Feeling Environments

Emotions Beyond Human Interiority

by Frederik Schröer and Laura Otis*

This article proposes that as the history of emotions develops, looking beyond the human individual and human interiority as the locus of emotions may enable researchers to address current concerns in the field and to sustain interdisciplinary conversations. Written collaboratively by a historian (Frederik Schröer) and a literary scholar trained as a neuroscientist (Laura Otis), our essay draws on recent insights in the sciences and the humanities to explore South Asian literary sources spanning two millennia. To show how emotions emerge in "feeling environments," we compare descriptions of people experiencing nature in classical South Asian texts and in Arundhati Roy's novel, "The God of Small Things."

As the history of emotions develops, its evidence that emotions transcend the human individual may help researchers collaborate with scholars studying emotions in other disciplines. In our field's intersections with neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and literary studies, questioning the analytical primacy of the human individual has become vital. The metaphor of "having" an emotion, implying human ownership, impedes understanding of how emotions grow through perceptions and encounters in what we call "feeling environments." We likewise make no claim that plants, animals, or inorganic objects "have" emotions. Emotions, human or other, are not "had"; they *are.* If we think of emotions as transitory environmental states involving all local life and materiality, we increase our potential to cross-connect knowledge of emotions built in the humanities and the natural and social sciences.

In this special issue reflecting on 15 years of research at the Center for the History of Emotions, Berlin, we consider the work that has been done here as we look toward the future. We offer these thoughts as scholars whose training and daily interactions with researchers present contradictions about how emotions can be known.[1] Laura Otis studied biochemistry and neuroscience and worked in laboratories for eight years before moving to literary studies,

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1 Though at times we use "feelings" interchangeably with "emotions," we recognize that fields define these terms differently with regard to physicality, sentience, and social influence.

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where she critically examines metaphors that have shaped Western understandings of emotions. Currently, she is investigating how fiction writers' evocation of multisensory imagery can elicit emotions. Frederik Schröer is trained in Tibetan, Buddhist, and South Asian studies and completed his PhD in global history. His current research project explores emotions in and beyond the human, focusing on human-environment relations among Buddhists in colonial South Asia. Through collaborative dialogue, we have discovered that despite our different perspectives, we understand emotions as more than the products of human individuals.

This article focuses on literary texts that depict characters experiencing emotions extending beyond themselves into natural environments. Fiction-writers and poets excel at engaging readers' senses, and consequently, their emotions. The evocative texts we study resonate in the ways they illustrate emotions emerging in people interacting with places. In the quest to historicize emotions, literary sources like these can complement archival ones by showing how authors describe culturally specific emotional experiences. No creative author or work can "speak for" a culture or offer a transparent window onto a shared approach to life. Cultural understandings of emotions can't be extracted from literary texts like DNA from tissue samples; they can be inferred only in light of how a story or poem functions as a work of art. Many literary scholars resist attempts to discover history or culture *through* fiction or poetry, but one can learn from literary representations of past or unfamiliar cultures as long as one keeps their aesthetic purposes in mind.[2]

In this essay, we first survey recent historical, literary, philosophical, and scientific studies that analyze environments' roles in creating emotions, emphasizing points that invite cross-connection. We then examine several classical religious and poetic South Asian texts, along with Arundhati Roy's novel, "The God of Small Things" (1997), which illustrate thriving models of emotions in which bounded individuals play no role. We argue that thinking of emotions as environmental rather than individual opens new paths for cross-disciplinary studies of emotion.

I. Theorizing Emotions beyond Human Interiority

Our analysis engages recent studies across fields that weigh the roles of environments and their human perceivers in creating emotions. Conceiving of emotions as transcending the boundaries (stable or porous) of individual minds and bodies, and tracing feelings experienced *in* and *with* environments, can help researchers integrate knowledge across disciplines. This section's

2 Sianne Ngai argues convincingly that *because of,* not despite, literary works' aesthetic aims, they offer ideal sources for studying certain emotions in cultural and political context. Sianne Ngai, Ugly Feelings, Cambridge, MA 2005, pp. 2 f.

critical examination of such research in the humanities and sciences prepares our analysis of literary descriptions of natural environments where feelings exceed the confines of human interiority and social relations. The emotions we explore are not foreign to the human; we do not mean to disregard the human or pretend that we could, given that our sources are human historical artifacts. But by attending to their locations in feeling environments, we aim to decenter the human and explore the role of environments, objects, and nonhuman others in the constitution of human emotional life.

Our conviction resonates with new work in the history of emotions and related fields that critiques the lingering anthropocentrism of our epistemological foundations. Historian Erika Quinn and Germanist Holly Yanacek urge historians of emotions to engage with the "nonhuman turn" in the humanities to better understand the "affective relationships" between humans and nonhumans, including animals and machines.[3] Charting the extension of human emotional lives in relation to nonhuman others opens a perspective that sees the human mind as embedded in the world rather than closed off in the citadel of interiority. As our literary examples will explore, feeling environments come in many shapes and sizes. Though each of these worlds is historically contingent, recent studies in the mind sciences suggest that the human mind and sensory apparatus exceed the boundaries of the individual. These findings prompt us to re-examine the location of emotions and to ask, with philosopher Edward S. Casey, what would happen if "emotion is more *out there* than *in here*"?[4]

The extension of feelings beyond human individuals has been explored by affect theory scholars, who study "autonomic reactions" to external stimuli that involve more than individual bodies.[5] Erin Manning, like Brian Massumi, locates affects in relational spaces, "in the between of the organic and the inorganic," stressing that they are "neither human nor nonhuman."[6] Yet given these scholars' stress on affects as pre-cultural autonomous "intensities," their approaches clash with the methods of scholars working historically with textual or other cultural sources, as director of the Center for the History of Emotions, Berlin, Ute Frevert, has pointed out.[7] Several of the Center's scholars

3 Erika Quinn and Holly Yanacek, Introduction. Feeling beyond the Human, in: Quinn and Yanacek (eds.), Animals, Machines, and AI. On Human and Non-Human Emotions in Modern German Cultural History, Berlin 2022, pp. 1–30, here p. 4.

4 Edward S. Casey, Turning Emotion Inside Out. Affective Life beyond the Subject, Evanston 2022, p. 3 [original emphasis].

5 Brian Massumi, The Autonomy of Affect, in: Cultural Critique 31. 1995, pp. 83–109, here p. 88. See further Silvan Solomon Tomkins and Carroll Ellis Izard, Affect, Cognition, and Personality. Empirical Studies, Oxford 1965; Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds.), The Affect Theory Reader, Durham 2010.

