The Representation and Role of Demon Possession in Mark

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Abstract

Demon possession and exorcism are major themes in the gospel of Mark. Since the Enlightenment, Mark's Western audience has often found them to difficult to interpret, especially in the case of possession itself. The author of Mark assumed that his audience would understand the idea of possession, an assumption that does not necessarily hold true for modern audiences. This study aims to provide some idea of what possession means in Mark. It proceeds with exegesis of Mark's possession pericopes and situates them within the context of ancient beliefs about demons and possession. Critical consideration of modern cross-disciplinary research related to possession is important in this task. So too is the history of modern interpretation and exegesis of Mark, which has offered insights as well as misapprehensions. The weight of evidence supports the conclusion that part of the spiritual importance of possession for Mark is its disorienting, frightening, and ultimately incomprehensible nature.

Abstrait

La possession démoniaque et l'exorcisme sont des thèmes très importants pour l'évangelie selon Marc. Depuis la siècle des luminaires, l'audience occidental de Marc les ont trouvé difficile à comprendre, surtout la possession. L'auteur de Marc supposait que son audience comprenait l'idée, mais ce n'est pas vrai pour les audiences modernes. Cette étude veut donner une idée de le sens et de la signification de la possession en Marc. Elle procède avec l'exégèse des histories de la possession en Marc et les met dans la contexte des convictions anciennes à propos des démons et de la possession. La réflexion critique des études pluridisciplinaires de la possession est importante, et aussi l'histoire moderne de l'interprétation et l'exégèse de Marc, leurs idées et aussi leurs erreurs. La plupart de l'évidence support la conclusion qu'une partie de l'importance spirituelle de le possession, pour Marc, est sa nature désorientant, effrayante, et en fin incompréhensible.

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I. Introduction

No reader of Mark's gospel[1] can fail to notice its interest in matters demonic. The synoptic gospels all list exorcism among Jesus' itinerary of practices,[2] which along with other ancient evidence suggest the historicity of Jesus' reputation as an exorcist.[3] For all this agreement, however, it is the shortest of the canonical gospels devotes the most discussion to Jesus' interactions with evil spirits. Matthew and Luke, usually expanders of Mark, condense or omit these accounts,[4] and John is without exorcisms.[5] In Mark, Jesus performs four exorcisms (1.21-28, 5.1-20, 7.24-30, and 9.14-29) and becomes involved in two disputes about them (3.22-30 and 9.38-41). The first of these exorcisms is in fact the first act of power that Jesus performs publicly and can be seen as both incipient and paradigmatic for his subsequent ministry.[6] The words δαίμων, δαιμονίζομαι, πνεῦμα [ἀκάθαρτον], and πνεῦμα [κακόν/πονηρόν] occur a combined total of twenty-six times,[7] as opposed to fifteen in Matthew,[8,9] constituting a verbal as well as a thematic emphasis. These terms are

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[1] Quotations from the Greek New Testament, including Mark, rely on fourth revised edition of the Nestle-Aland text (1966). Translations are original unless otherwise noted.

Mk 1.32-34, 1.39, 3.13-15, 6.6b-13; Mt 4.23-25, 7.21-23, 8.16-17, 10.1-8; Lk 4.40-41, 8.1-2, 9.1-2, 10.17-20, 13.31-33.

[3] Non-biblical ancient references to Jesus as exorcist.

[4] Matthew tells the story of the Gerasene demoniac, or rather the Gadarene demoniac at less than half its length in Mark (8.28-34), shortens the story of the possessed boy considerably (17.14-20), and omits the Capernaum periscope entirely, preserving only the final acclamation (7.28-29). Luke omits the story of the Syrophoenician woman and shortens the one of the possessed boy (9.37-43a).

[5] John does preserve references to accusations that Jesus himself was possessed ((7.19-20, 8.48-52, 10.19-21). Ronald Piper ("Satan, Demons, and the Absence of Exorcisms in the Fourth Gospel," 2000) provides a detailed exploration of why the inclusion of exorcism pericopes would have been redundant within the practical and cosmological narration of John (253-278).

[6] See Herman Hendrickx (*The Miracle Stories*, 1987) 33-40, 50-55;

[7] 1.23, 26, 32, 34 (twice), 39; 3.15, 22 (twice), 30; 5.2, 8, 15, 16, 18; 6.7, 13; 7.25, 26, 29, 30; 9.17, 20, 25 (twice), 38.

