

Into Gospel Wilds

Divine, Demonic, and Animal

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In a tableau diffracted across multiple gospels, a spirit-dove comes upon or into Jesus and drives him out into the wild, where he encounters the devil, angels, and/or other animals. This series of interactions of a spirit-dove, Jesus, devil, angels, and other animals starting along the transitional space of the river and ending in the wild raises questions about how animals, spirits (holy and unclean), and humans relate in terms of the domesticated, the feral, and the wild. Beginning with Jesus's baptism and temptation scenes and spiraling out from there, this essay examines the canonized gospels' accounts of wildness in terms of divine, demonic, and other animals, examining them in terms of Jacques Derrida's divinanimality, Donna Haraway's companion species, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's becoming animal and demon animality. All of this is framed by bringing gospel wildness into dialogue with Jack Halberstam's queer wilding and zombie anti-humanism. The gospel wilds are queerly entangled with and are the founding condition of the domestic, and to which the domesticated must repeatedly return and face its potential dissolution, renewal, or transformation.

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“The God of Israel is the God of the desert. If you want to speak to him, then you'll have to go to the desert.

Be careful, God isn't alone out there.”

(John the Baptist in *Last Temptation of Christ*, dir. Martin Scorsese)

In a tableau diffracted across multiple gospels, a spirit-dove comes upon or into Jesus and drives him out into the wild, where he encounters the devil, angels, and/or other animals. This series of interactions of a spirit-dove, Jesus, devil, angels, and other animals starting along the fluid, transitional space of the river and ending in the wild raises questions about how animals, spirits (holy and unclean), and humans relate in terms of the domesticated, the feral, and the wild.

These tracks of doves, humans, angels, demons, and other animals circle around several thinkers in a time that the historian Richard Bulliet calls “post-domesticity” (Bulliet 2005; 1990, 2-3). Since the domestication of certain animals thousands of years ago, humans have lived in close, intimate relations with domesticated animals used for work, clothing, food, as well as sacrifice. Most people would have been familiar with domesticated animals mating, giving birth, being raised, and being slaughtered. Today, after the rise of industrialization, urbanization, and the “green” revolution that gave rise to corporate farming, fewer people, especially in the U.S., Europe, and Australia, have these experiences. Our primary animal relationships are with pets or pests. Bulliet suggests that the displacement of animal sex and

violence that humans have been privy to for thousands of years has had wide-ranging social consequences, including the rise of animal rights ethics and posthumanist thinking.

Lines of posthumanist thinking have opened up ways of engaging the relationship between humans and other animals and how slippery the categories of “human” and “animal” are. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, and Donna Haraway among others have become central to rethinking animals, animality, humans, and humanity, and the physical and symbolic interactions among them. These posthumanist tracks of divine, demonic, and wild musings intersect at the definitional positionality of the civilized against the wild, the undomesticated against the tame, often with colonizing societies defining themselves as “civilized” and those they colonize as “wild.” Such a position is socially variable: different societies define the wild against themselves in different ways and in multiple ways within the same society. This essay seeks inspiration among these figures to discuss demonic animality, divine animality, and wild companion species, yet I want to frame the discussion with queer theorist Jack Halberstam.

Beginning with children’s books and films, particularly Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, Jack Halberstam has queered the wild, finding it not just in nature but also aesthetics, politics, theory, and desire (Halberstam 2020, ix). It is an epistemology of disorderliness. Like queerness, wildness is “a challenge to an assumed order of things that refuse and resist order itself. Wildness names simultaneously a chaotic force of nature, the outside of categorization, unrestrained forms of embodiment, the refusal to submit to social regulation, loss of control, the unpredictable” (Halberstam 2020, 3). Halberstam emphasizes that it is not a simple binary; wild is not simply the opposite of order; it is an intense opposition to order: “wildness is the absence of order, the entropic force of a chaos that constantly spins away from biopolitical attempts to manage life and bodies and desires. Wildness has no goal, no point of liberation that beckons off in the distance, no shape that must be assumed, no outcome that must be desired” (Halberstam 2020, 7). It is the embrace of a non-teleological chaos, an ever-shifting existence that has no final form; it is fluid; it is fire. It has no certain future; time is uncertain; all is improvised. The wild dissolves binaries and oppositions; in its non-teleology, it can both repress and liberate, shock and bore. It perpetually becomes. It even threatens the division between wild and domesticated order as it seeks to absorb order within itself (Halberstam 2020, 31, 26). Beyond Halberstam, I will also argue order relies upon it and the wild’s destructive potential is a source of order’s own renewal.

Halberstam’s queer wilding has elements that are an ill fit for the gospel narratives, such as his emphasis on desire; nonetheless, Halberstam’s account has much to offer. To begin, wildness is not merely a binary opposite of order; it is the opposition to order that dissolves binary oppositions. Halberstam writes, “we must find a way around the treacherous binary logics that set the wild in opposition to the modern, the *civilized*, the cultivated, and the real” (Halberstam 2020, ix [emphasis original]). While order defines itself against shifting forms of the wild to reinforce order, the wild can destroy order. We should not be surprised to see wild threats to social order in the form of the demonic, wild animals, and even the divine interloping into domesticated space. Therefore, stories will often rely upon this division in order to blur it, undermine it, and sometimes reinforce it. We will see this in figures who straddle the line between domesticated and wild, such as the

(holy) spirit or possessed humans, who become divine-human or demonic-human assemblages. Halberstam further writes, “the wild does not simply name a space of nonhuman animality that must submit to human control; it also questions the hierarchies of being that have been designed to mark and patrol the boundaries between the human and everything else” (Halberstam 2020, 5). While Jesus may be driven out into the wild, the wild always already exists around us.

Wildness is contextual. Different societies rely upon different models of the distinction between wild and domesticated; therefore, we cannot assume our modern “post-domestic” life will resonate easily with the domesticated era of the gospel accounts, and realize that both our contemporary and the ancient epistemologies of wildness are and were multiple. For example, modern sentimentality around pets and the pet industry do not resonate with gospel stories. Domestic animals appear in the gospels for eating, working, and sacrifice rather than companionship, though domesticated or feral dogs eat scraps from the table (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). Finally, Halberstam’s understanding of zombified life and zombie anti-humanism will become pertinent when discussing the dehumanizing impacts of spirit possession.