6 Brian Massumi, The Politics of Affect, Cambridge 2015, p. 122.

7 Ute Frevert, Affect Theory and History of Emotions, in: Bloomsbury History. Theory and Method Articles, 18. 10. 2021, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350970878.069. For a

have begun examining what we call feeling environments within the larger analysis of space and emotions, including natural environments and those shaped by humans. In 2015, Benno Gammerl broke new ground with a collection of studies on emotional spaces and spatial emotions ("Gefühlsräume – Raumgefühle") that explores the role of emotions in the social construction of spaces where feelings arise not within but around subjects.[8] Margrit Pernau has investigated the entanglement of space and emotions in historical sources, focusing on the learned nature of the body's "ability to be affected," on the co-production of spaces and practices, and on the practices and experiences that endow spaces with "emotional valences."[9] Philipp Nielsen and Joseph Ben Prestel have examined urban planning and architecture, while Joel Lee, Tamara Turner, Karsten Lichau, and Max Jack have explored the importance of the senses in the emotional or affective qualities of historical and contemporary spaces.[10] We, too, use the senses as pathways into our analysis of feeling environments, situating bodies and their affective potentials in the spaces where they are culturally co-produced.

In literary studies, as well, scholars have proposed studying emotions or affects in relation to environments, as in ecocriticism, which focuses on literary representations of physical environments and nonhuman life. Stressing the embodied nature of the mind and human embeddedness in the world, Alexa Weik von Mossner and Serpil Oppermann call for an increased attention to "affective ecologies"[11] and human-nonhuman "affective connections."[12] Numerous other scholars have begun describing particular environmental

comprehensive critique, see also Ruth Leys, The Ascent of Affect. Genealogy and Critique, Chicago 2017.

8 Benno Gammerl and Rainer Herrn, Gefühlsräume – Raumgefühle. Perspektiven auf die Verschränkung von emotionalen Praktiken und Topografien der Moderne, in: sub\urban 3. 2015, no. 2, pp. 7–21.

9 Margrit Pernau, Space and Emotion. Building to Feel, in: History Compass 12. 2014, pp. 541–549, here p. 542.

10 Till Großmann and Philipp Nielsen (eds.), Architecture, Democracy, and Emotions. The Politics of Feeling since 1945, London 2019; Joseph Ben Prestel, Emotional Cities. Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860–1910, Oxford 2017; Joel Lee, Odor and Order. How Caste Is Inscribed in Space and Sensoria, in: Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 37. 2017, pp. 470–490; Tamara Turner, The "Right" Kind of *ḥāl*. Feeling and Foregrounding Atmospheric Identity in an Algerian Music Ritual, in: Friedlind Riedel and Juha Torvinen (eds.), Music as Atmosphere. Collective Feelings and Affective Sounds, London 2020, pp. 113–130; Karsten Lichau, Secularising Silent Bodies. Emotional Practices in the Minute's Silence, in: Monique Scheer et al. (eds.), Secular Bodies, Affects and Emotions. European Configurations, London 2019, pp. 141–156; Max Jack, The Crowd in Flux. Atmosphere and the Governance of Public Affects at FC Union Berlin, in: Ethnomusicology 65. 2021, pp. 497–518.

11 Alexa Weik von Mossner, Affective Ecologies. Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative, Columbus 2017, pp. 2–4.

12 Serpil Oppermann, Ecologies of a Storied Planet in the Anthropocene, Morgantown 2023, p. 10 and p. 159.

emotions[13] or contributing to a growing list of "eco-"emotions such as "eco-anxiety," "eco-guilt," or "eco-grief."[14] While their approaches methodologically differ from our literary analysis, they resonate with our inquiry into feelings beyond the human not by universalizing human emotions but by exploring what connects us to the nonhuman.

Across fields, scholars have begun proposing that even the perceptions on which emotions depend can be understood to exceed the individual. Humans and nonhuman animals are connected to environments through sensory repertoires attuned to the complex modalities of our intersecting life worlds. At the same time, cultural conceptions and practices shape our perceptions, coding environments in historically and geographically specific ways.[15] In psychology and cognitive science, views of the mind as solely confined to the brain are being challenged by theories emphasizing its embodiment and embeddedness in the world. The brain, neuroscientist György Buzsáki writes, is "a venture-seeking explorer" ceaselessly engaged with the world.[16] The "4E" theory of mind expands on the idea of extended cognition.[17] As philosopher Mark J. Rowlands summarizes, "4E" sees the mind as "embodied" (1) beyond solely neuronal structures; as "embedded" (2) in its adaptation to external environments; as "enacted" (3) in larger sets of practices shaped by environmental interactions; and as "extended" (4) into environments beyond the restriction of a head or even a body.[18] As we will show, there is a close affinity between such contemporary theories of the mind and the ways that perception, environmental embeddedness, and emotions have been theorized and described across South Asian history. Our methods differ from those of "4E" philosophers because of our focus on culturally grounded literary sources, but the feelings and experiences we find therein point us beyond the human into feeling environments.

Sharing findings about emotions between the humanities and the sciences remains challenging, but regarding emotions as an emergent feature of life, not just humanity, holds the potential to link current research in history, philosophy, and psychology. Since the late nineteenth century, natural

13 Cf. James Beattie, Empire and Environmental Anxiety. Health, Science, Art and Conservation in South Asia and Australasia, 1800–1920, Basingstoke 2011.

14 See Douglas A. Vakoch and Sam Mickey (eds.), Eco-Anxiety and Planetary Hope. Experiencing the Twin Disasters of COVID-19 and Climate Change, Cham 2022; Csilla Ágoston et al., Identifying Types of Eco-Anxiety, Eco-Guilt, Eco-Grief, and Eco-Coping in a Climate-Sensitive Population. A Qualitative Study, in: International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 19. 2022, no. 4, pp. 1–17; Glenn A. Albrecht, Earth Emotions. New Words for a New World, Ithaca 2019.

