on the eastern side and the gateway to Jakhoo and the final flight of monkey-haunted stairs on the west. There had been a constipated monkey child sitting in the pool with a fecal clump hanging halfway out of his distended anus. Understandably, the little monkey was in some distress and when another juvenile jumped on him, he let out a pained scream. Nearby females came to his side, one of them snatched her

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constipated child up, and a fight broke out. I cannot be sure who the involved parties were or what alliances were mobilized, but I know how it ended. After just a few moments, “Gorilla” bounded up the slope from a point near the dormitory behind Baba Balak Nath and set to chasing the entire lot of aggressors into the woods. Monkey yells echoed back up the slope for a few minutes, and some time later, “Gorilla” returned to the now-quiet pool, and drank by himself.

It was hardly a surprise when Kaku introduced him to me as Babu, the raja. Mohan, the eldest male prasad vendor on the site, who had been there forty years, confirmed Kaku’s naming. So did Madan, the young police officer who spent his on-duty hours at Jakhoo feeding monkeys and helping to sew together garlands of marigolds.<sup>286</sup> Kaku also pointed out a Rani, who was Babu’s “wife.” Judging from these monkeys’ presences when I fed their kin, and the deference others showed to them on these occasions, Babu and Rani were certainly high-rankers. I am confident that their ascriptions as the king and queen of the hill were, if not entirely accurate, then at least made from good faith attempts at describing their places in the hierarchies of Jakhoo’s rhesus.

Of all the recognizable personages, two big, high-ranking males, Babu and Sundarloo, seemed to be the only ones who were widely appreciated. If the Rani of the hill, the Step Sisters, and lowly monkeys like Chewbacca were not as recognizable, I suppose that this is firstly on account of the males’ greater size, which makes them stand out. But it may also be due to the way that the macaques’ hierarchies resolve spatially. That is, if a given monkey is higher-ranking, other monkeys will give them a wide berth during socially tender occasions such as provisioning sessions. So, at any given feeding session – and this is one of the primary venues for human-macaque interaction on Jakhoo – the highest-rankers

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<sup>286</sup> I had once embarrassed Madan by joking with him as he strung flowers together, “And this is what the police pay you for?” He was a bashful guy unlike Thakur-sahib.

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will also be the most visible. This might explain why Kaku had a name for the Rani, but not the low-ranker I had taken to calling Chewbacca.<sup>287</sup> At any rate, being the monkey raja of Jakhoo is a position of respect. Several people recollected for me that when a former monkey raja died in 2005, his passing was noted in local newspapers.<sup>288</sup> The raja of Jakhoo enjoys an affectionate kind of celebrity far removed from the notoriety of the Killer of Laxmi Nagar (see Chapter Three), who was apparently a capable leader of monkeys in his own right. Like the Killer, Babu's sovereignty had its limits in human political contexts.



Figure 46. Monkey trap at Totu, with bait spread inside. The smaller cage alongside it contains a captured male.

Imagine my surprise when, in late October 2009, I found a monkey trap in the Vanar Rajya. Only a few days before, I had visited Sandeep Rattan, the veterinarian in charge of sterilizations at the Forest Department clinic at Tuttikandi, and he had apprised me of some of

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287 The tendency to note high-ranking males was expressed in Delhi as well, for the guards who worked the park on Hanuman Road also recognized a Prime Minister and a Chief Minister among the monkeys there. The “Chief Minister” I knew because of his disfigurement – he was “Left Scar Face” in my notes.

288 I don't have these articles, but I was told this by Ajay at Fair Deal Trade Shop.

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the Wildlife Department's plans for monkey sterilization. And I knew that some of the monkeys on Jakhoo had been caught and sterilized in a literally catch-as-can manner a few years earlier: One female, whom Teresa and I had dubbed the Sad Monkey, was recognizable by the tag she had on her ear as well as her downcast mien – an effect of her low, hairy brow. Her jewelry was the artifact of the less than systematic way that sterilization had been carried out in previous years, which had made it necessary to come up with a way to mark monkeys who had undergone the procedure. Unfortunately for everybody, the monkeys tended to tear the bulky tags out of each other's ears. The Sad Monkey's ear tag was an exceptional holdover. Maybe she had tough cartilage?

But I was still caught off-guard by the cage on Jakhoo that day. It was sitting on the rugged lawn beyond Vanar Rajya's pavilion, just above the site of the still unfinished cable car dock. The front hatch was wide open, and monkeys were milling about it, picking up corn that had been freshly dropped there. This is how the trapping would proceed: A cage like this one – about five feet tall and wide, and just a little longer – would be set up with its hatch open. The hatch would be connected to a cord, which would be pulled by a hidden trapper at the right moment. Corn, bread, nuts, and fruit would be laid as bait. When I found it, there was bait, but there were no trappers, and I would later learn that the cage was being left in the Monkey Kingdom so as to habituate its denizens. When I saw them, they were refraining from entering the enclosure, and I congratulated them for being too wily. But a little more than a week later the trappers caught Babu and a few others. I found this out after the event, when I happened upon him in the post-op ward at Tuttikandi.

Tuttikandi is the nexus of the HP Wildlife Department's drive to sterilize monkeys. It still serves as the permanent home of several bears and leopards, all of whom were captured in populated areas and determined to be unreleasable. Like Ashola, it is meant to imprison

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incorrigible nonhumans. Unlike Ashola, Tuttikandi only holds individuals known to cross the boundaries between human and macaque worlds in potentially dangerous ways. (Ashola, on the other hand, attempts to imprison an entire class of being.) Despite complaints from Forest officials about visitors to the site, which is supposed to be closed to the public for the sake of its residents, the place is known to many Shimlans as “Tuttikandi Zoo,” and I have observed young couples strolling among the bears’ cages. With Vinay Tandon’s blessing, I visited Tuttikandi and met with Dr. Rattan on the 13th of October in 2009. I was able to observe the sterilization surgeries as they were carried out on captured monkeys the next day, but that’s getting ahead of the story I want to tell. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, I would return to Tuttikandi to observe the surgeries and then quickly depart on the first of several ridealongs with district monkey catcher Vijay and his team. Rattan and I didn’t talk at length until the 28th.