[8] 7.22; 8.16, 31; 9.32, 33, 34; 10.8; 11.18; 12.22, 24, 27, 28, 43; 15.22; 17.18.

synonymous in Mark, as some pericopes alternate them in reference to the same entity.[10] The theme is so prominent in Mark, and so distinctive of it, that it is difficult to identify any historical-critical or like-minded authors who do not consider Mark the primary source for the historical Jesus in this respect, or even conflate the two directly.[11]

Mark's demonology has caused a number of interpretive problems in the history of modern New Testament scholarship. These problems are part of a complex of hermeneutical difficulties surrounding miracle accounts. Early and medieval interpreters tended to accept the literal value of miracles as well as a variety of analogical meanings.[12] Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment readings, in contrast, have been inclined to transform or outright reject the exorcism stories on both literal and analogical levels. This

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[9] The count in Luke is higher than for Mark, but this owes to "avalanches" of repeated words in fewer, shorter pericopes. For example, the words occur in 8.2, 34, 27, 29, 30, 33, 35, 36, 38, 47 and 11.15, 18, 19, 20.

[10] The scribes in the Beelezebul controversy say that Jesus "in the power of *demons* casts out *demons*," (ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι *τῶν δαιμονίων* ἐκβάλλειν *τὰ δαιμόνια*, 3.22), but the summary notes that 'they said, 'He has an *unclean spirit*'" (ἔλεγον *Πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον* ἔχει, 3.30). The Gerasene demoniac is "a man in unclean spirit" (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, 5.2), and both Jesus (5.8) and the narrator (5.13) refer to it accordingly. When the townspeople come to investigate, however, the text switches to "τὸν δαιμονιζόμενον" (5.15, 16, 18). This may have bearing on the pericope's redaction history. For present purposes, it must suffice to note that the final editor considers the terms identical. This is also true in the case of Syrophoenician woman's plea. She initially comes to Jesus because "εἶχεν τό θυγάτριον αὐτῆς πνεύμα ἀκάθαρτον" ("her daughter had an unclean spirit," 7.25), but the text thereafter refers to the girl as having "τὸ δαιμόνιον" (7.26, 27, 28).

[11] There is broad agreement that the historical Jesus was known as an exorcist. See, for example, Branscomb (*The Gospel of Mark*, 1937) 30-32, 69-70; van der Loos (*The Miracles of Jesus*, 1965) 339-414; Sabourin ("The Miracles of Jesus [II], 1974) 136-138, 156-160; Dunn and Twelftree ("Demon-Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament," 1980) 211-215; Sanders (*Jesus and Judaism*, 1985) 149-154; Collins (*The Beginning of the Gospel*, 1992) 52-54; Blackburn ("The Miracles of Jesus," 1994) 353-368; Funk et al.'s commentary in *The Acts of Jesus* (1998); Ådna ("The Encounter of Jesus with the Gerasene Demoniac," 1999) 299-300.

[12] A detailed exploration of patristic authors' interpretations is beyond the present scope, but the common approach is to assume or take for granted the reality of demon possession and exorcism but to consider allegorical and applied readings more necessary to explicate. Oden and Hall (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 1998) provide a useful sampling, documenting such views in fathers as diverse as Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, Origen, Minutius Felix, Lactantius, Ephraim the Syrian, Athanasius of Alexandria, Jerome, Prudentius, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Augustine of Hippo, Euthymius, Peter Chrysologus, John of Damascus, and Bede (21-23, 43-47, 66-72, 100-102, 122-125). The same tendency evidences itself in one of the earliest extant commentaries on Mark per se, an early seventh-century work of probable Irish provenance; see Cahill (*The First Commentary on Mark*, 1998) 4-9. See also the overview of early post-patristic commentary in Kealy (*Mark's Gospel*, 1982) 36-43.

seems to owe primarily to the tendency of the (post-) Enlightenment West, until recently the primary domain of biblical traditions, to disbelieve in the involvement of the supernatural in the observable world.[13] The alternatives to this approach involve (re-)definition if beliefs and interpretive principles regarding the supernatural against either Enlightenment or fundamentalist ideas. Whatever modern people have thought of demons, possession, and exorcism, it has not been what their medieval or ancient forbearers thought of them, or anything closely akin to it. All the permutations of historical, textual, rhetorical, and literary criticism alike[14] have encountered the same problems when dealing with exorcism narratives and have tended to offer the same solutions, albeit sometimes presented in different terms.