15 Noel Castree, Making Sense of Nature, London 2013.

16 György Buzsáki, The Brain from Inside Out, New York 2019, pp. 28.

17 Francisco J. Varela et al., The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience, Cambridge, MA 1992.

18 Mark J. Rowlands, The New Science of the Mind. From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology, Cambridge, MA 2010, p. 3.

scientists' evidence for evolution has eroded the belief that emotions exist only in humans. In "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" (1872), Charles Darwin argued that humans' and other mammals' behavior patterns form a continuum that includes the expression of emotions in response to environmental changes.[19] Most neuroscientists and psychologists now approach human emotions as part of an evolutionary inheritance, so that a "feeling environment" might include all life forms that respond to their surroundings in related ways. Psychologist Paul Ekman has praised Darwin's powers of observation and likewise focused on expressions of emotion that seem shared not just across cultures but across species.[20] Ekman and his colleagues' transcultural studies of emotions have encountered criticism, but his theory of universal "basic emotions" recognizable through distinct physiological patterns maintains a strong hold in and beyond the scientific community. He and his colleagues acknowledge that "culture clearly shapes how emotion is expressed," and they have tried to shift thinking away from the extremes of universality versus cultural construction toward investigations of *how* cultures mold people's biological inclinations.[21] Like the literary sources we analyze, current psychological studies of emotion focus on how people's natural and cultural surroundings constitute their inner states.

Psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett's theory of constructed emotion, for instance, conceives of emotions as more than products of discrete human minds.[22] She calls people's continuous physiological fluctuations in response to environmental changes "core affect," which drives emotions but lacks emotional meaning.[23] According to her model, people *learn* what emotions are by identifying patterns in their core affect and associating them with emotion concepts in their languages and cultures. People's life experiences vary, and their cultures and inner lives teach them to define emotions in different ways. If Barrett's model is accurate, it means that on three levels, emotions extend beyond individual human minds. First, emotions exist only because physical environments continually change. Second, human responses to those changes resemble those of other animals because they are evolutionarily related and involve some similar neural structures. Third, emotions rely on cultural environments, which teach people how to understand and name the

19 Charles Darwin, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, Chicago 1974, pp. 347–366.

20 Paul Ekman, Introduction to the Third Edition, in: Charles Darwin, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, New York 1998, p. xxi–xxiii.

21 Dacher Keltner and Paul Ekman, Introduction. Expression of Emotion, in: Richard J. Davidson et al. (eds.), Handbook of Affective Sciences, New York 2003, pp. 411–422, here p. 413.

22 Lisa Feldman Barrett, How Emotions Are Made. The Secret Life of the Brain, Boston 2017, p. xiii.

23 Lisa Feldman Barrett, Solving the Emotion Paradox. Categorization and the Experience of Emotion, in: Personality and Social Psychology Review 10. 2006, pp. 20–46, here p. 30.

fluctuations of their core affect. Emotions depend on shared neural systems and shared ideas, both of which connect individual minds with natural and cultural feeling environments.

Since the 1990s, scholars of the "posthuman" have engaged this interdependent, evolutionary outlook to rethink humanity in the age of digital technology and climate change. N. Katherine Hayles has argued that reliance on technology has rendered the notion of the intact, autonomous human individual obsolete. Dependence on computers does not mean that people have evolved beyond the need for bodies, but as Hayles contends, bounded individuality makes no sense when human activities involve technological environments that extend cognition outward.[24] Cary Wolfe has built on Hayles's concept of the posthuman, focusing less on technologies than on people's interdependence with nonhuman life.[25] According to Wolfe, any deep understanding of humanity should take into account people's relationships with everything living.[26] The South Asian literary sources we study offer readers the chance to imagine emotions that transcend individuality in ways that scholars of the posthuman describe. Shaped by cultural understandings and intuitive knowledge, these texts show what it might mean to participate in an entire place's state of feeling.

Creative writers spend their lives learning how to immerse readers in unfamiliar spaces, bodies, and minds so that their senses and emotions are engaged. Literary representations of emotions are biological and cultural, emerging from authors' bodies and the ways they have learned to use and know them. When writers summon language to convey imagined feelings, they experiment with the words and experiences they know. They can recombine scraps of memory in myriad ways, but recent psychological research on embodied cognition indicates that imagination works by reactivating past experiences, which may or may not be recalled consciously.[27] Because these original experiences occurred in a cultural context, they carry that context when they reemerge. Writers drawing on memories work with material twice encoded in language: at the time it was experienced, and at the time they use language to transform their memories into elements of their characters' psyches.[28] Before writers draft poems or stories, they may conduct research extending far beyond their own minds. Even if authors' research is confined to remembering and observing, a work of art composed with language will necessarily incorporate cultural understandings of emotions. On multiple

24 N. Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics, Chicago 1999, pp. 283–286.

25 Cary Wolfe, What Is Posthumanism?, Minneapolis 2010, p. xv.

26 Ibid., p. xxii.

27 Lawrence W. Barsalou, Grounded Cognition, in: Annual Review of Psychology 59. 2008, pp. 617–645, here pp. 618 f.

28 See Elaine Auyoung, When Fiction Feels Real. Representation and the Reading Mind, New York 2018, p. 12.

levels, understandings of emotions are culturally shaped, but evocative, finely-crafted literary descriptions invite readers to think through emotions that emerge conjointly in environments and their inhabitants.

II. Feeling Environments in South Asian Texts

This section will explore emotions in feeling environments depicted in three very different South Asian textual case studies. Chosen for the ways they address feelings in natural environments, these narratives written across millennia of South Asian history represent distinct genres: first, religious teachings from the middle of the first millennium BCE; second, elite poetry from the first millennium CE, and third, a contemporary novel written for South Asian and global readers. The first textual study shows how early Buddhist contemplative practices were grounded in encountering feelings within natural environments through the senses. By contrast, the second case study of a poetic text shows an environmental understanding of emotions that maps feelings onto seasonal landscapes and their flora and fauna, which by this historical time point had become so widespread that it constituted a genre convention. Finally, the third case study reveals the continuities and discontinuities of such environmental understandings of emotions in contemporary India. Each text offers its own theorization of emotions and feeling environments, but they resonate with one another and with the theoretical perspectives discussed above.

Our regional focus also addresses geographical and epistemic limitations that persist in scholarship on emotions, the bulk of which remains "quite unabashedly Eurocentric," as Margrit Pernau has argued.[29] By exploring these different South Asian theorizations of feeling environments, we hope to show how our disciplines' analytical categories resonate with, and may be enhanced by, these rich epistemic and emotionological traditions that offer evidence and tools for claims made in fields such as "4E" today.