While reframing with Halberstam, this essay does not leave behind the insights of and disagreements among Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida, and Haraway, yet draws them into new entanglements, combining those things that tend to be pushed outside of civilization, but inextricably intertwined with it: the divine, the demonic, and wild animals. While there will be discussion of domesticated animals, it is the repeated entanglements of the feral and wild—untamed—and the divine, the demonic, and, to a lesser degree, angelic that interests me. While wild animals and the divine and demonic realms are untamed and, to some degree, untamable by humans, Jesus—and other special humans—can harness and redirect this wild energy to (temporarily) tame the demonic and wild through exorcism. Any lengthy exorcistic account tends to emphasize a lack of humanity or loss of socially accepted behavior from the possessed; they are dehumanized by the demonic just as one could become feral by the animalistic. Let us, therefore, leave domesticated orderliness with its hierarchies and distinctions behind and enter the wild.

This essay repeatedly returns to the different accounts of Jesus’ baptism and temptation on the edges of the wilds and spins its webs out from there into dove-like divine animality with Jacques Derrida, wild animals as companion species with Donna Haraway, and the wild pack of demonic animality assembled with Deleuze and Guattari, and their recurrent queered entanglements with one another.

Divinanimality between Domesticated and Wild

Most thinking about divinanimality derives from readings of Jacques Derrida’s *Animal that Therefore I Am* and *Beast & the Sovereign*. While starting with his pet cat staring at his naked body, Derrida springs into a series of meditations from Genesis through Descartes into contemporary philosophy. According to Derrida, the divine and animal share the quality of “ahuman.” They represent the “excluded, foreclosed, disavowed, tamed, and sacrificial foundation” of the symbolic order of “the human order, law and justice.” (Derrida 2008, 132; 2009, 17, 49-50, 126-127). Divinanimality is both exterior to and necessary and foundational to order. God, the ultimate sovereign, is the most beastly (Derrida 2009, 50; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachian Ethics* VII.1 [1145a24-33]). Derrida leaves behind actual animals to

the figure of animals: the figure of the wolf or the dove (Derrida 2009, 1-31). Yet, in *Animal that Therefore I Am*, Derrida uses the word “tamed” for this referent. Turning to a religious context, “tamed” animals tend to be the norm for sacrifice and consumption through eating, wearing, and working. It is a surprising maneuver, since one would expect the divine to transcend this order of eating, wearing, working, and killing. On the one hand, the divinanimal energy is channeled and focused through ritual efforts that become religious, economic, and political mechanisms of a particular society, but behind this channel are vast, untamed entanglements that are not human, not social, not civilized; in a word, wild. By contrast, in the *Beast & the Sovereign*, it is the untamed wolf that becomes the more typical referent for the beast and the sovereign. Yet, to return to Derrida’s phrasing; it is the wild—or its representation or threat—that makes domestication possible; it is, as he says, its “sacrificial foundation” (Derrida 2008, 132). So divinanimality is both the basis for, representation of, and the threat to the domesticated social world.

The ancient world abounds with divine-animalistic confluences. The theriomorphism of Egypt was famous and Zeus could transform into various things, including animals (e.g., the swan), though ancient Greek and Roman writers looked down upon the former rather than the latter (Pliny, NH 2.16). Various deities were associated with and rode upon animals, such as Dionysus upon a leopard, or the rivalry of southern and northern kingdoms in associating the God of Israel with either a bull or the hybrid beast of a cherub (Exod. 25; 1 Kgs. 6:23-28; 12:25-29; cf. Exod. 32:1-16). Socrates could exclaim “by the dog” (likely Anubis) just as “by Zeus” (Republic 399e, 567d, 592a; Gorgias 428b5).

In the Hebrew Bible, Ken Stone has noted that domesticated animals provide “positive symbols of care and sustenance” while wild animals could be “frightening symbols of danger” (Stone 2018, 116-117). Not only does the Hebrew Bible offer examples of animality to indicate God’s care for Israel, who keeps wild animals (Israel’s enemies) at bay, but also to portray God as a fierce predator of the divine lion ready to devour Israel (Isa. 31:4; 38:13; Jer. 25:30, 38; 49:19; 50:44; Amos 1:2; 3:4, 8; Hos. 5:15; 11:10; 13:7-8; Joel 3:16 [Heb. 4:16]; Job 10:16; Lam. 3:10; Pypers 2014, 59-74; Stone 2018, 116-139). Turning closer at hand to the gospels, Revelation offers extraordinary examples of divinanimality and demonanimality with Jesus as the beaten, bloodied, yet enthroned lamb (Gieschen 2007).

Contrasting these images of divinanimality, the gospels’ primary exemplar is the (holy) spirit. This spirit frustrates categorization. It is multiformed, fluid, blows where it wants to, is wild and uncontrollable, yet can also appear as a domesticated being fit for sacrifice, disrupting the wild/domesticated binary itself. Much like Derrida’s ruminations, the divine animal is both the foundation of tamed and wild; like Halberstam, we must consider the intricate ways wild and domesticated are entangled with one another. It is an animal fit for sacrifice, a potentially domesticated dove, that comes upon and possesses Jesus and spurs him into the wild.

First, the spirit is wild. Eco-theologian Jacob Erickson refers to the spirit as “an incarnation of Divine Wilderness” (Erickson 2014, 95). Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3:8 that the “spirit blows wherever it wants to” (τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ). The same word can mean spirit, wind, or breath. The spirit is also “poured out” elsewhere in the Bible (Is. 44:3-4; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18). The spirit, wind, and fire are aligned in Acts 2:2-4. What does the spirit, wind, and fire have in common?

Wildness! Uncontrollability, constantly shifting form; without final form, it is nonetheless formative; it can be chaotic, but simultaneously destructive and creative. Elizabeth Johnson writes, “Blowing like wind, flowing like water, flaming like fire, the Spirit of God awakens and enlivens all things” (Johnson 2014, 138). Or Jacob Erickson writes, “The perichoretic movement of the Spirit-breath resists all forms of domestication as it moves, plays, bends, dives, and bursts” (Erickson 2014, 97). Moreover, it doesn’t blow in any particular place, where one expects it to, where it is “supposed to;” it blows or blazes wherever it feels like it (Johnson 2014, 139-40).