Despite occasional exegetical interest in biblical miracles, most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theologians, rationalist and anti-rationalist alike, rejected the miracles of exorcism as such. Their rejections took a variety of forms in different relationships to questions of biblical miracles in general.[15] Exorcisms were most commonly explained as apparent "placebo" cures for conditions that had come to be identified as mental illnesses, an explanation that remains prominent in both scholarly and general exegeses, albeit in submerged or modified form. More recently, interpreters have sought to cast New Testament exorcisms, especially Mark's exorcisms, in sociological or political terms.[16] All of

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[13] For further discussion, see Burkill (*Mysterious Revelation*, 1963) 45-61; Sabourin 115-140, 156-175; Mack (*A Myth of Innocence*, 1988) 208-215; Collins (*The Beginning of the Gospel*, 1992) 41-46, 52-58; Meier (*A Marginal Jew* v. 2, 1994) 511-521; Zachman ("The Meaning of Biblical Miracles in Light of the Modern Quest for Truth," 1999) 1-16.

[14] For a discussion of the uses, limitations, and insights of the various major schools of interpretation, see Telford ("Mark and the Historical-Critical Method," 1993) 492-501.

[15] See previous footnote on the history of modern interpretations of miracles.

[16] See following chapters for details.

these approaches, carefully applied, can yield insight into the world of the text. Interpretations that rely on them too heavily on exclusively, however, can offer conclusions only about general sociological or political principles with Mark as a literary case study, rather than insight into the text itself.[17] A number of considerations about the interpretation of Mark necessitate a more nuanced approach. The difficulty with any of them in isolation is that it necessarily places the interpretive method ahead of the text. To this end, it is important to avoid the dangers of "signification,"[18] or reducing to an overtly or implicitly functionalist symbolic role, what the text considers reality. Berger makes a similar point in his critique of the "signification" inherent in manifestly or effectively "demythologizing" interpretations, in which

> the physical or corporeal dimension of [textual] reality is devalued over against some underlying feature that is regarded as truly essential, albeit highly elusive. I contend that this modern tendency leads to a serious misunderstanding of the way signs are perceived in the New Testament. Signs there hardly have just a didactic function; they do not become insignificant when set against the reality to which they point... the New Testament does not view miracles as some ultimately inadequate way of speaking about God. Miracles are instead an actual component of some new reality that, while it certainly stretches beyond the miracle itself, nonetheless finds its starting point precisely in the miracle.[19]

Within the textual world of Mark, there really are evil, invisible supernatural beings taking over people's minds and bodies and causing them to suffer, for reasons unspecified.[20] In Mark, and therefore here for present purposes, the demons and evil spirits possessing people are real and literal.

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[17] For further discussion, see Telford (1993) 494-501; Shanafelt 322-331.
[18] Kelly (*The Hammer and the Flute*, 2001) 45-46. See Shanafelt 326-328 on the crypto-functionalism inherent in most current approaches.
[19] Berger (*Identity and Experience in the New Testament*, 2003 [1991]) 13.
[20] See Burkitt (1963) 45-59; Sabourin 150-153; Dunn and Twelftree 211-212; Sanders 135-143, 149-154; Hendrickx 4-5; Berger 44-46; Collins (1992) 46-52; Telford (1993) 88-90; Rousseau 129-153; Neyrey ("Miracles, In Other Words," 1999) 21-29.

The same is true of Jesus' exorcisms, which Mark depicts as a component of his triumph over Satan's power, an intrinsic component of the unfolding eschaton.[21] The situation at the beginning of the gospel is one in which the world is under Satan's control, awaiting the messiah who will liberate it. The perspective of the text itself is that of a world in which the ongoing process of liberation is underway. Circumstances during Jesus' ministry, as Mark depicts them, are depicted as having been worse than those at the time of the gospel's composition.[22] The perspective presumably is not that possession and the need for exorcism no longer exist; Mark gives no indication of subscribing to this view, and his assumption that his audience will understand his meaning would invalidate this hypothesis. Indeed, the ongoing need for exorcism seems to have been a widespread theme in the early church(es):

> Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, the Shepherd of Hermas, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, [and] Origen, all testify that the demons which they saw expelled were of the same kind as those which Jesus cast out.... All the church writers in turn, as we have seen, attest that the demons exorcized inside the church were the same as those exorcized out of it. Where Christianity had an advantage over other religions was in this, that demons who fled from no other name, yet trembled at that of Jesus Christ. In particular the New Testament and the fathers attest that Jewish exorcists expelled real demons before, during, and after the lifetime of Jesus."[23]

The text of Mark provides no indication that its author holds idiosyncratic beliefs in this respect. Mark nevertheless seems to operate under the assumption that the situation has

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[21] For further exploration of relationship between eschatology and exorcism in Mark, see Cranfield (*The Gospel According to Mark*, 1959) 138; Kelber (*The Kingdom in Mark*, 1974) 15-18; Kee (*Community of the New Age*, 1977) 36-38, 64-72; Dunn and Twelftree 216-222; Rhoads and Michie (*Mark as Story*, 1982) 73-79; Mack (*A Myth of Innocence*, 1988) 238-245; LaHurd ("Reader Response to Ritual Elements in Mark 5:1-20," 1990) 156; Collins (1992) 57-58; Meadors (*Jesus, the Messianic Herald of Salvation*, tr. 1997)192-196, 243-245, 251-255; van Iersel (*Mark*, tr. 1998) 170-171; Hanson (*The Endangered Promises in Mark*, 2000) 168-181; Aus ("*My Name is Legion*," 2003) 92-94.

[22] Ian Henderson made this observation in the course of a private communication (2007).

[23] Conybeare (1897) 600-601.

improved since the inception of Jesus' ministry.[24] This creates a gap between the world in which the gospel situates its story and that in which it situates itself. The gap has grown greater with every situation since Mark's composition as possession beliefs have mutated, accreted, adapted, reformed, ebbed, and waxed. The beliefs that Mark represents and reflects were part of a complex matrix of religious, theological, anthropological, soteriological, teleological, cosmological, eschatological, sociological, political, economic, and individual factors. The author of Mark assumes his audience to hold well-established beliefs and positions vis-à-vis all of these factors, and to share certain beliefs about them, an assumption that ceased to hold hundreds or even thousands of years ago.

The perspective of this study is effectively phenomenological, but not to the exclusion of other possible considerations. Attention to what be considered reader-response perspectives are a component of this phenomenology, as what the author of Mark assumed his audience to understand would have affected how he chose to relay his information. In order to understand Mark's perspective on demons, it is first necessary to investigate what it is possible to infer from the gospel itself. Close examination of the text reveals more information about demons and possession than is necessarily apparent at first glance. This task necessitates situating Mark's demonology in the context of contemporary demon beliefs. Other gospels' adaptations of Mark are major sources of information, as are other sources' direct or indirect reliance on Markan traditions. Second- and third-century

[24] This analysis also stems from a communication with Henderson.

texts such as the *Testament of Solomon*,[25] the *Acts of Thomas*,[26] and the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*[27] all evince familiarity Markan demonic traditions, whether or not they are written from a position of specific familiarity with Mark. Examining the permutations of Mark's presentation of demons in subsequent interpretations can provide insight into ancient understandings of the presentation itself.

The personal and political realms vis-à-vis demonology in Mark are critical components of the picture, but they also exist at least partially in the shadow of the numinous. Demons are entities of terror and evil, in conflict with or at least opposition to the ultimate divine force, ὁ πάτερ τοῦ υἱοῦ.[28] While there are important sociological aspects to the approach and representation of the numinous in Mark or in any other context, it would be a mistake to rely too heavily on sociology in an attempt to investigate beliefs and experiences that by their very nature must necessarily defy description and complete representation. The ultimate task in beginning to understand Mark's demonology, then, is an attempt to describe and contextualize something that defies rational comprehension. Explaining what the devil is or means may not be quite as futile a task as explaining the nature of the divine, if only because it can be defined in terms of opposition. Nonetheless, contemplating and critically reflecting on the ultimately incomprehensible can lead to a better appreciation of its meaning, scope, and implications.