1. Emotion, Space, and Time in Classical South Asian Texts

The English word "emotion" has no direct equivalent in the vocabularies of classical South Asian languages such as Pali and Sanskrit.[30] Among the most common terms, *vedana* and *bhava* are used to distinguish two psycho-physical states. *Vedana* is often translated as affect or feeling tone, differentiating only

29 Margrit Pernau, Introduction. Studying Emotions in South Asia, in: South Asian History and Culture 12. 2021, pp. 111–128, here p. 112.

30 Purushottama Bilimoria and Aleksandra Wenta, Emotions in Indian Thought-Systems. An Introduction, in: Bilimoria and Wenta (eds.), Emotions in Indian Thought-Systems, London 2015, pp. 1–54, here pp. 2 f. For readability, we eschew diacritics in the text.

pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral reactions.[31] *Bhava* is used to describe more complex experiential states closer to what we might translate as feelings, including love, hate, or fear. Such states of feeling are inherently extensive, encompassing both the feeling subject and its environmental embedding. As Maria Heim, Ram Prasad Chakravarthi, and Roy Tzohar explain, "emotions [in classical South Asian philosophy] appear primarily as perceptual modes (of the natural world in particular), thereby creating an emotional 'space' in which the subject and the external world are, phenomenologically speaking, inextricably bound together."[32] This extension of feeling beyond the subject is based on an understanding of perception grounded in relationality. Classical South Asian philosophies theorize the senses not as unidirectional receivers of information but as entangled organs that connect the inner sense faculties and their external stimuli, similar to present views of extended cognition. This interaction results in a condition of "affective entanglement" in which the feeling subject is always already connected to the world through perception and emotion.[33]

Our first case study takes us back to South Asia in the centuries preceding the Common Era. In the Gangetic plains of present-day India and Nepal, Buddhism emerged as a new religious tradition between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. The Buddha described his philosophy as a "Middle Way" between sensual indulgence and ascetic self-mortification, thus setting Buddhism apart from established institutionalized religion and isolated ascetics.[34] Early Buddhism as we now know it from its codification in the Pali texts of the Theravada Buddhist canon taught calm detachment as an antidote to the suffering seen as endemic in all worldly existence.[35] This does not mean, however, that early Buddhists simply sought to avoid emotions. Although their ultimate aim was to escape the world of suffering, the long and arduous path to that goal leads right through the materiality of this world. Far from shunned, the sphere of feelings is central to the Buddhist path.

31 John Peacock and Martine Batchelor, Editorial. Vedanā: What Is in a "Feeling?", in: Contemporary Buddhism 19. 2018, pp. 1–6.
32 Maria Heim et al., Introduction, in: Heim et al. (eds.), The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Emotions in Classical Indian Philosophy, New York 2021, pp. 1–22, here p. 2.
33 Frederik Schröer, Affective Entanglements. Human-Nonhuman Relations in Buddhist Ecologies of Feeling, in: Journal of Global Buddhism [in press].
34 "Dhammacakkappavattanasutta" (SN 56.11). We follow the ID system of Pali texts used at buddhanexus.net, where the source texts are freely available. For a different translation, see Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion (SN 56.11), 30 November 2013, Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html.
35 First committed to writing in the first century BCE following several centuries of oral transmission. See Russell Webb and Bhikkhu Nyanatusita (eds.), An Analysis of the Pali Canon and a Reference Table of Pali Literature, Kandy 2011.

Forested environments play key roles in many Buddhist texts.[36] As early Buddhist texts outline a path of practice that combined the dependence on society (for alms) with the seclusion of a monastic community, they focus on specific spatial configurations as ideal environments for contemplative practices. The "Discourse on the Establishing of Mindfulness,"[37] one of the most popular manuals for early Buddhist meditation, explains: "Here, oh monks, a monk, gone to the forest, or gone to the root of a tree, or gone to an empty house, sits down having crossed his legs, having set his body upright, having readied his mindfulness as focused. Thus mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out."[38] This passage and its many repetitions throughout the canon establish a discursive link between remote forest environments and contemplative practice, shaping the imagination of what an ideal place for meditation looks like and where it can be found. Often, such environments were tidy groves or royal parks given to the Buddhist community by their wealthy patrons. However, forests in the wilderness posed real dangers in ancient India, including the threat of pouncing tigers, poisonous snakes, or angry elephants.

In practice, sylvan solitude could prove hard to bear for the lone monk (or nun),[39] as the "Discourse on Fear and Terror" describes.[40] In the text, a practitioner confesses to the Buddha that he is regularly overcome by fear and terror in his attempts to meditate in the forest. Dwellings in wild forests are "hard to endure," solitude "hard to do," and loneliness "hard to enjoy." The Buddha is full of understanding. He replies that before his enlightenment, he too experienced the same emotions. Instead of avoiding these environments and the feelings arising therein, however, he consciously sought them out, visiting fear-inducing places like forests and tree shrines in the dark of night. Such places, he explains, inspire awe and dread; they make one's hair stand on end. Having positioned himself in them, he would sit and wait, listening to the sounds of the wind or of unseen animals. Crucially, the Buddha recalls asking himself about the location of fear in the forest, anticipating by several

36 See S. Dhammika, Nature and the Environment in Early Buddhism, Singapore 2015; Johan Elverskog, The Buddha's Footprint. An Environmental History of Asia, Philadelphia 2020.

37 "Satipaṭṭhānasutta" (MN 10). For a different translation, see Nyanasatta Thera, Satipatthana Sutta. The Foundations of Mindfulness (MN 10), 1 December 2013, Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.nysa.html.

38 All translations are, unless otherwise stated, by the authors.

39 The texts consistently use the masculine form *(bhikkhu)* here, but monastic communities of nuns also existed.

40 "Bhayabheravasutta" (MN 4). For a detailed analysis and translation, see Sree Dharma Rakkhit Sraman (Kadalpur Shimul Barua), The Bhayabheravasuttavaṇṇanā of the Majjhima-Nikāya. An Annotated Translation and Study, PhD thesis University of Hong Kong 2018.