The elemental spirit is associated with water. God’s spirit/wind/breath hovers over the waters of creation (Gen. 1:2) and reappears at Jesus’s baptismal waters. This animalistic occurrence appears in all three synoptic gospels—and some extra-canonical gospels as well. I quote Mark 1:10: “And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the spirit descending like a dove on him (ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν).” Immediately, this spirit then drives Jesus out into the wild (εἰς τὴν ἔρημον): “he was in the wild forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts (καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων); and the angels waited on him” (Mark 1:13). Matthew and Luke are quick to add that this was the “spirit of God” (Matthew) or “holy spirit” (Luke). They expand the temptation account but remove Mark’s references to the wild beasts and the angels tending to Jesus.

The spirit-dove is a “revelation,” drawing upon the apocalyptic imagery of the “open heaven,” when John the Baptist has a vision of the heavens are torn apart (ἶδεν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς) and the revelation of a divine being (the spirit-dove) (Ezekiel 1:1; Rev. 4:1). When bringing Acts 2 into the mix, the (holy) spirit is also a mighty wind and can separate into multiple tongues of fire – and perhaps even fluid since it is “poured out” (Acts 2:2-3, 17-18, 33; 10:45). Yet the spirit-dove image is so familiar to Christians today that one does not think about what it could mean that the spirit takes the form of an animal. The dove is perhaps an appropriate animal, since it flies, and flying things can be—though are not always—associated with heavenly things. Most Christians portray this dove as white, but doves are not always or even primarily white. It is difficult to determine what different gospel authors envisioned.

While the spirit can be associated with fluid wildness, doves or pigeons (*Columba livia*) have a long history of interactions with humans. Likely originating from North Africa and the Mediterranean basin through the Middle East and Central Asia, they are now found throughout the world except Antarctica (O’Connor 2013, 101). From the ancient world to today, they display a range of interactions with humans; some are domesticated, some are “commensal” (non-domesticated but living with humans), and some are wild (like the “rock dove”). Ancient rural Romans kept dovecotes—permanent birdhouses for doves—to keep them around for food and fertilizer (O’Connor 2013, 103, 115). In ancient Israel/Judea, the sacrificial complex demanded that doves be available for use, and, therefore, they were kept for sacrifice and for eating. A large complex at Mareshah was established to raise doves and pigeons on a massive scale by the end of the third century BCE and only came to an end of usage around the Bar Kokhba Revolt the second century CE (Firmage 1992, 1144-5). The dove, therefore, does not only conjure an image of wildness for first-

century readers. Doves or pigeons, then as now, could be domesticated, a feral pest, or wild (O'Connor 2013, 101-15).

Other divine animals in the gospels also lean more toward the domesticated, such as the potential “divinanimality” of Jesus himself. In Matthew’s screed against the Pharisees, which includes several other animalistic references, Jesus laments: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her nestlings under her wings (ὄν τρόπον ὄρνις ἐπισυνάγει τὰ νοσσία αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας), and you were not willing” (Matt. 23:37). Here the metaphor not only crosses species (Jesus as poultry) but also transes gender (Jesus as mother) (Strassfeld 2018; 2022, 114-15; Stryker, Currah, and Moore 2008). The Jesus-hen seeks to gather these children-chicks, perhaps shifting from the “lost sheep,” but the chicks will not listen, so they are lost. “Nestlings” may be a better—and more accurate—translation of τὰ νοσσία (cf. Attic: τὸ νεόττιον) than “brood” (NRSV), especially to distinguish it from the term used in the same gospel for “brood of vipers” (γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν), which is something like “those begotten of vipers.” This message has a religio-political edge, too, since the “house” or temple will also be forsaken (Horsley 2003, 88-91).

Jesus also associates himself with the serpent: “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὕψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ), so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15; cf. Num. 21:9). We tend to expect serpents to be associated with evil or bad qualities and associate them with outsiders, such as John the Baptist calling his opponents a “begotten of vipers” (Matt. 3:7-10; 12:33-34; 23:33; Luke 3:7-9); but here and elsewhere (Matt. 10:16; p.Oxy. 4009 recto) Jesus refers to wild serpents to refer to the quality of wisdom or prudence, a foreshadowing of his own crucifixion, and to healing and life. In the Numbers story, the people spoke against God, and so the LORD sent poisonous (or fiery) serpents (*seraphim*) that bit the people, and many died. The survivors asked Moses to intercede, and the LORD had Moses make a poisonous (or fiery) serpent out of bronze, set it on a pole, and whenever anyone who has been bitten looks at it, that person will live. Jesus, here, associates himself with the bronze serpent. The serpent renews life even as it can take it away. This is an anomalous case, since Jesus identifies with a crafted simulacrum of a wilderness serpent rather than the serpent itself. There is another subtle shift, moreover, since in Numbers one looks upon the serpent and lives; here one believes in the serpent and lives (DeConick 2001).

The Gospel of John entwines Jesus with animality from the start when John the Baptist proclaims: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου)” (John 1:29). And again, “Look, here is the Lamb of God! (ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ)” (1:36). This ultimately is a reference to the Passover lamb as 19:36 makes explicit: “None of his bones shall be broken.” This takes the rules of the Passover lamb in Exod. 12:46 and makes them a prophecy about Jesus’ death (cf. Ps. 34:20). Jesus’s death is entwined with the Passover lamb’s death. The lamb’s death foreshadowed Jesus’ sacrifice. While John the Baptist, at first blush, appears to be speaking metaphorically, Jesus’s death moves beyond metaphor; it is equivalent to and surpasses the Passover lamb’s sacrifice. Jesus is the ultimate lamb. The lamb and Jesus mutually signify one another. This also accounts for the shifts in the death account from the synoptics to

having Jesus die on the Day of Preparation, along with all the lambs (19:14; see Josephus, War 6.423; Philo Spec. 2.145). From hen to lamb, Jesus's animality is domesticated, and, in the latter, becomes, as Derrida would say, the foundation of the sacrificial order. Yet Jesus-as-serpent disrupts this pattern, a rewilding that threatens and heals simultaneously.