On the 28th, as Teresa milled among the bears outside, Rattan and I had tea and biscuits. He happily announced that Tuttikandi would be visited by observers from the Centre the next day in order to be certified as a nationwide training center for monkey sterilization. The sterilization program had been implemented in 2006 during the early days of Tandon’s tenure as wildlife chief, and unlike the primate park, it had survived. I didn’t get the numbers down until our third meeting, when Rattan was busy entertaining the visitors from the Centre, but they are indicative of the program’s success on one level at least. The three years between the initiation of the sterilization program in the second half of 2006 and our meeting late in 2009 had seen over seven thousand monkeys sterilized. The greatest portion, 2448 monkeys, had been sterilized since 2008, after Tandon was moved from Wildlife to Forests.

I asked Rattan what he thought of predictions from the farmers and their advocates that the sterilization program would also fail. He agreed! “Sterilization cannot be one hundred per cent!” he insisted. Furthermore, research was needed – is still needed – to ascertain the

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social effects of sterilization. Does the sterilization of monkeys really bring the population down to controllable numbers, or do reproductive monkeys simply fill the vacuum? Rattan was not pessimistic per se, but he expressed skepticism regarding the state of knowledge about rhesus macaques in Himachal Pradesh's government. Yet, he felt that progress had been made.

Census techniques, for instance, had been refined. Between my two visits with him, a census had been conducted of the monkeys on Jakhoo Hill as preparation for the trapping. The census, like the attempt to habituate the monkeys to the cages, had occurred without my knowing. On the 21st, twenty people had been dispatched around the hill – at the temple, on the slopes, on the path, and in the forest. Each observer was given thirty minutes to locate monkeys and to make sure that the area in which they were about to conduct a monkey count did not overlap with the area that was about to be counted by another census-taker. At ten o'clock, each census-taker counted the monkeys in their chosen area, and then recounted. They had ten minutes to do this. The same method was used among the residential zones lower on the hill on the 22nd and the 24th. Their findings were that, on the whole hill of Jakhoo – the mandir complex, the jungle, the residential apartments just above town, the few manors on the slopes, the paths – there were about 478 monkeys. Rattan lamented that “two hundred dedicated people would be required to count the entire town,” but if Jakhoo's population of less than five hundred macaques was any indication of the densities and distribution of Himachal's urban macaques, then it was possible that population control could be achieved with sterilization.

Sterilization had initially been conceived on a model used by wildlife officials in Hong Kong, but the immuno-sterilization “vaccines” that the Hong Kong officials had used were too expensive for the Himachali authorities to afford on the large scale required for managing the

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hill monkeys. Conventional surgery, on the other hand, would be too invasive to guarantee a healthy outcome for the monkeys once they were released, and would also require a long period of care in post-op as the monkeys' wounds healed around their stitches. Eventually laser surgery was settled upon as the technique of choice for males, and laparoscopic electro-surgery for females. An electro-surgery unit and CO2 laser were purchased from a German firm. I observed their use on the fourteenth.



Figure 47. Sedated monkeys being shaved and cleaned before sterilization at Tuttikandi.

The surgeries were conducted at Tuttikandi in a building separate from the offices, and just adjacent to the two monkey wards – one for pre-op and one for post-op. I was outfitted with a surgical gown and sterile slippers in an ante chamber to the operation room.



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The operation room was freshly washed and smelled strongly of antiseptics. There were two operation tables, and between them a shelf bearing an array of devices: boxes with knobs whose purposes passed unrecognized under my gaze; an “electro surgical unit”; Halogen cold light sources; an “Ackerman high performance insuffusion system”; and a flat screen television. Rattan was already in the room, preparing the equipment. He didn’t speak to me immediately, but I could tell it was him under the mask because of the lines under his eyes.

He wrapped the laparoscope in a clothe sheet and sat it down on a tray beside the right-side operation table, with its camera end pointing at me. He switched the television on, and music played – a cheery way to begin surgery, I thought. But it was just his cell phone, which he removed from his pocket with a sterile clothe and switched off. Finally, an orderly came in and handed me a mask, which I donned. Rattan explained how a female monkey would be laid on a metal plate on the operation table. This plate would complete the electrical circuit that Rattan would pass through her body in a controlled manner using the electro-surgical machine. As he powered on the laparoscope, I saw a blurry image of the room and myself appear on the flat-screen.

The first monkey to be brought in was a male, and with him the final piece of my equipage, a pair of protective glasses. The patient was unconscious and the entire lower half of his anterior abdomen was shaven. He was placed on his back on the left-hand table. Using the CO2 laser, Rattan burned through the skin of his lower abdomen, producing smoke which was sucked up through a vacuum tube suspended over the scene. Rattan placed the laser to the side. With one hand he gripped the monkey’s shriveled penis, holding it out of the way as he probed the incision with forceps and, shortly, pulled out a crimped section of the monkey’s left vas deferens, which he incised. He did the same with the right seminal tube.

It was a strange scene for me, as accustomed as I was to seeing these “restless

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creatures” in a more energetic state, rather than laid out helplessly on their backs, sleeping as humans do. (Monkeys sleep sitting upright in bundles.) The first male was followed by another. They were both smaller adults – though perhaps they only looked small to me as they were cradled by the orderlies dressed in blue. Each of the males was completely covered with two sheets as he was laid on the table, one orange sheet and one blue sheet; the sheets, of course, were cut through with holes through which their genitals protruded. As Rattan lasered the seminal tubes of the second and third monkeys, smoke rose and there was an acrid smell as the vacuum missed a few whiffs of rhesus flesh.