millennia Edward Casey's "periphanous"[41] model asking *how* and *where* emotions show themselves: "Now is this the fear and terror that arrive?"
The fear and terror of wild forests can overcome a practitioner and "plunder their mind," the text argues. Bronwyn Finnigan recently discussed how fear and its avoidance are used as teaching devices in early Buddhist texts.[42] Here, our focus is on the location and uses of this emotion in the concrete practices described. These powerful descriptions of feeling in the texts must be contextualized within the psychology of early Buddhism, which, not unlike the "4E" theory of mind, views the human subject as an assemblage of psycho-physical elements irreducible to a single independent self.[43] There can therefore be no airtight individual interiority in which emotional experiences arise. Rather, feelings are described as located within forested environments themselves. Buddhist practice, as the Buddha explains, lies in intentionally seeking them out. Experience of emotions, not avoidance, transforms them in the minds of monks and nuns. The texts thus reveal the experience of emotions as a key aspect of early Buddhists' contemplative practice.[44]
Both Buddhist texts examined here foreground bodily practices – posture, breathing, movement. As the groundwork of meditation, their instructions tell us much about the mind's embodiment as well as its extensions. By combining interior perception and external sensations, these texts explore feelings within larger environments. Classical South Asian philosophies operated with an understanding of perception that saw the subject as affectively entangled with their others and environments. The "Discourse on Fear and Terror" relies on this condition of affective entanglement to teach methods for probing where fear is located, what its edges and ends are, where and when it begins, and how it moves through spaces until it reaches the subject and its extended sensorium.
We jump ahead in time to Kalidasa, widely regarded as the greatest Sanskrit poet and playwright, who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. To this day, he remains famous across and beyond South Asia for his poetic descriptions of nature.[45] This section focuses on his lyric poem "Meghaduta," the "Cloud Messenger," composed in over one hundred quatrain verses.[46] It is famous for its artful descriptions of the rainy season, the monsoon, and for its exquisite depictions of love and longing across the landscapes of ancient India. Kalidasa

41 Casey, Turning Emotion Inside Out, p. 6.
42 Bronwyn Finnigan, The Paradox of Fear in Classical Indian Buddhism, in: Journal of Indian Philosophy 49. 2021, pp. 913–929.
43 See Sue Hamilton, Identity and Experience. The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism, London 1996.
44 Schröer, Affective Entanglements.
45 See Mary Belle Harris, Kalidasa. Poet of Nature, Boston 1936.
46 Different editions of the text vary in their verse counts. We follow Kale's edition of the Sanskrit text. M. R. Kale, Kālidāsa – Meghadūta (with Mallināth's Samjīvanī), Bombay 1947[4].

describes a *yaksha,* a nonhuman nature spirit, exiled to a mountain somewhere below the plains of northern India. Penalized for negligence in caring for his divine lord's sacred lotus pond in the heavenly city of Alaka in the mighty Himalayas, the emaciated *yaksha* pines for his beloved wife. Then, "[o]n *Ashadha's* first day, he saw a cloud embracing the summit / resembling an elephant bent down, butting a riverbank in play."[47] Without a moment's hesitation, the spirit addresses the cloud:

> Here is a cloud, aggregate of vapor and light, water and wind, there a message to be delivered by beings of intellect. Disregarding all this out of longing, the hidden [*yaksha*] petitioned him, for those struck by love are by nature plaintive towards the thinking and the non-thinking.[48]

An elaborate description follows of the path the cloud should take to cross northern India and the enticing sights the *yaksha* seeks to draw him[49] onward until, finally, he ascends the Himalayan mountains. There, as the poem's second part describes, the cloud is to find his friend's forlorn wife in Alaka and deliver to her the *yaksha's* message of love.

The wondrous journey that Kalidasa depicts in rich sensuous detail must have immediately captivated an audience familiar with the real mountains, rivers, and cities it describes.[50] The poem is crafted to engage its audiences' senses and their experiential knowledge of changes in the natural world brought by the monsoon. Kalidasa writes that "sweet sings the Cataka bird," a migratory cuckoo heralding the rainy season, and "lady cranes attend you" as cloud and monsoon travel across the lands.[51] The cloud extinguishes forest fires and gives life to flora and fauna. Bees, deer, and elephants enjoy fresh blossoms, tasty buds, and the intoxicatingly sweet fragrance of the wet earth in the wild forests.[52] The drenched landscape drips with sensuality. Mountains "with flanks hidden by groves of mango glistening with ripened fruits" will appear "like the earth's breast, pale all around and black in the middle [by the cloud's shadow]."[53] The Nirvindhya river entices with feminine beauty, "girdled by rows of birds loud with the water's perturbations / glides along in graceful stumbling, her navel exposed in her swirls."[54] Another river's "indigo garment of water, somehow held, as by hand, by stalks of reed / seized [by the cloud], falling from the buttocks of the embankment" makes the cloud's departure

47 Kālidāsa, Meghadūta 1.2. The month *Ashadha* marks the onset of the rainy season.
48 Ibid., 1.5.
49 The cloud is gendered male in the Sanskrit original.
50 For a reconstruction of the cloud's itinerary, see Vaman Krishna Paranjape, Fresh Light on Kālidāsa's Meghadūta, Poona 1960.
51 Kālidāsa, Meghadūta 1.10.
52 Ibid., 1.21.
53 Ibid., 1.18.
54 Ibid., 1.29.

difficult, "for who, knowing its relish, is capable of abandoning an uncovered behind?"[55] All the while sultry winds blow:

> Where the wind of the Shipra [river], carrying the clear coos of sweetly intoxicated swans, perfumed at daybreak from the touch of sweet smelling burst buds of lotus, soothing to the body, carrying off the weariness of women's physical delights, is like a lover speaking his entreaty in coaxing words.[56]

Landscapes, nonhuman animals, and humans become closely entangled in the rainy season, supercharged with emotion. The monsoon and its messenger, the cloud, bring rejuvenation and growth but also feelings of longing, love, and sensual passion. Kalidasa's language likely shaped the genre conventions for the expression of what would later be termed *sringara rasa,* the key emotional "taste" of eroticism.[57] The "Cloud Messenger" reveals the intense emotions associated with the rainy season, a bouquet of "monsoon feelings."[58] As much as it set enduring poetic and cultural conventions, spurring its own poetic tradition of "messenger poems,"[59] so too does the "Meghaduta" reflect historical practices of feeling in the seasonal landscapes of the monsoon. We read of travelers' wives raising their braids in delight at the sight of the cloud, knowing their hair will soon be unwound by their husbands, returning home for the rainy season.[60] We learn of the flirtatious *veshyas,* dancing courtesans of the famous city Ujjayini, "casting you [the cloud] side glances like rows of bees," as the cloud's "rain drops give gentle comfort to the nail marks [they received from their lovers]."[61] Or we learn of shy *abhisarikas,* women meeting their secret lovers under cover of darkness, the cloud illuminating their way "with lightning, shining like streaks of gold in stone."[62]