While Jesus's animality has an ordering element, though his serpentine associations bring in the potential of disorderliness that blurs poison and cure, the spirit's dove-like embodiment is, like the wind, more difficult to pin down. The dove is like Jesus-as-lamb part of the sacrificial order, but doves could be wild, domesticated, or feral. The location of its appearance—the Jordan river in the Judean wilderness—reinforces the indeterminacy. It is a borderland space that with John the Baptist, living on the fringes in terms of his camel-hair dress and locust-and-honey diet, symbolizes a wild or de-domesticated space. It hovers at the edges of wandering in the wilderness and dwelling in the land. The dove, therefore, alights at this liquid line in the sand, fluidly, flittingly, flying among the wild and domesticated alike.

It is also not clear what “descending like a dove” (ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαῖνον) means. Is it the manner in which the spirit descends that is reminiscent of a dove or did the spirit appear in dove-form? That is, how literal is the linkage of spirit and dove? Mark's version is ambiguous, and Edward Dixon has argued—using Homeric and Virgilian parallels—that it is a simile that follows a common mythological topos of the arrivals and departures of gods to and from Olympus in human form. He places great emphasis on Mark's εἰς, that the spirit went “into” Jesus; indeed, a possessed Jesus being driven by the possessing spirit into the wilderness will become significant later.

Nonetheless, while Dixon argues a commonality between the spirit coming into Jesus and the Greek gods taking human form, in the Greek case the gods take a visible form of whatever they want; in Mark's case, the spirit is coming into an already existing body: Jesus' body (Dixon 2009, 770-2). The spirit does not appear as Jesus—as Greek god appears as a human—but possesses Jesus if it goes “into” him analogously to how other spirits—such as unclean spirits—possess existing human bodies (cf. Dixon 2009, 778-9). Moreover, most of these birds Dixon lists from the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* are birds of prey like falcons and eagles—even a “dove-slaying falcon” (*Iliad* 15.237-8)—or generic “birds” rather than something like a dove (Dixon 2009, 767-9). The distinction is important, at least in the history of interpretation of food laws, since the tannaitic Rabbis declared that predatory birds are unclean (m. Hul. 3:6), whereas a dove is clean for both consumption and sacrifice (cf. Douglas 1972, 77). Dixon is likely correct, however, that the bird simile is not to be taken completely literally for Mark. It describes the *manner* of its movement rather than its form (Dixon 2009, 723n52).

Dixon may be correct about Mark, but neither Matthew nor Luke understood it as a simile. Matthew notes that the Spirit-Dove descended and added that it “came upon him” (καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν; Matt 3:16). The coming upon is sometimes translated as “alight” which takes the dove analogy into account but literalizes it in the process. If “alight” is a correct rendering, this movement seems less likely if the Spirit was anthropomorphic; if it was a simile, it is becoming extended in Matthew's usage. The language of “coming upon,” however, does more work for Matthew, because it aligns Jesus more strongly with

the Hebrew Bible and second temple Jewish traditions. In the Hebrew Bible and the LXX, the Spirit regularly “comes upon” chosen leaders, though without necessarily the sense that it is bird-like (Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Sa 10:6; 11:6; 19:20; cf. Num. 24:2). In Is. 11:2 LXX, the spirit will “rest upon” the future Davidic king. God will also put his spirit upon his servant (Is. 42:1; cf. Is. 61:1). In T. Levi 18:7, the “spirit of understanding and sanctification” will rest upon the messianic priest (cf. T. Jud. 24:2). These passages, like Matthew, tend to prefer ἐπί (upon) instead of Mark’s εἰς (into) (Dixon 2009, 764). Mark’s passage suggests possession; Matthew’s connects Jesus to the tradition of the Judges. Dixon, however, is correct that none of these texts present the spirit’s descent as a literal, embodied bird. But the connection of the descent and coming upon / resting upon with Mark’s bird simile begins to empty the simile of its metaphorical nature, increasing its literalness.

Luke removes all ambiguity, saying “and the holy spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove” (καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον σωματικῶ εἶδει ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ’ αὐτόν; Luke 3:22). Whether the spirit merely looked like a dove or moved like a dove in Mark, in Luke it is embodied as a dove: “in bodily form (σωματικῶ εἶδει).” Indeed, Dixon fails to mention all the times that the gods do appear in animal form. Zeus does not just descend like an eagle, but sometimes appears as an eagle, or a swan, or a bull, etc., or rain or other forces of nature—like the holy spirit does! Luke, however, is unique in this clarity; Fitzmyer refers to the addition of “in bodily form” as a “characteristically Lucan feature” (Fitzmyer 1981, 480). So why make the dove embodied? Does Luke have an obsession with spiritual embodiment? Again, Fitzmyer suggests: yes! He indicates that elsewhere the gospel tries to make extra-ordinary realities tangible; it is, recall, the only gospel that has the post-resurrection Jesus explicitly eat (Luke 24:41) (Fitzmyer 1981, 484; Craddock 1990, 51).

Finally, John 1:32, while omitting Jesus’ actual baptism and any temptation narrative, retains the Spirit-Dove’s descent: “I [John the Baptist] saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.” In this way, John remains closer to Matthew and less to Luke, as the spirit alights upon and remains.

The holy spirit, the spirit, or God’s spirit does not have recurrent bird-like features in the biblical tradition before this. It hovers over the waters of creation like a bird (Gen. 1:2; cf. Deut. 32:11). Like Mark, it is the manner of hovering rather than the form—yet it does not clearly indicate any doves. Doves themselves have significance in the biblical tradition, but not as forms or movements of the divine. Two of the three birds Noah sent out from the ark were doves—the other was a raven (Gen. 8:6-12). Other than the doves that Noah used (Gen. 8:10-12), it is unclear what existing significance that dove would have had at this point. Unlike a raven, the dove is a clean animal, and can be used in sacrifice. Only one post-biblical Jewish tradition associates the spirit’s descent with a dove: b. Hag. 15a. Yet this isolated instance is fairly late to be helpful to reading the canonized gospels. The biblical traditions, however, draw upon a larger reservoir of ancient Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean traditions, which, in turn, represent female deities of love and war with doves in their iconography, including Ishtar, Astarte, Anat, and Aphrodite, though this would be a more distant echo for the gospels (Johnson 2014, 139; cf. Fitzmyer 1981, 483-4). By contrast, birds can also be compared to Satan in the gospels (Mark 4:3-4, 14-15; cf. Matt. 13:3-4, 19; Luke 8:5, 11-12).