Next, a female was carried in. Rattan used the laser to make two small incisions, through which two shunts were inserted with measured force. I watched the television as the camera entered her body through the dark tube – as the pinkish organs came into view, the first images that came to my mind were the opening credits of the older runs of *Doctor Who*, which passes the viewer through a tunnel of spinning, colored lights. Then the ovaries and the uterus came into view. The bladder and the colon provided a pale backdrop to the organs at the center of our attention. I wrote dramatically, *I am seeing inside the monkey!* On television, I watched Rattan manipulate the electro-surgical tool, which he had loaded into his patient’s body cavity through the other shunt. The tool took hold of her fallopian tube in its pincers, and fried it. I watched smoke from the cauterization rise and turn on itself in billows inside her body. The ovaries were small against her uterus, and as the electricity desiccated the fallopian tubes, the tiny glands retreated. They didn’t quite shrivel, but retracted as the flesh around the burn point condensed. The uterus, too, seemed to draw into the body cavity away from the burning, but then I realized that this was the effect of a little pressure that Rattan has applied to his patient’s belly from the outside. “A little bit of smoke as see-oh-two we are putting in,” Rattan explained. At the end of the episode gasses produced by the

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surgery would be siphoned from the body cavity by a valve in the laparoscopy shunt.

A large male was next. Rattan examined him. “His testicle is damaged,” Rattan explained, perhaps from a fight. He decided to try to operate on the male’s good testicle. As he drew the vas deferens through the incision, the monkey’s penis retracted into the body cavity. The male was so big that he could not be covered with the sheet, so they let him lay naked and sprawled out in front of Rattan and I. His jaw was limp and his mouth was fallen open, displaying his long canines. Rattan completed the surgery – none of these procedures took more than a minute or two – and an orderly retrieved the monkey. He was so big as to be unwieldy for carrying, and his arm got caught on the door as the orderly carried him to post-op. I noticed that his eyes were open, and I told Rattan as much. He assured me, “Ketamin – he won’t remember anything.”



Figure 48.  
Babu  
recovering from  
sedation shortly  
after surgery.

The monkeys’ passage through Tuttikandi takes only four or five days in total, and though they may not remember the moment of sterilization, the rest of their trip must surely

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make an impression. Throughout their stay at the facility, they are passed through a series of trap doors, squeeze cages, modules and other devices meant to restrict the monkeys' lines of flight and attack. The array of cages allow veterinary personnel to control the monkeys and transfer them from room to room and thus through the phases of the sterilization process. The first cage is the trap. Though the district monkey trapper, Vijay, and his men – Nepali workers visiting Himachal Pradesh on work visas for precisely this purpose – were something short of cruel to the monkeys they captured over the course of the few trips on which I was allowed to accompany them, the affair was necessarily violent from start to finish.

The monkeys whose sterilization I witnessed were from the vicinity of the Forest Lodge at Totu (or Tutoo), which is west from Tuttikandi, within five kilometers or so of Shimla town. I visited Totu with Vijay and his team on the thirteenth, directly after observing the sterilization process. They had set up their trap – the same one I would later find in Vanar Rajya – on a concrete water tank on the side of the road. They had already captured one monkey, a pretty burly guy that Vijay identified as the troop's neta, who was resting in a smaller cage alongside the larger. He explained that it was imperative to get the leader because the other monkeys would be inclined to come to his rescue, but this was not the case that day. I was there only a short while before the scene became crowded with onlookers from Totu and Vijay called off the expedition. After Totu, we traveled to two other locations east of Shimla town. One juvenile monkey was caught across the street from a police station, where Vijay was welcomed by police officers who knew him as a shikar. Vijay had told me as much when I asked him how he had gotten into the monkey catching racket: He had more than twenty years of experience trapping and hunting wild animals. I must admit that much of Vijay's own Pahari-accented Hindi passed meaninglessly through my ears, but if the chit-chat I overheard at the police station was any indication, he was most renowned for

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trapping leopards. He later added bears and cobras to the list himself.

A plan was made to meet the next morning, the fifteenth, at the State Assembly Building in Shimla proper, just west on the Mandi Road from the old Victorian era Railway Department Building. Here, I knew, monkeys were responsible for snatching food from the hands of bureaucrats and parliamentarian's aides. I was excited about this. I thought it might give me an opportunity to look at how the anti-governmental aspects of the "monkey menace" narrative would play out in Shimla, where my attention had become enamored with Jakhoo.

We were up with the sun. Teresa and I were at the Assembly Building by six. Unlike us, the monkeys were customarily early risers, and it always impressed me, when I happened to be with them in the morning, how they quietly made their way down the streets as if they owned them. At dawn they were the monkeys', and at ten-thirty at night, after the human crowds had dispersed, they were the dogs'. Both species searched the streets and storefronts around these times, going through the garbage left by the evening's festivities, and congregating in masses simply unseen during the daylight hours when *Homo sapiens* was the most prevalent large mammal species. During the day the monkeys traversed rooftops and the dogs laid in piles along the road side, or, if traffic was slow enough and sufficiently docile, in the middle of the road. But at night, the dogs of Shimla partied. In Delhi, the thin, short-haired lowland dogs howled and barked as they carried out their turf wars and scrounging missions. The large-bodied, furry mutts of Shimla – reminiscent more of stocky mountaineering dog breeds introduced by the British than the "pariah" type kutta-dogs on the plains – barked as incessantly and loudly as their Delhi counterparts, but also formed huge packs. One night in June, I had tied one off at the Himal bar and started home at about eleven o'clock. When I reached the steps of my hotel from the Ridge Road, I heard a noise like running to my left. Westward along the Ridge Road there was a sea of dogs. Furry, big