The "Meghaduta" documents the co-creation of feelings by all actors and elements in the drenched and dripping landscapes of the rainy season, involving every sense. While in the Buddhist texts practitioners sought to find the edges, beginnings, and ends of single emotions such as fear, here the monsoon season and the environments it traverses are suffused with a host of correlated emotions, illustrating how emotions do not "belong" to single individuals. Love, longing, and sensual passions are located as much in the lovers as in the rivers, winds, and most of all, the rain. Though ultimately the poem speaks of the affections of a single couple, none of the main actors are

55 Ibid., 1.44.
56 Ibid., 1.32.
57 See Sheldon Pollock, A Rasa Reader. Classical Indian Aesthetics, New York 2016, here p. 52.
58 Imke Rajamani et al. (eds.), Monsoon Feelings. A History of Emotions in the Rain, New Delhi 2018.
59 Kālidāsa et al., Messenger Poems. Translated by Sir James Mallinson, New York 2006.
60 Kālidāsa, Meghadūta 1.8.
61 Ibid., 1.38.
62 Ibid., 1.40.

human. In the end, the *yaksha* has the cloud tell his spirit wife how he sees her beauty in all natural things around him:

> In boughs of Priyangu I see your limbs, your glances in eyes of shy deer, the beauty of your face in the moon, in the plumage of peacocks your hair, in the slender waves of rivers your eyebrows' play; woe is me, oh passionate one! Nowhere, in no single thing, is your (entire) likeness![63]

In the monsoon season, entire landscapes throb with life and feeling. The eroticism of the environment speaks to the *yaksha* of his lover, and the poem's rich sensory descriptions activate its audiences' own feelings that extend into environments. Kalidasa describes emotions ranging far beyond the human, co–constituted between a host of actors as diverse as the landscapes of South Asia and temporalized through the seasonality of the rains. Though the individual emotions associated with the monsoon would change over time, the season's quality as a period of heightened environmental emotionality still endures today.

2. Environmental Emotions in "The God of Small Things"

Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" is often read as a postcolonial novel, but its structure and artistry rely on aspects of climate and culture that predate colonialism.[64] In constructing the troubled landscapes of the South Indian state of Kerala, Roy draws on her extensive knowledge of the subcontinent's long colonial and pre-colonial history. In this vein, we can even see elements of the "Cloud Messenger," reworked to show the driving force of love encountering human cruelty. Roy builds her story around the monsoon cycle and the interactions of land, water, plants, and animals – human and nonhuman.

Her novel opens with a description of nonhuman life awaiting the monsoon rain:

> May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun.[65]

63 Ibid., 2.44.

64 Roy's plot depends upon social caste laws, and critics have noted the resemblance of her story structure to the Kathakali dance she depicts in a central scene. See Alex Tickell, The God of Small Things. Arundhati Roy's Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism, in: Journal of Commonwealth Literature 38. 2003, pp. 73–89, here p. 84; and Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru, Performative Symbols and Structures in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, in: Commonwealth Essays and Studies 31. 2009, no. 2, pp. 68–77, here pp. 73 f.

65 Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things, London 2017, p. 1.

In an environmental overture, Roy appeals to all of her readers' senses.[66] Her choice to start with the natural environment and its human interface (windows) implies a premise that readers will not "get" her story unless they can imagine the place where her characters live. Before the characters emerge, readers are asked to sense their hot, humid world, tense with anticipation and ready to burst.

In Roy's novel, feeling environments share the emotions and sensations of perceiving humans. Gorging crows and crashing flies come from a character's or narrator's memories, and before that, from their sense perceptions. In the complex narration of Roy's novel, a third-person narrator closely affiliated with its central characters, the twins Rahel and Estha Ipe, conveys their knowledge of monsoon time before readers know who is speaking.[67] The narration of Roy's evocative story matters not just because readers will likely imagine characters' emotions through the perspectives offered, but because the novel channels the viewpoints of "small things" (including seven-year-old South Asian twins) rarely encountered in published literature. If Roy's birds and insects sound human, it is because the children observing them (or the adults remembering their childhood perceptions) identify with these small things' lack of power and their suffering as older humans crush them.

The first time Roy mentions humans, they emerge as part of an animated picture of a world welcoming the monsoon rain: "By early June the south-west monsoon breaks and there are three months of wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine that thrilled children snatch to play with. The countryside turns an immodest green."[68] As argued in the previous section, the monsoon carries cultural meanings of renewal, creativity, eroticism, and love. Roy depicts human responses to the rain as integral to the responses of all local life. Like the monsoon, Rahel is returning to Ayemenem, her mother's ancestral home. Roy's overture primes readers to imagine Rahel's feelings by showing how the rain affects the world:

66 Naomi Rokotnitz observes that Roy calls on readers to imagine sensations in "image clusters" and that "Roy's narrative technique […] relies on her readers' visceral engagement." Naomi Rokotnitz, Goosebumps, Shivers, Visualization, and Embodied Resonance in the Reading Experience: The God of Small Things, in: Poetics Today 38. 2017, pp. 273–293, here p. 273 and p. 287.

67 Critics who have analyzed the narration of "The God of Small Things" generally agree that the third-person narrator channels the thoughts of Rahel and Estha, but they differ as to whether the narrator retains an identity distinct from that of any specific character in the novel. See Elisha Cohn, Radical Aesthetics. Arundhati Roy's Ecology of Style, in: ARIEL 40. 2009, no. 2–3, pp. 161–181, here p. 162; Elizabeth Outka, Trauma and Temporal Hybridity in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, in: Contemporary Literature 52. 2011, pp. 21–53, here p. 32; and Mirja Lobnik, Sounding Ecologies in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, in: Modern Fiction Studies 62. 2016, pp. 115–135, here p. 116.

68 Roy, The God of Small Things, p. 1.

> It was raining when Rahel came back to Ayemenem. Slanting silver ropes slammed into loose earth, ploughing it up like gunfire. The old house on the hill wore its steep, gabled roof pulled over its ears like a low hat. The walls, streaked with moss, had grown soft, and bulged a little with dampness that seeped up from the ground. The wild, overgrown garden was full of the whisper and scurry of small lives.[69]

Roy's description reveals Rahel's awareness of what small things are doing.[70] The references to sound, vision, and touch suggest relentless movement, warning not just of softening but of violent change.