The popular Proto-Gospel of James presents the pre-pubescent Mary living in the temple of the Lord, where she was cared for like a dove, being fed from the hand of an angel (8.1). According to the text, a dove also is central in the selection of Joseph as her husband as she approached menarche (9.1; cf. Pseudo-Matthew 12:1-2). In these cases, Mary is like a dove, or a dove becomes the sign—perhaps signaling the divine presence—of the providential choice of Mary’s life partner. Miller, reflecting upon ancient Christian dove imagery, writes that the dove became “an enduring Christian emblem of the avian complex of air, freedom, and liberation ever since the Gospels pictured the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus at his baptism in the form of a dove” (Miller, 2018, 33). The spirit-dove hovers between wind and water, domesticated and wild, yet drives those it possesses to where the wild things are.

Wild Companion Species

In the narrative space between baptism and temptation, the spirit-dove—whether possessing or coming upon Jesus—drives Jesus to where the wild things are. While Matthew and Luke focus on Satan being there, Mark reflects something broader, even if his account is briefer:

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;
and he was with the wild beasts (καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων);
and the angels waited on him. (Mark 1:13).

Mark is the only author who discusses the wild beasts. Due to our familiarity with the story in Matthew’s and Luke’s versions, we expect Satan, but not the wild beasts or the angels, but if you go out into the wild yourself, you will likely encounter beasts. What ties them all together?

In multiple publications, Donna Haraway has spoken of “companion species.” She looks at animals not only as categories to think with but as micro-relationships—*sympoiesis* of being—and becoming-with (Haraway 2016, 5; 2007, 3, 16-17, 27-35); all animals and living things, including bacteria and plants for that matter, are “companion species” of some sort. She writes:

Companion species are relentlessly becoming-with.... In human-animal worlds, companion species are ordinary beings-in-encounter in the house, lab, field, zoo, park, truck, office, prison, ranch, arena, village, human hospital, forest, slaughterhouse, estuary, vet clinic, lake, stadium, barn, wildlife preserve, farm, ocean canyon, city streets, factory, and more. (Haraway 2016, 13; cf. 2007, 4-5)

Hers is a world of “com- / cum-” or “sym-”: it is always “with.” She describes her work as “compost”—that is “making” and “unmaking” “with”: composing and decomposing all at once with companion (*cum panis*) animals (from microbes to dogs to feral pigeons to spiders) coming together at the table (Haraway 2016, 11-12, 32, 55, 101-2; 2007, 15-19, 134-6, 209, 245, 285-301; cf. Derrida 2008, 10-11). It is not only “thinking with” animals as categories, but “becoming with” them; living with specific animals and finding the webs of relationships that we spin together with our own and other species (Haraway 2007, 5, 205, 242; cf. Strømme 2018, 4-6).

Haraway has largely illustrated this “becoming with” of companion species with regard to her dog, Cayenne. Halberstam has responded to this primacy of pets in our society, and in theorizing, as their zombification (Halberstam 2020, 147-74). While zombified life will become important later, I think Haraway partly withstands Halberstam’s critique: her list includes domesticated life in various forms as well as

wild and those that straddle the two. What does it mean, though, to think of wild animals as companion species rather than a cat (Derrida) or a dog (Haraway)? What might it mean to be “with the wild animals?” Others, such as Terry O’Connor, have introduced the term “neighbor species” to discuss non-domesticated animals that have come to inhabit spaces made by humans, including birds, vermin, urban foxes, raccoons, among many others (O’Connor 2013). Timothy Morton uses such a term for cats alongside bees (Morton 2016, 49). I am not sure this alternative terminology is necessary. While I will turn to wild animals that occupy domesticated spaces, I also want to discuss how humans go out into their habitats, as Jesus does. Put into Haraway’s terms, both places—domesticated spaces and wild spaces—can be “contact zones” for wild animal-human entanglements (Haraway 2007, 216-17). Moreover, while it is true Haraway’s primary example is her dog, she includes microbes, bacteria, and a wide range of other domesticated, feral, and wild species that are not easily categorized as “intimate” with humans, but with which we are continually entangled in our becoming. That is why she uses the terminology of “companion species” instead of “companion animal” (Haraway 2004, 301-2; cf. Stone 2018, 28-9). So I want to keep the “with” of Haraway’s analysis, while also considering some criticisms of her concepts, so we can think through how can one “be with the wild animals?”

Focusing on Jesus’ “being-with” the wild animals, Richard Bauckham suggests the “ecotopia” of Isaiah 11 is key to understanding this (Bauckham 2010, 79-80; cf. Horrell 2010, 65-71). In this passage, the “spirit” of God rests upon the “shoot” that comes from the “stump of Jesse.” Moreover, “the wolf shall live with the lamb, / the leopard shall lie down with the kid, / the calf and the lion and the fatling together, / and a little child shall lead them” (Is. 11:6). In the kingdom of God, the wild predator and the domesticated prey will live in harmony. It happens not by the socialized becoming wild, but by folding the wild into the socialized, which is why a “child shall lead them.” The wild becomes part of the domesticated, socialized world. As Bauckham puts it, wild animals—particularly the predators—are the “enemies of whom Jesus makes friends” (Bauckham 2010, 80). Bauckham sees Mark 1:13 as a foretaste of the Isaianic ecotopia. One may also suggest that Mark 1:13—as well as Isaiah 11—envision a return to Edenic conditions (cf. An Encomium on John the Baptist 11.4; Miller 2018, 153; Stone 2018, 124-5).

This is a possible and intriguing reading, but I am not so sure. A child is hardly a symbol of the civilized; in fact, Halberstam re-reads Derrida’s divinity by including the child alongside the divine and the animal as part of the forces of the wild rather than the domesticated (Halberstam 2020, 125-46). The child is the not-yet-domesticated, and, therefore, provides an intermediary between the domesticated and the wild. The child is, however, perceived as vulnerable.