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dogs and a few smaller ones, moving as a mass down the narrow road right towards me. I jumped into the stairwell and casually situated my monkey stick (which I still had from the afternoon's trip to Jakhoo) between myself and the road. The dogs paid no attention to me at all, completely consumed in dog business, and descended the steep path to the Mall. There would have been no fewer than thirty of them.<sup>289</sup>

The first monkey we encountered on the grounds of the State Assembly Building was the only monkey in this locale with whom I was already familiar. Like my favorites elsewhere, I knew this monkey because he was possessed of an outstanding physical characteristic, in this case obesity. Before the trapping expedition I had only ever seen him sitting, never in motion. His belly went right over his genitals and legs, and his breasts hung as low as any older female's. I had read about such a monkey in Bruce Wheatley's account of the long-tailed macaques of Padangtegal. To us he appeared somewhat comical as he would sit in place and chew on the food from his cheek pouches, but I knew from reading Wheatley that a macaque with such heft would present a terrifying mien to the subordinate unfortunate enough to earn his wrath. I suppose that he might not have charged fast or far, but if that much bristling monkey launched itself at me, I would clear right out. Such superlative monkey threats are only possible given a body built on the bounty of calories made possible by places like Shimla and Padangtegal.

When the trappers arrived and set up their cage on the front patio, the Obese Monkey took a seat on one of the stone pilings for the fence along the Assembly Building's front drive and watched. He watched as they spread the bait of corn, bananas, and white Super Slice Bread around the ground in the large cage, but did not make a move. Trapping began a little before seven o'clock. Vijay had paused with Teresa and I briefly to take a group

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<sup>289</sup> It's possible that this was an ad hoc pack of males gathered around a female in heat. Smaller gatherings for this purpose are common.

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photo, and then made off somewhere to make a phone call and get more transport cages. In the meanwhile his Nepali assistants, under the watch of a pair of curious clerks, a couple of chowkidars, and a growing crowd of macaques, spread the food around and called to the monkeys. Like the prasad vendors and staff of Jakhoo, like the pilgrims to the mandirs in Shimla and Delhi, they called, “Leh! Leh!” to the monkeys. “Le” (say it something like “lay” or “ley” if you like) is the diminutive command form of *lena*, to take, appropriate for children, animals, your lover, or God. “Take it!” they might have been ordering the monkeys. But as people aimed their imperatives at monkeys, they tended to shorten it and reduce it to a sort of gliding bark: “Leh! Leh!”

Within twenty minutes as many as thirty monkeys were watching from the walls, the fences, and the eaves of the Assembly Building. While two of the trappers periodically spread more bait around, or attempted to lure monkeys closer to the cage, a third lay in hiding behind some shrubbery, ready to spring the cord and release the hatch should a sufficient number of monkeys fall for the deception. Four younger monkeys wandered into the cage first while their elders watched from a distance. The trapper in hiding did not pull the cord, and they left with their cheek pouches filled with white bread. Eventually a larger male – one of the trappers identified him as a “pramukh bandar,” a chief among monkeys – began to linger around the door to the cage. But his desire for the white bread his subordinates had so easily won overwhelmed his caution and he entered the trap. Vijay’s men waited a bit longer, until the four other young monkeys re-entered with him – and snap! Just a little more than twenty minutes into the morning, the first five monkeys of the day were caught.

The monkeys on the inside flipped out, flinging themselves against the bars, climbing up to the mesh roof, and screaming. Some of the monkeys on the outside, but not everyone, gave warning barks. The Obese Monkey departed nonchalantly down the drive. At the far

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edge of the patio, where it dropped off into a cliff face above the road to the train station, four or five females gathered side by side to issue their warnings to the trappers and pleas to their troop in unison. They made hoot faces at us humans and grew more agitated as the Nepalis began the process of transferring their five wards into the smaller transport cage. The trappers did this by aligning the open transport cage with the front hatch of trap and opening it again. The male and three of the others went in immediately, perhaps expecting to simply reverse their situation the way they got into it. The fifth monkey did not follow. He continued to scream and cling to the sides of the trap until two of the trappers physically removed him. First, they tried prodding him with their rods; then they tried to pry his fingers and toes from the mesh. Finally one of them grabbed him by the arms and pulled him into the bars, immobilizing the panicked macaque while his partner entered the cage and took the monkey by the shoulders. Rather than risk opening the holding cage for the four other monkeys, they deposited the troublemaker in his own cell. The two transport cages were set alongside the larger trap and the monkeys were offered food to quiet them and replenish the bait. For five minutes, it was to no avail. The captives screamed. The larger male slapped the others and manhandled them until suddenly settling with them into a huddle. The lone monkey in the other cage pressed himself against his companions in the adjacent cage through the two layers of mesh.

The next monkey who was caught was a female, perhaps a relative of one of the monkeys who had been captured already. When given the opportunity, she too fled directly into the transport cage with the lone juvenile. Very shortly after that, another female was caught. She, too, refused to release the mesh of the trap. Vijay had returned by now and took charge of removing her, which he did by roughly prodding her with the rod. His assistants' labored attempts at removing the juvenile previously looked gentle by comparison, but Vijay's



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technique produced results more rapidly, and she went into the less populated cage.



Figure 49. Two of the trappers attempt to prod an adult male into a holding cage with his junior troopmates; in turn, once routed, he would rough his cellmates up before allowing everyone to settle into a huddle.