"The God of Small Things" tells a story of trauma,[71] and Roy's depiction of the monsoon signals that Rahel is perceiving a violent world: "Heaven opened and the water hammered down, reviving the reluctant old well, greenmossing the pigless pigsty, carpet bombing still, tea-colored puddles the way memory bombs still, tea-colored minds."[72] The rain may enable new life and growth, but metaphorically, it suggests forces that treat the Global South as the United States treated Vietnam. Psychologically, the metaphorical bombing implies cues that will blast buried memories to the surface. The pounding rain evokes and reflects the fear Rahel associates with her home region, where her grandfather beat her grandmother; her mother was exiled for loving Velutha, an "untouchable" man; seven-year-old Rahel and Estha were bullied into betraying Velutha, who was beaten to death; Estha was sexually abused by a stranger; and Rahel and Estha were separated when they were blamed for their white cousin's drowning. Some of this cruelty derives from colonialism, but most reflects patriarchy and caste prejudices that are much older. The painful emotions aroused by these horrifying events belong to the whole Ipe family and to the environment where their feelings emerged.

Roy uses evocative descriptions of the Meenachal River to convey the feel of Ayemenem in December 1969, when the novel's main actions occur, and in

69 Ibid.

70 Mirja Lobnik argues that Roy's descriptions of sound convey the close environmental awareness of people who lack social power. She believes Roy's novel depicts "the close entanglement of the environment and human experience." Lobnik, Sounding Ecologies, p. 115.

71 Numerous critics have read "The God of Small Things" as a trauma narrative, analyzing how Roy's narrative structure reflects the mental life of a person suffering from experiences impossible to forget but too painful to remember consciously. See Outka, Trauma and Temporal Hybridity; Susan Stanford Friedman, Spatial Poetics and Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, in: James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (eds.), A Companion to Narrative Theory, Oxford 2005, pp. 192–205; Joanne Lipson Freed, The Ethics of Identification. The Global Circulation of Traumatic Narrative in Silko's Ceremony and Roy's The God of Small Things, in: Comparative Literature Studies 48. 2011, pp. 219–240; and Deepika Bahri, Make It New. Trauma and the Postcolonial Modern in The God of Small Things, in: Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses (eds.), Modernism, Postcolonialism, and Globalism. Anglophone Literature, 1950 to the Present, Oxford 2018, pp. 144–160.

72 Roy, The God of Small Things, p. 10.

June 1992, when Rahel returns and the twins are reunited. Twenty-three years earlier, Rahel and Estha froze emotionally,[73] but the river that killed their cousin has changed:

> Despite the fact that it was June, and raining, the river was no more than a swollen drain now. A thin ribbon of thick water that lapped wearily at the mud banks on either side, sequined with the occasional silver slant of a dead fish. It was choked with a succulent weed, whose furred brown roots waved like thin tentacles under water. Bronze-winged lily-trotters walked across it. Splay-footed, cautious. Once it had had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent. It was just a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers.[74]

To help readers imagine the polluted river, Roy asks them to see and feel movement. The slowing of a current that could once kill suggests the aging of an exhausted warrior. Roy appeals to vision, hearing, and smell, alluding to dead fish and rotting garbage. Yet in the stinking water, nonhuman life persists; weeds and water-birds are moving about. Bright, aerodynamic human refuse upstages them, but life in the poisoned natural world continues. When readers learn that thirty-year-old Estha walks along the Meenachal, which "smelled of shit," they may sense that (as "4E" philosophers might intuit), his emotion includes the river.[75]

With her twin protagonists, Roy challenges any concept of emotions belonging exclusively to one person. Rahel and Estha seem to share all their thoughts, feelings, even sensations, not because they are telepathic but because, as the children of an abusive, alcoholic Hindu father and a disgraced, divorced Syrian Christian mother, they have learned to read bodies skillfully in order to survive.[76] Like the characters of "Cloud Messenger," Roy's twins live merged with their environment, which she invites readers to sense by helping them mentally inhabit the seven-year-olds' bodies. Her narration cues readers to imagine life in a body whose sensations and emotions extend past its boundaries.[77] Rahel and Estha intimately know the river that enables the story's key events: their mother's forbidden love and their cousin's death:

> The first third of the river was their friend. Before the Really Deep began. They knew the slippery stone steps (thirteen) before the slimy mud began. They knew the afternoon weed that flowed inwards from the backwaters of Komarakom. They knew the smaller fish. […] Here they had discovered for themselves the disconnected delights of underwater farting.

73 Susan Stanford Friedman writes that the events of December 1969 "leave the children emotionally frozen in time." Friedman, Spatial Poetics, p. 198.

74 Roy, The God of Small Things, p. 124.

75 Ibid., p. 13.

76 Mirja Lobnik and Naomi Rokotnitz argue that the twins' apparent telepathic powers result from their acute sensitivity to each other's bodies. Lobnik, Sounding Ecologies, p. 124; Rokotnitz, Goosebumps, Shivers, Visualization, p. 280.

77 We thank our anonymous reviewer for suggesting this idea.

[…] The third third was shallow again. The water brown and murky. Full of weeds and darting eels and slow mud that oozed through toes like toothpaste.[78]

To show *how* the children know the river, Roy appeals to readers' senses of touch – not just tactility but deeper bodily senses associated with expelling gas or tracing cool movement between the toes.[79] Roy emphasizes the twins' awareness of motion, their own and that of all life in the river, for which they feel an affinity.

Perceived by the twins, the river and the land host worlds full of living, feeling creatures. Many of the plot's key scenes occur outdoors, including Estha's discovery of an old boat in which the children try to escape across the river, partly because Estha wants to flee his abuser and partly because none of them feel loved. As the twins free the forgotten boat, Roy invites readers to share their combined sensations and emotions: "Finger-colored fingers fought the ferns, moved the stones, cleared the way. There was a sweaty grappling for an edge to hold on to."[80] Through alliteration, Roy strengthens the anticipation that may come from imagining different textures, weights, and small movements.

When Rahel and Estha invert the boat, they discover a white world of tiny creatures as anxious as they are:

Underneath, a boat-shaped patch of withered grass. A scurrying, hurrying boatworld. Dark and dry and cool. Unroofed now. And blind. White termites on their way to work. White ladybirds on their way home. White beetles burrowing away from the light.[81]

One might call this passage anthropomorphic. Insects used to living in the dark flee instinctively when exposed to light. Instinct is not emotion, but these fictional insects created by language, emerging through characters' perceptions, enact the emotions of their human observers. Rahel and Estha recognize the vulnerability and panic that the scurrying has cued in their own breasts.