While Bauckham’s reading is a possibility, it is fruitful to compare this episode with the other wild animals in the gospel accounts, especially Mark. On the one hand, there are ways in which it is difficult to think of wild animals as companions in Haraway’s sense. The wild, wildness, and wild animals usually signal danger to socialized human beings. They stand outside of society and culture. Mary Douglas, for example, notes that in the biblical tradition, cattle and domesticated animals enjoy the blessings of the covenant, especially sabbath rest and fertility, and “they had to be brought into the social order in order to enjoy the blessing” (Douglas 2002, 55; cf. Stone 2018, 155-6). On the other hand, “the wild beasts have no covenant to

protect them.” Douglas is partly correct; the Mosaic covenant that guarantees rest only extends to the domestic sphere (Exod. 23:12); God’s covenant with Noah extends to all animals, whether domestic or wild (Gen. 9:10, 12, 16). Nonetheless, the same covenant creates a distance between humans and animals, even as they had existed briefly as companions on the ark (9:2). Hos. 2:8, similarly, includes a future covenant between God and wild animals.

While there are alliances between God and animals, they remain, however, outside of the socialized order. Wild things punctuate, puncture, and disrupt the daily rhythms of domesticated life, imposing upon it. Like God, like the demons, and like the angels, wild animals stand apart from and potentially threaten to disrupt daily life.

Wild companion species, therefore, pop in and out of the various gospel stories. Most birds—other than chickens and doves—would have been considered in some way wild. Snakes and vipers, foxes, wolves, and vultures all appear in the gospels as potentially opportunistic or threatening scavengers and hunters. Fish that one eats would have been wild. The Gospel of Thomas plays upon the wild birds and fish, who live in the sky and sea respectively, to argue that the kingdom is neither in the sky or the sea, since, if it were, the birds and fish will precede you (human beings); rather, it is inside of you (Thom. 3). Gospel wild animals have natural comforts: foxes have holes, birds have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to place his head (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58; cf. Thomas 86). Jesus’ itinerant lifestyle is even more wild than the wild animals, which at least have stable homes. Or, for example, Jesus says, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.” (Luke 17:37; Matt 24:28). In this case, a simple reference to the scavenging activities of vultures as a metaphor for divine judgment on the day when the Son of Man will be revealed. Is God a vulture here? Or is it simply God’s judgment? Yet vultures are part of everyday life when there is something to scavenge.

The gospels, therefore, portray humans within proximity to wild animals in daily life, not just as a threat or as beings who have commonalities with human companions, seeking food and shelter, but as entangled in mundane life. As Jesus is in the beginning of the narrative, humans are “with the wild animals” throughout, entangling human-made spaces with wild animals and wild spaces with human animals.

Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Demon, and Zombie Antihumanism

Mark entangles wild animals with unclean and (holy) spirits, heightening the wildness and highlighting entities typically outside of human control. The spirit, Satan, wild beasts, and angels: these are all beings who exist outside of the socialized human order, but who alternately threaten, energize, or simply and mundanely encroach upon that order when seeking food and shelter. Moreover, the wild is a contact zone where good and evil spirits meet along with wild animals. It is both a part of yet apart from the domesticated world. And, in the following gospel narratives, this wild energy breaks through and threatens domesticated life through demonically induced diseases, healings, spirit (demonic and divine) possessions, and exorcisms.

The connection between the quotidian-yet-threatening wild, the demonic, and one’s power to control them shows up in otherwise weird ways in the gospels;

understanding their entanglements clarifies these passages. For example, Jesus says elsewhere

See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. (Luke 10:19; NRSV)

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them: they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16:17-18; NRSV)

The extraordinariness in these passages is about controlling things that are uncontrollable. It is a power beyond the domestic. Luke's version links treading on snakes and scorpions (venomous animals that a good parent would never feed or give their child!) with power over the enemy, the enemy being Satan and demonic forces. Mark, likewise, links the ability to encounter deadly snakes with power over demons, speaking in tongues, drinking poison, and healing the sick. What connects these things? The demonic, ability to heal and exorcize, wild animals, and venom? Again, the Isaianic ecotopia may lurk behind these passages. Note especially Is. 11:8: "The nursing child shall play over the hole of an asp, / and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den." Here even the serpent will not harm the most vulnerable of humans. Yet again, as Halberstam has pointed out, the child stands against the civilized, adult world. The child is not (yet) socialized, not (yet) tamed (Halberstam 2020, 125-46). In some ways, they stand in tension between dangerous (asp) and vulnerable (child); in other ways, they have an epistemological kinship of entities that exist along the edges of socialization. Yet children do not play a part in these animal accounts in the gospels as they do in the Isaianic ecotopia. More to the point, there is not an ecological harmony in these gospel passages either; instead, the humans threaten the wild animals rather than the other way around. It is an inversion.

I would like to recontextualize the serpents and scorpions the way Luke and Mark do: with demonic possession. Jesus gives authority over the forces beyond human life that potentially endanger that life, and, otherwise, beyond human control. These forces can possess, debilitate, and kill. Jesus allows one to exorcize, heal, and not be harmed.

In this case, our interlocutors will be Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of animality and Jack Halberstam's zombie anti-humanism. Unlike Derrida and his pet cat, Deleuze and Guattari prefer the wild pack of wolves, though they sometimes may think of the collective wolf (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 26-38; cf. Derrida 2009, 1-2, 63-96; Detienne and Svenbro 1986). In their analysis, there are three kinds of animals: (1) "individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, 'my' cat, 'my' dog." These are "regressive" animals, victims of and contributors to bourgeoisie human narcissism; (2) "animals with characteristics or attributes"—paradigmatic or mythic animals; and (3) "more demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 240-41). The sentimental animals have been central to much animal studies theorizing, including Derrida's cat and Haraway's dog. These, for the most part, do not play a part in the gospel tales. Paradigmatic and mythic animals find a place in Jesus' parables and aphorisms. But for this case, it is significant that Deleuze and Guattari align the wild multiplicity of animals with the demonic: after all, they observe, "Beelzebub is the Devil, but the

Devil is lord of the flies” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239). They even allude to the episode of the Gerasene demoniac about to be discussed: “what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling. I am legion” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239). So, Derrida aligns the animal with the divine; Deleuze and Guattari, swarms or packs of wild animals with the demonic. One does not become part of the pack, what they call “becoming-animal,” by filiation or heredity, though, but by contagion. They also note that animals become rhizomatic in pack-form, in their assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 6-7).