Around eight-thirty, Vijay decided that they might be more successful if they moved the trap to a location nearer to the cliff side of the patio. Once it had been shifted to its new position, Teresa and I went to examine the neatly rectangular field of bait left behind. As the transport cages were loaded onto the Wildlife Department's pickup truck, they too left their outlines on the patio, but their traces were drawn in feces and urine in addition to the softened, gummed together bits of bait that the monkeys had divulged from their cheek pouches.

By nine o'clock, two more monkeys had been individually captured, and the rest of the troop was renewing their caution. The cord man, grown bored of waiting for monkeys to

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enter the trap, and occupying himself by tossing some seeds absentmindedly to a far-off youngster on the patio, nearly missed his chance to catch number twelve. Soon, two females came onto the platform to challenge the trappers directly – number twelve, I reckoned, must have been a relative or friend of theirs. The trappers routed them with rods, but they remained on the periphery of the patio, accepting no food and softly grunting to the caged monkey for another thirty minutes. We waited two more hours. After the twelfth monkey, Vijay chit-chatted with onlookers, smoked bidis, and mostly stood around with the rest of us as we waited. Two more monkeys were captured before he decided that fourteen was to be sum of the morning's work, and he issued a ticket to the building manager for bookkeeping purposes.

Monkey catching requires patience on the part of the trappers. I was frankly surprised at the ease with which the initial bunch were captured. Where Chief Tandon had judged Delhi's Wildlife Department's effort to commit to feeding thousands of monkeys at Ashola in the long term as "kind of impossible," the limited investment of baiting traps was something that government could handle. Against the complaints of farmers and others who resent the state's apparently skewed prerogatives in favor of nonhumans, the low cost of the sterilization process is as important as the minimization of the Wildlife Department's contact with monkeys. Counting the nominal amount of bait laid out in trapping, the fuel, food, transport, and post-op care for each monkey as it passed through Himachal's sterilization apparatus cost the state between Rs2000 and Rs2500.<sup>290</sup>

The state releases the monkeys as soon as possible, but occasionally retains in its post-op ward a monkey who has been injured and needs additional care. The standard recuperation time was three days. I found Babu in the post-op ward after his surgery, which had been conducted before the visitors from the Centre on the 29th. I had arrived at

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<sup>290</sup> That's between forty-three and fifty-four dollars, and it doesn't count the salaries of the trappers and the employees of the veterinary section.

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Tuttikandi late and missed a chance to revisit the operation theater alongside the visitors, but I accompanied them as they were given the tour of post-op. The ward was housed in a separate building. As we entered, we passed through an antechamber flooded with bright yellow liquid. I watched one of the observers and a deputy ranger step gingerly around it, probably thinking the same thing I was. I asked an orderly, and he told me that the liquid was an antiseptic for our shoes. He led me right through it.



Figure 50. Cages containing sterilized monkeys along a wall in the post-op ward.

In the next room, several monkeys rested in a battery of cages built into the wall and connected to one another through a system of hatches attached to cranks which could be worked by the orderlies. There were bottom panels which could come out for cleaning, side panels for moving monkeys, and a panel that could travel across the space of the cage so as to squeeze a monkey into confinement. Each of these panels were set against the back side

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of the cage, presumably in preparation to bring the macaques to the front where blood samples could be taken and medicines could be administered. An orderly cleared a monkey from one cage to make room for another. He used a rod to pressure the monkey into moving, hissing at the panicked creature, “Shish! Shish!”



Figure 51. Left, Rani (who was not sterilized at that time), and right, Babu. Babu's third right finger is bent and swollen, an injury that is barely visible in figure 47. Beside this, there are only the laser scars on his scrotum. One is visible to the left (his right) of his penis.

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Many of the monkeys in this group had wounds, slashes apparently inflicted by their companions in the transport cages. Babu was alone in his cage, laying on his side. When I knelt to look at him, he lifted his head slightly, but he seemed neither fearful nor particularly agitated. A female with her child in the next cage, simply looked away when she saw me. (The HP vets and their assistants are careful to keep infants with their mothers during capture and care; pregnant females are kept separately and not sterilized.) In the next cage, two juvenile males clung to one another. When I turned my gaze to them, they released one another and leaned towards me with hoot faces on. These two had been out of surgery longer, and were perhaps beginning to behave more like themselves, but they were still sedate in comparison with the monkeys in pre-op, who had threatened us energetically or scrambled into the rears of their cages – their hooting still echoed from the other ward.

The Jakhoo monkeys and the monkeys from the State Assembly Building were released at their sites of capture on schedule. I was on hand for the return of two batches of them to Jakhoo Hill on the 24th and the 30th of October, but not for Babu's return. Both times, the cages were simply positioned to open towards the back of the pickup or van that was transporting them, and the monkeys were let go. Teresa filmed them on her camera as they cascaded from the van in Jakhoo's parking area. Babu was released a little later, on the first of November, but it was another week before we'd see him. When I caught sight of him on the lawn of Vanar Rajya, I bought some prasad from Mohan and spread it around on the steps hoping to get a closer look at him. He and the Rani obliged us. The other monkeys gave them a berth, and I let him pick the channa from my palm. Teresa gave him a slice of an orange she hadn't eaten. Things had not apparently changed for him much by that point. The only visible marks from his abduction from the Monkey Kingdom and passage through Tuttikandi were two tiny, pale scars on his pubis, one for each of his tubes. How his brief absence and

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the altered tissues beneath those scars would affect his career as an individual at the summit of the Jakhoo monkeys' political order, I don't know.