Despite their close connection to the river, the twins know the Meenachal less well than they think. On the night its waters drown their cousin, Roy's eerie description comes from a perspective that transcends the children's perceptions:

Wet leaves in the trees shimmered like beaten metal. Dense clumps of yellow bamboo drooped into the river as though grieving in advance for what they knew was going to

78 Roy, The God of Small Things, p. 203.
79 Anežka Kuzmičová observes that describing an environment visually then showing characters interacting with it through touch can immerse readers in that environment. Anežka Kuzmičová, Presence in the Reading of Literary Narrative. A Case for Motor Enactment, in: Semiotica 189. 2012, no. 1, pp. 23–48, here pp. 39 f.
80 Roy, The God of Small Things, p. 202.
81 Ibid.

happen. The river itself was dark and quiet. An absence rather than a presence, betraying no sign of how high and strong it really was.[82]

The shimmering leaves and drooping bamboo convey a mournful mood that encompasses the twins but extends beyond them. To help readers imagine the wet darkness, Roy brings the perspective of a narrator who detects what the children can't: "In the dark they couldn't see that they were in the wrong lane on a silent highway full of muffled traffic. That branches, logs, parts of trees, were motoring toward them at some speed."[83] Rahel and Estha never learn what hit them, but Roy lets readers imagine the impact from a wide angle, so that they can combine visual impressions of a capsizing boat with the sensations of bodies immersed in water. The broad perspective of this dark scene works not just sensorily but emotionally. Roy depicts a feeling environment stricken by a death about to occur.

To show how emotion circulates in people experiencing a place, Roy's narrator will lead readers into *anyone's* body. She opens her novel's most violent scene with a description of policemen marching toward Estha, Rahel, and Velutha, who are asleep:

A posse of Touchable Policemen crossed the Meenachal river, sluggish and swollen with recent rain, and picked their way through the wet undergrowth, the clink of handcuffs in someone's heavy pocket. [...] They lifted their thin legs high, clumping through tall grass. Ground creepers snagged in their dewdamp leghair. Burrs and grass flowers enhanced their dull socks. Brown millipedes slept in the soles of their steel-tipped, Touchable boots. Rough grass left their legskin raw, crisscrossed with cuts. Wet mud farted under their feet as they squelched through the swamp.[84]

To help readers experience this deadly march, Roy appeals to their senses of sound, sight, motion, and touch. The policemen's steel contrasts with the organic matter they crush, which resists them in stinging, comic ways. Roy emphasizes Touchability because that is what this police-action is about. The police think "untouchable" Velutha has kidnapped the twins and violated their mother, and when they find him, they kick him nearly to death in front of the children. Roy's narrator calls the police "history's henchmen," but her novel suggests that even the most sadistic creatures can feel.[85] In her description, emotions work collectively, so that it becomes hard to say whether the scratchy irritability of the wet grass belongs to one policeman, all the policemen, or to the lush island itself. By asking readers to assume the perspectives of killers and crushed grass, Roy illustrates how actions and the emotions they inspire affect all the life in a place.

82 Ibid., p. 291.
83 Ibid., p. 292.
84 Ibid., pp. 304 f.
85 Ibid., p. 308.

If the river island's flora and fauna suffer from the policemen, they draw the love of Velutha and Ammu, the twins' mother. In their precious hours together, the lovers take playful delight in the instincts of "small things":

> They laughed at ant bites on each other's bottoms. At clumsy caterpillars sliding off the ends of leaves, at overturned beetles that couldn't right themselves. […] At a particularly devout praying mantis. At the minute spider who lived in a crack in the wall of the black verandah of the History House and camouflaged himself by covering his body with bits of rubbish.[86]

Viewed by lovers about to be smashed by social laws, these animals illustrate anything but a well-adapted natural order. They move klutzily, kick helplessly, and perform overzealously. The resourceful spider on whom Roy's narrative settles seems obsessed with hiding. Like Ammu's children, Ammu and Velutha may see themselves in these small things whose instincts don't serve them well. The characters' emotions can't be untangled from the river island's rich life. The police experience this life as irritating, and the lovers, as endearing, but these opposing responses emerge from encounters with a place. Any emotions evoked in readers rely on the way Roy renders her characters' environment.

III. Conclusion

We have argued that human emotions need to be understood as emerging in what we term feeling environments. While current scholarship in the humanities and the mind sciences investigates feelings beyond human interiority, the literary texts we have discussed show that environmental understandings of emotions have been formulated in South Asia since antiquity. Such descriptions of emotionally charged places suggest historically specific ways of experiencing, understanding, and acting out emotions, which the history of emotions can uncover. They also speak to contemporary scholarship beyond our field, offering theories of the mind and ecologies of feeling that resonate with current trends in ecocriticism, "4E" theory, posthumanism, or environmental neuroscience.[87] Shifting our gaze beyond Europe and the Global North remains vital for the ongoing renewal of our disciplines' analytical concepts and normative assumptions. In how many new directions will our knowledge of emotions grow if scholars can rethink the idea

86 Ibid., p. 338.
87 Simone Kühn and Jürgen Gallinat, Environmental Neuroscience Unravels the Pathway from the Physical Environment to Mental Health, in: Nature Mental Health 2. 2024, pp 263–269, https://doi.org/10.1038/s44220-023-00137-6. Simone Kühn follows Ute Frevert as a new director at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, with the Center for the History of Emotions being succeeded by the Center for Environmental Neuroscience.

of emotions as individual property and see emotions as environmentally co-determined?
However far into the natural world emotions extend, they deserve the analytical attention that every field of human learning can bring. Literary studies and history offer ways of examining languages and cultures in action as they construct the emotions of eight billion minds. At the present conjunction of the Anthropocene and rapid technological progress, exploring feeling environments beyond human interiority leverages these analytical potentials so that researchers can venture into the larger domain that humans share with the animate and inanimate agencies of the world. As the history of emotions continues to flourish, it can invigorate epistemologically different studies of emotions by showing not just that cultures influence emotional experiences – a fact accepted by most natural scientists – but *how* discourse, practices, and materiality shape what people feel. At the same time, historians of emotions need to sustain an active dialogue with scholars in related fields, as in Barrett's studies of how people learn to label changes to their core affect or in new models of the human mind suggested in "4E" or contemporary neuroscience. The humanities' critical capacities can make a vital contribution to dialogues with other fields of knowledge, while scientists' findings can offer humanities scholars new theories to consider. The cultural and historical study of emotion will be enhanced if we can widen our gaze and deepen our understanding of emotions in and beyond the human.

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