Keeping this multiplicity in mind, something else that combines venomous serpents and scorpions, drinking poison, and the demonic register is the specter of death and, even, the undead. When situating demon possession among wild things, Halberstam’s concept of zombie anti-humanism is relevant for the demonic dehumanization we see in the gospel accounts. Like Legion, zombies’ power also lies in numbers (Halberstam 2020, 162-166). Wildness does not only seek to dissolve the binaries imposed by domesticated orderliness by invading that order through unbounded and uncontrollable vitality—like weediness—but also the chaos of death: “As much as wildness speaks of life, liveliness, dynamism, vitality, and excess, it also raises the specter of death” (Halberstam 2020, 37). Moreover, as for Deleuze and Guattari, the demonic “becoming-animal” occurs not by filiation or heredity, but by contagion and occupation, so does zombified life (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 241).

Zombification is Halberstam’s critique of a form of humanism and posthumanism that looks at co-evolution of different animal lives—and all wildness—into the “economy of voracious human consumption” (Halberstam 2020, 119). It is the cultivation of life as human prostheses and dependence in modern capitalist appetites. Coming from the Haitian word *zombi*, meaning “spirit of the dead,” the word emerged in the conditions of slavery with the fear of being re-enslaved after one’s death. It evolved through filmic traditions to be a threat to white order, always containing a residue of its racialized origins (Halberstam 2020, 162-6). Even given its specific modern trajectory, if we think of zombification as the fading of the boundary between the domestic and the wild, the creation of a category between life and death, as a form of objectification that is a “living death,” as Halberstam has described modern zombification, then, when placed alongside the wolfpack of the demonic, then it seems a partly fitting conversation partner for possession (Halberstam 2020, 149). It is such a zombified life—rather than the fully wild—against which non-zombified humans “insist on our own humanity” (Halberstam 2020, 151).

Looking at the Hebrew Bible, Ken Stone has noted the entwinement of the desolation of cities, rewilding of those cities with wild animals, and potential demonic presences, including Lilith and “goat creatures” in Isaiah 13, both of which blur “the line between real animals and mythical creatures” (Stone 2018, 126). In this case, instead of a possession, it is the haunting of wild animals and evil presences in particular places, as the wild encroaches upon and threatens the domesticated, turning cities into a wilderness (Stone 2018, 125-9).

While demon possession and exorcism recur frequently in the gospels, there are few actual exorcisms. While Mark mentions exorcism throughout (3:15; 3:22-30; 6:7; 9:38-41; 16:9; 16:17), Mark records only four exorcisms. There are two extensive exorcisms: the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20; cf. Matt. 8:28-34; Luke

8:26-39) and the epileptic boy (Mark 9:14-29; cf. Matt. 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-42). The other two in Mark include an exorcism in a synagogue (1:21-28), which has little comment, and the Syrophenician woman's daughter (7:24-30), in which one never actually meets the daughter—it is a “distance” miracle. The story of the Gerasene demoniac, however, is one of the most descriptive scenes in Mark and Luke (Matthew makes it a much shorter story and doubles the number of demoniacs). The level of description slows down the narrative, and draws the reader in.

Focusing on Mark and Luke, I will follow Mark and note where Luke makes significant alterations for the present discussion (Klutz 2004, 82-151). As noted, Mark offers a higher level of description in this narrative than in the rest of that gospel. The set-up to the confrontation between Jesus and the demon(s) inside the man includes several nouns that capture the scene. After Jesus steps out of the boat, the word “tombs” shows up three times, “chain” or “chains” three times, “shackles” once, “stones” once, and “mountains” once. The scene has been set. The excess of description—at least for Mark—and the repetition of terms, especially tombs and chains, reminds what Halberstam says of the wild as “monstrous, excess” yet also “extravagance, freedom, unspeakable desires, death, life and illegible territories in between” (Halberstam 2020, 147). The man lives along the edges of civilization and culture and along the edges of the living and the dead. In this way, he exemplifies “zombie anti-humanism,” by collapsing distinctions between life and death, present and future, and, therefore, the hierarchies that sustain society (Halberstam 2020, 167). While Luke limits the number of nouns in the opening scene (one sees “tombs” and “chains” only once each, for example), Luke otherwise emphasizes this outsider situation, noting that not only did he live among the tombs, but he also did not live in a house (Luke 8:27). He dwells solely among the dead. Moreover, he is clothed in broken chains and shackles. He is de-socialized; he is feral. That his demonization, which is also a de-socialization, is also a dehumanization is further suggested by the verb usage.

Mark's verbs are violent: the possessed man “wrenched apart” and “broke in pieces” the chains and shackles—he could not be “restrained.” He has non-human strength. Moreover, the possessed man is also “always howling” and “bruising himself.” While the word translated here as “howl” is κράζω, which can be used for a human cry, it is more of a scream, a howl. It is an expression beyond intelligible, translatable social speech. It also has animalistic overtones, used in post-Homeric Greek for the “croak” of ravens and frogs (Liddell and Scott, s.v., κράζω). Halberstam notes, regarding the feral, “the feral, indeed, is situated beyond human language” (Halberstam 2020, 79). While Halberstam reframes feral expression in terms of sex and desire, here it is a death drive, almost one of a wounding. This super-strong feral man screams, screeches, or bawls in unintelligible sounds. Luke further emphasizes his de-socialized, dehumanized, and feral state, since he adds that he had not worn clothes for a long time (Luke 8:27). While Luke omits the mountain, he notes that the man would break his bonds and the demon would drive him “into the wilds” (εἰς τὰς ἐρήμους).

This unnamed man is an inverse mirror of Jesus. A spirit possesses both Jesus (at least in Mark) and the man. The (holy) spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness, where he meets the devil, and in Mark also the wild animals and angels. Similarly, a demon pushes the man into the wilds. The wilds or wilderness (or desert) again is the place of the uncanny, the non-human and non-socialized, where spirits, holy and unholy,

and feral and wild animals dwell. Demonization or demon possession has become entwined with de-socialization, dehumanization, and animalization. These elements cannot be fully unraveled; they are entangled.