The important thing for the purposes of the HP Wildlife authorities was that he had been returned to his locale to maintain the existing social order there, and to defend it from new monkeys whose reproduction the state had not sent up in smoke. Sterilized monkeys are manageable (if not exactly docile) subjects of governance. Though we are still talking about an imposition of power, and though violence is an integral part of this imposition, the HP Wildlife Department's attempts to make "the present situation" manageable rather than to redefine the situation at hand entirely demonstrates something along the lines of an institutional "respect." That this respect emerges in part from a failure to effect other projects is not inconsequential, but this is one way in which change occurs. It is possible that the process of passing the monkeys through Tuttikandi – of abducting them and moving them across a series of transformative thresholds before returning them to the place they had already made their own – is a way of making them familiar to power, and giving them the legitimacy of good citizens.

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This fact that the political or social activity of actors in one world or context can sometimes echo into apparently disparate worlds of meaning and matter is apparent to the people and government of Shimla. Like Delhi's governments, Shimla's government is beholden especially to the spoken complaints of its human constituents about monkeys. The political utterances of farmers and their advocates activates the state apparatus, and impels it to find a way to manage monkeys. But even those interests that do not necessarily reach the level of spoken discourse – there are no pro-monkey agitations coming out of Jakhoo, for

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instance<sup>291</sup> – can have an effect on the material manifestation of management that is ostensibly meant to appease the needs of human actors. Background disapproval of harming monkeys, and the economic interests of Shimla town itself (especially Jakhoo Mandir), disincentive the wildlife authorities from plowing stark separations between humans and monkeys in the town and district.

The cross-species congeniality demonstrated at prominent sites of human-monkey interface like Jakhoo transforms food into *prasad* and so echoes into humans' religious worlds. Exchange of food exists on Jakhoo as a relatively peaceful association and so echoes into the HP Wildlife authorities' management plans as a functioning model of multispecies relations that might best be conserved. It also echoes into the economic worlds of visitors to Shimla as a tourist attraction and a place of leisure. So, while the monkeys' appetites and depredations are in Shimla, as in Delhi, a wild zone in which government exerts power and legitimates that power, the ethical demands that shape that exercise of power arrive from a multitude of sources: from the local machinations of rhesus and human politics, and from the demands of citizens who feel disenfranchised from the Himachali political system, but also from political interests at the national center, from the wandering desires of tourists seeking peace and romance away from the metropolis, and from the willingness of monkeys to tolerate interaction with humans.

As the long-term effects of Wildlife's current plan – capture, sterilize, re-release – begin to resolve, there is an opportunity for further research on how this kind of management

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291 Though this is not unheard of at other monkey temples. The prominent Hanuman mandir known as Sankat Mochan ("Reliever of Troubles") in Varanasi was the site of pro-monkey agitations in October of 2005. Devotees picketed outside the temple grounds with signs like, "Sankat mochan ke andar bhukha hai bechara bandar" ("Inside Sankat Mochan, there is a poor, hungry monkey") and "'Hindu Astha sukhe hai mandir ke bander bhukhe hain" ("The Hindu congregants are happy, but the temple monkeys are hungry"). And this at one of the wealthiest, best-known Hanuman mandirs in the country. "Campaign for Simians," *Hindustan Times*, 2005.

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strategy plays out for all the primates involved. Did Babu's incapacity to sire offspring result in the weakening of his status in Jakhoo society? Will the sterilization program produce material or political results in the agricultural zones of Shimla district? Will the forms of governance being practiced by the Wildlife Department aid in the flourishing of human-monkey relations? Success, as Richard Lewontin reminded his readers in *Biology as Ideology*, is not just about numbers;<sup>292</sup> the parameters of "flourishing" do not stop at the multiplication of bodies, monkey or human. One question that remains to be answered about Shimla, then, is whether or not the model of interspecies governance being practiced there will result in the flourishing of amicable, workable relationships between the species.

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<sup>292</sup> Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology: The Doctrine of DNA*.



Chapter Ten: Conclusion: Introductions in Urban Tangles



Figure 52. Noting the interest of this male macaque, these two children decided to wait in the shoe room until an adult could escort them out.

**Chapter Ten: Conclusion: Introductions in Urban Tangles**

According to the United Nations Population Fund, the majority of humans have lived in cities since 2008, and the proportion of urbanites in all world regions will keep growing.<sup>293</sup> Most of this projected growth is not expected to take place in mega-cities like Delhi (defined

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<sup>293</sup> *State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth* (United Nations Population Fund, 2007), 6, <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/408>.

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by the Population Fund as cities with more than 10 million residents), but in medium-sized ones like Shimla.<sup>294</sup> But both kinds of environment – super-dense sprawls like Delhi, and relatively managed zones of urbanization like Shimla – are becoming increasingly significant in human and nonhuman lives. Do we primates have the skills to flourish in these expanding, often quite novel, and sometimes violent settings?

Defined as organisms with defining impacts on the living relations around them,<sup>295</sup> the labels of "keystone species" or "ecosystems engineer" easily describe humans' roles in these urban ecologies, not least for their part in producing the alterations to the world that materialize city landscapes. In the material-semiotic relations of Shimla and Delhi, rhesus macaques and other animals are also keystones and engineers, but they make their contributions in different ways, including through the co-construction of niches.<sup>296</sup> Individuals and collectives from the two primate species I have focused on here facilitate contact and exchange across scales and intelligibilities,<sup>297</sup> but also make introductions between the human and nonhuman participants who appear in those zones. Keystone species' labor sets the stage for other relationships.

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294 Ibid., 3.

295 C.G. Jones, J.H. Lawton, and M. Shachak, "Organisms as Ecosystem Engineers," *Oikos* no. 69 (1994): 373–386; C.G. Jones, J.H. Lawton, and M. Shachak, "Positive and Negative Effects of Organisms as Physical Ecosystem Engineers," *Ecology* 78, no. 7 (1997): 1946–1957; R.T. Paine, "The *Pisaster-Tegula* Interaction: Prey Patches, Predator Food Preference, and Intertidal Community Structure," *Ecology* 50, no. 6 (1969): 950–961.

296 A. Fuentes, "Naturalcultural Encounters in Bali: Monkey, Temples, Tourists, and Ethnoprimatology," *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2010): 600–624.

297 Macaques are also "keystones" in the "metaphorical" sense deployed by Celia Lowe to describe how the designation of a population of island macaques as a separate species acted as a boundary object that brought together government, scientific, public, and financial interest in the conservation of biodiversity in Indonesia. "In its biological sense, a keystone species holds together an ecosystem and, in the Togean Islands, the [Togean] macaque held together the social life of biodiverse nature." Celia Lowe, "Making the Monkey: How the Togean Macaque Went from 'New Form' to 'Endemic Species' in Indonesians' Conservation Biology," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (November 2004): 510.

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This does not make humans, the "dominant species" of the landscapes they help to form, except in the dullest numerical terms, and even then only when compared to certain other vertebrates. This is not to say, for instance, that humans are incapable of systematically wiping out the rhesus macaques of Delhi; only that there are, at every step, relationships in play that offer alternatives to categorical violence that would preclude the possibility of further relations. As humans alter the conditions of life and death in their own (always shared and impure) worlds, they also actualize constructive capacities in other lifeforms.<sup>298</sup> Affection for monkeys entailing from symbolic and material encounters with them is one way in which humans become the mediums for materializing a monkey-friendly world. Likewise, human world-building is, like all labor, only possible in the context of nonhuman relations.<sup>299</sup>

What human domination many moderns do imagine and produce in their worlds is expressed in discourses and practices that mark out and purify zones where anthropogenic forms of power are considered a priori superior. Modernity, as a practice that produces truth claims only by purifying or translating all other points of view,<sup>300</sup> is a striking example of the sort of chauvinism entailed in the performance of human transcendence.<sup>301</sup> This dissertation

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298 Vinciane Despret, "The Becomings of Subjectivity in Animal Worlds," *Subjectivity* 23 (2008): 123–139.

299 K. Marx, "Capital I," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R.C. Tucker, vol. Second (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 344.

300 The language of purification and translation is from Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern*, cited earlier, but also see: B. Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 268–281; Isabelle Stengers, "A Cosmopolitical Proposal," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 994–1003.

301 E.g., the cross-disciplinary "consilience" that E.O. Wilson imagined would one day unite all knowledge under the pursuit of science, or the notion, forwarded by neuroscientist Steven Pinker, that science, despite revealing the variety of circumstances and vastness of the universe, dictates a humanist ethical stance. Steven Pinker, "Science Is Not Your Enemy: An Impassioned Plea to Neglected Novelists, Embattled Professors, and Tenureless Historians," *New Republic* (August 6, 2013), <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114127/science-not-enemy-humanities>; Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, First Vintage Books Edition (New York:

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has focused on another zone where humans are produced as the exclusive engineers and builders, government. Governmentality is a world-building practice, one that emerges in a variety of forms across different ecological, economic, political, spatial contexts. The environmental historian K. Sivaramakrishnan wrote about colonial forestry management in Bengal as a state-making process that, despite its pretensions to cultivating universal scientific principles as well as profitable arbors, failed to gain credibility among elites on account of its actual diversity of practices and outcomes. Colonial forestry was only ever able to unfold in the specific contexts of heterogeneous social-geographic landscapes.<sup>302</sup> Similarly the actual variety of human-monkey relations and relational contexts not only disallow states and municipalities from homogenizing interspecies relations, but also have consequences for the expression of governmentality in the specific, real-world circumstances in which government power is applied. An examination of the practices of wildlife governmentality, and of the sources of the knowledge and motivation which impel government action, militates against the assumptions that government power is entirely anthropogenic and serves entirely human ends.

This runs counter to the hierarchical ontologies posited in some classic modernist models of the emergence or evolution of world-building capacities unique to humans. The idea that the superlative concentration of human power that is state power – or the superlative way of life that is language, technology, culture – is the product of a series of phenomenal orders that occur sequentially through time, each one the necessary foundation of the more efficacious order to emerge from it, is not supported by this ethnography of the material-semiotic aspects of human-macaque sociality. The multispecies worlds I have written

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Vintage Books, 1998).

302 K Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests: Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

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about in Delhi and Shimla are, in the language of the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, surpassings that do not leave their fields of origin,<sup>303</sup> but rather emerge from a tangle of interactions between many co-extant selective processes, desires, inheritances, and materialities. Here and elsewhere I use the word, "tangle," to nod towards the "tangled bank" at the close of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, which has often been read as an early musing on what would nowadays be called an ecosystem. Like an ecosystem, Darwin's tangled bank was a living morass, one with roots, but also with a history of material connections that also become the conditions for future interconnections.<sup>304</sup>

While there may be something that the respective wildlife management units of Delhi and Shimla can learn from one another – Tuttikandi's visitors from the Centre were there to see what could be gleaned from Rattan's operations, after all – it is difficult to pass judgment on Delhi or Shimla relative to the other. The management strategies that were being pursued during the period of my research were responsive in situated ways to the political and ecological pressures of the given situation. This goes for Delhi as well as for Shimla, and Ajay Gandhi makes an invaluable point when he indicates that the on-the-ground banality of heterogeneity and ambiguity in Delhi's human-monkey worlds means that multispecies complexity can serve the interests of anthropocentric power as easily as the interests of "revelatory" theory that criticizes human chauvinism.<sup>305</sup> However, we might also read Nand Lal's realist contempt-without-malice for the heterogeneity he encounters as the expression of a situated subjectivity emerging from a form of multispecies governmentality which achieves its goals by paying its functionaries on a per monkey basis – Nand Lal is not just "a product of

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303 M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. J. Wild (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 153.