Act two of this scene is the actual exorcism, which I will return to shortly. Act three is the man's reintegration into society. In this, the people find the formerly possessed man "clothed and in his right mind." While Mark earlier did not emphasize the man's nakedness as Luke did, he now retroactively indicates it, by remarking that the man is now "clothed," having his human faculties restored to him. The demon leaves, and the man re-enters a socialized status: he wears clothes, he is "in his right mind." Presumably, he would stop hanging out around tombs and return to a house. While the people begin to fear Jesus and ask him to leave, the formerly possessed man begs to accompany Jesus, and the man proclaims what Jesus has done for him in the Decapolis.

In Acts one and three, we see the relationship between demon possession and animalization (and not just any animalization but feral animalization) alongside de-socialization. Act two highlights the relationship between demonality and animality. In the confrontation between Jesus and the demon, one learns that the name of the demon is "Legion; for we are many" (Mark 5:9). Deleuze and Guattari emphasized that the animalistic demonic is many, a swarm, or a pack. They write, "a becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239). Like their rhizome, Legion swarms as multiplicity in unity and unity and multiplicity. Likewise, for Halberstam, the subversive power of zombies is in their multiplicity.

In Mark, Legion begs not to be sent out of the country; in Luke, Legion begs not to be sent back into the abyss (Luke 8:31). Instead, they ask Jesus to send them into a herd of swine, Jesus permits them to do so, and the swine rush down a bank and drown in the sea, a simulacrum of an abyss. Mark says about two thousand pigs died; Luke omits the number. It is a double-possession, then, possessing the human and then the pigs. The "becoming-animal" of both the human by the demons and the demons themselves as they enter the pigs occurs, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, by occupation, even infection, rather than by filiation and heredity (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 241-2). It is a multiplicity that becomes another multiplicity. After the demons turn a man into a feral animal, they possess domesticated animals. The monstrous threat, thereby, has been named, domesticated, and neutralized. Halberstam writes, "we have fashioned monsters to embody what we cannot name, to frame what we have come to fear, and to banish what we cannot tolerate" (Halberstam 2020, 148). Demon possession and exorcism, together, embody the monsters both conjured and banished.

There have been post-colonial and anti-imperial readings of this episode, since the demon uses the name of "legion," a contingent of the Roman army, which would have been occupying the land at the time. Fittingly, the Legion X Fretensis was involved in fighting Jewish insurgents during the Jewish War and its insignia was a boar (Shinall 2018, 66). Perhaps kosher readers and hearers of this story would get a laugh of the fairly Roman demon(s) degraded to possess an unclean animal and promptly dying.

Additionally, the destruction of the pigs has proven a sticking point for ecological readings. Ecological readers remark upon how pigs are the most intelligent of all animals humans eat (Haraway 2007, 297; Singer 2009, 119). Critics from the

philosopher Peter Singer to the biblical studies scholar Hector Avalos have remarked upon Jesus's indifference to non-human life and the unnecessary suffering these pigs underwent (Singer 2009, 191; Avalos 2015, 328; cf. Horrell 2010, 65). Indeed, Jesus's attitude towards pigs mirrors that towards dogs: they are unclean and unworthy (Matt. 7:6). Even Richard Bauckham, who sees Jesus as eco-friendly, has trouble with this passage, seeing it as evidence that the world remains unharmonious and unredeemed even as Jesus tries to usher in harmony and redemption (Bauckham 2010, 81).

Beyond postcolonial and ecological readings, something else is happening here; there is, firstly, a resonance between the uncleanness of the animals (pigs) and the uncleanness of the spirits (demons). As such, alongside postcolonial understandings, one should not be surprised from a zombified perspective that the demonic and the animal are both situated in terms of their foreignness, since Jesus is in a Gentile city and pigs would be Gentile food. Jesus sends the foreign, invading demons into foreign pigs within a foreign city. Moreover, the possession itself also signifies the threat of the dissolution of the boundary between civilized and wild, human and demonic, domesticated and feral, and even living and dead. The exorcism, however, temporarily neutralizes this threat.

What happens to the demons, in fact, is a reverse image of what happens to the man. The demons do not enter wild boars, but domesticated pigs. As the man leaves his demonically feral animal state and returns to domesticated order, the demons shift from their wild status and are transferred into domesticated animals. He is restored to life; they return to the abyss and forces of death. Losing their freedom, their wildness, though, the demons choose extinction. The zombified threat of feralness and wildness has been tamed, domesticated by a spirit-possessed Jesus who was also driven into the wilds.

Entangling the Divine, the Demonic, and the Wild

God is of the wilds, but God is not alone out there; the wild is not just a place, but a condition, an epistemology of the extraordinary, the untamed, the fantastic, the monstrous, the mysterious, and the unknown. In Haraway's terms, it is a "contact zone" between humans, wild animals, God, the devil, angels, and demons. It is undomesticated by definition, but the domestic cannot exist without it; the domestic needs it to define itself. Yet, the wild is not just the opposite of domestic, but opposes the domestic. It seeks to dissolve the domestic into itself. It impinges upon, infiltrates, and ultimately becomes entangled with domesticated daily life as the wild and the domesticated interact and interrupt one another in mundane, dangerous, surprising, and uncanny ways as spirit possession and exorcism, demon-induced disease and healing, and, therefore, the source of extraordinary, fearful, awe-inspiring energies.

The spirit hovers between domesticated, feral, and wild, appearing as a potentially domesticated dove, yet possesses and drives one into the wild. Wild animals become entangled in one's daily life and in extraordinary moments of life, necessary for our mutual becoming, as they come into the domesticated contact zones and we go out to wild contact zones. The demonic causes more unease. As societies seek order by domesticating and taming the wild, possession returns the domestic back into the feral; it is the wild making the domestic into itself. It more

flagrantly dehumanizes, zombifies, and makes one feral, living on the borderlands of life and death, domestic and wild/foreign.

The gospel wilds may be the populated demons, the devil, the (holy) spirit, and other beasts, but thinkers from Derrida to Halberstam are correct to note that the wild is the founding condition of the domestic, and to which the domesticated must repeatedly return and face its potential dissolution, renewal, or transformation.

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