304 C. Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: The Modern Library, 1998), 648.

305 A. Gandhi, "Catch Me If You Can: Monkey Capture in Delhi," *Ethnography* 13, no. 1 (2012): 51.

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the system," but a life form being practical given the circumstances of power and value. Though I take Sonia Ghosh seriously when she said that translocation was the only way, Delhi's plan to simply translocate every monkey it can capture does not especially lend itself to responsiveness in the context of the multiplex of mortal and moral significances that work to gather humans and monkeys together in urban environments.

Gandhi's expansion of Lal's realism, via the anthropological literature on gifts in India, into a critique of the utopianism of bourgeois activists and academics is key, but too summarily discounts (what he calls) Haraway's post-humanism as revelatory idealism. Gandhi's advocacy for the mundane aspects of complexity – those aspects of the world where living significance unfolds – puts him in a kind of sympathy with Haraway and Latour, who call for the cultivation of "worldly" orientations. As Haraway writes in *When Species Meet*, "The point is not to celebrate complexity" – not to simply point out the multiplicity of life forms, as if the mere act of unveiling heterogeneity would be enough to reform chauvinism – "but to become worldly and to respond."<sup>306</sup>

The worldliness needed for response might be thought of as an orientation or skill set. In *Politics of Nature*, Bruno Latour wrote about "diplomacy" as the skill required to avoid war footings by sussing out what, in the expanse of possible material and semiotic significances, is essential to life in shared worlds; and, equally as important, what can really be given up in order to form new, working collectives.<sup>307</sup> Isabelle Stengers has also written about diplomacy, imagining it as a process through which collectives can be de-anesthetized, roused to a sort of wakefulness in the world. For Stengers, diplomats cop to neither modernist progress nor

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306 D. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, ed. C. Wolfe (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 41. Cf. Haraway, "Speculative Fabulations for Technoculture's Generations: Taking Care of Unexpected Country."

307 B. Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 209–217, 240.

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universalist-utilitarian notions of general interest, but rather attend to the specificity of lives who are threatened: "Diplomats are there to provide a voice for those whose practice, mode of existence and what is often called identity are threatened by a decision. 'If you decide that, you'll destroy us.'"<sup>308</sup> She suggests an additional skill, "witnessing," as a way to represent actors who, like Herman Melville's Bartleby, do not engage in collective decision making, non-actors whose constant reply to every command and gift is, "I prefer not to," or, worse, silence. The job of the witness would be to convey, "what it may feel like to be threatened by an issue that one has nothing to contribute to."<sup>309</sup>

In "A Cosmopolitical Proposal", from which I draw Stengers's versions of diplomacy and witnessing, she offers the reader two examples of worlds which promote the cultivation of such cosmopolitical skills: the palaver system of dispute resolution, and magic as practiced by American neo-pagan witches. Something that these two disparate streams of world-building practice have in common are their concerns for the gathering at hand. In the case of the palaver, parties who are recognized as knowing something relevant to a crisis come together to discuss how to end the conflict between them; the goal of the palaver is not to determine the truth, but to figure out how an already agreed-upon "world Order" is to unfold in the specific context of a disagreement between actors. The magic rituals of American witches

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308 Stengers, "A Cosmopolitical Proposal," 1002.

309 Ibid., 1003. In this sense the work of the witness might be said to be along the lines of the work of the feminist scholar as described by Gayatri Spivak in her seminal essay in subaltern studies, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Answering her title question in the negative, Spivak claims that it is only through articulation with caring speakers that the subaltern can "speak" or find anything like earnest (if not equitable or necessarily accurate) representation in society. This is different from the "modest witness" who Donna Haraway wrote about, a form of modernist hero and author with the power to discursively assume the position of objectivity and in this way appear to channel objective reality into the decision making processes of society at large. Donna J. Haraway, *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium.FemaleMan\_Meets\_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997); G.C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

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convoke a Goddess presence that does not dictate anything to the witches, but rather catalyzes "a regime of thought and feeling that bestows the power to become a cause for thinking, on that around which there is gathering."<sup>310</sup> For Stengers, both practical worlds are expansions of the political not just to things and critters, but to whatever it is which makes artful, diplomatic, attentive gatherings possible.

To the palaver and the neo-pagan Goddess ritual, I can add the Himachal Pradesh wildlife authorities' capture-sterilize-release strategy of monkey management. This strategy is not a miracle of negotiation that finds all of the relevant parties in Shimlan naturecultures in agreement, but it is responsive to both the monkeys' multiple imbrications with the landscapes of Shimla and Jakhoo, and to the claims leveled by the human citizens of these landscapes. If in circumventing systematic extermination or wholesale translocation, the HP wildlife authorities' respect for the monkeys allows for the alternative violence of sterilization, then their efforts are still laudable because they attempt to preserve the working relationships between monkeys, humans, and their material-semiotic situations in the landscapes of Shimla district.

In seeking to refuse humans and monkeys – for their own, mutual good – the trans-species contact they desire, wholesale translocation efforts like Delhi's attempt either to cauterize the ground from which much-needed diplomats and witnesses emerge, or to seize those productive points for the state. Emergent from the vicissitudes of human politicking, multispecies racketeering, and overlapping histories, the Himachali scheme does more than protect the ground from which Jakhoo's and Shimla's monetary and ethical treasures are extracted. HP's style of monkey governmentality also conserves the gathering's ability to continue producing players who are savvy in the ways of others. Some will be diplomats and

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<sup>310</sup> Stengers, "A Cosmopolitical Proposal," 1002.



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witnesses; there could also be weeds, troops, gangsters, and gods. But there will be other humans and nonhumans also skilled in making novel introductions in the growing urban tangles of our planet, and these players we haven't named yet may be the ones we need in the coming worlds.

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