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[25] All quotations of the Greek text of *T. Sol.* will refer to Miller and Penner's edition (2006). Translations are adapted from Duling in Charlesworth (*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* v. 1, 1983) 935-987.
[26] Quotations from *A.Th.* will refer to Klijn's edition and translation (2003).
[27] Greek quotations will refer to Jones' edition of the text (2005), and translations are adapted from his English rendering.
[28] All New Testament citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Nestle-Aland edition. English translations are original to the paper.

It will be necessary at this point to explore the hypothesis that equates demon possession with mental illness, and to acknowledge a certain limited textual support for some shades of it within Mark. The gospel does imply certain commonalities between possession and mental illness or "madness." The equation that modern interpreters have often proposed between the two categories, however, is excessive at best and misleading. Some limited association between them nonetheless is not alien to Mark, which does acknowledge the existence of both. It is also useful to examine the ways in which Matthew, in particular, extends this idea. With these considerations in mind, it is possible to examine how Mark distinguishes the two and what implications attach themselves to these distinctions. Ideas about the self, the mind, and the soul are critical for understanding Mark's perspective in this regard. Political connotations are present in all of this, as many studies have recently noted; it is necessary to make note of them, as well as to avoid the errors that have plagued many explicitly and primarily political interpretations of demon possession in Mark.

The way forward on these issues must acknowledge that the cultural and intellectual barriers between Mark and the modern world are formidable. It must also recognize that the ancient world did not conceptualize religion, science, cosmology, anthropology, society, nature, illness, or the person in the same ways as the cultures and subcultures of the twenty-first century world. Indeed, it did not draw these categories as such, although it did draw categories of all kinds. For the purposes of this investigation, it is necessary to remember that Mark does not conceptualize itself as "religious" literature as opposed to any other kind

of literature.[29] It therefore seems unwise to attempt to extrapolate Mark's meaning based only on religious-studies perspectives. Mark's perspectives reflect a number of sociological, cultural, cosmological, political, and anthropological assumptions that are not immediately apparent to the modern reader. These assumptions are integral to the shaping of Mark's meanings, and as such it is constructive to make critical, informed use of cross-disciplinary perspectives to gain broader and more complete insight into the fabric of the gospel. The task of approaching these perspectives and integrating them responsibly into exegetical considerations resembles the task of Markan interpretation itself. Both cross-disciplinary research and the more specific interpretation of such a phenomenon as ancient exorcism require a hermeneutic of caution and humility, one that acknowledges that understanding can be difficult to achieve. The result of such investigations, at best, will be an incomplete mosaic more than a snapshot of Mark's demonology. It may be heartening to remember that there was no definitive demonology in the ancient world, and that the unknown and ambiguous qualities attributed to demons contributed to their status as entities of evil and terror.

In proceeding, it will be necessary to make several assumptions concerning Mark. The first, consistent with prevailing scholarly opinion, is that it was composed in something

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[29] This is not to deny that antiquity recognized literary genres or that it distinguished epics, post-archaic dramas, comedies, tragedies, treatises, histories, hymns, and epistles, or that there existed important distinctions between sacred and profane. What is relevant is that within these genres, and within a single work, it was possible to combine what modernity might identify as religious contemplation, empirical observation, romance, comedy, and any number of other themes. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid and of Apuleius suggest themselves as clear and prominent examples of such "combinations."

very close to its current form around the time of the Jewish War (66-70).[30] The relative lack of discussion of the Temple's destruction, particularly as compared to the attention Matthew gives the subject,[31] suggests that it was written before 70 C.E., probably during or immediately preceding the war. Next, it presumes, in keeping with prevailing opinion, that the exorcism stories and the Beelzebul controversy are textually secure, with no substantive variants.[32] In terms of scope, this study concerns itself only with possession by demons and unclean spirits and excludes positively evaluated possession experiences, although there is evidence for traditions of them in the early church(es) and in the New Testament itself.[33] As Mark makes no connection between positive and negative possession experiences, it will be necessary to leave this issue aside for practical reasons. Jesus' exorcisms as indications and manifestations of the beginning of the yet-to-completed eschaton are unto themselves a subject too large to consider properly here.[34] It is both possible and necessary to proceed with the assumption that demon possession in Mark is both part of and representative of Satan's hold on the world, and that Jesus' exorcisms indicate the beginning of its end, but the role of Satan in Mark's eschatology is too large an independent issue to consider within

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[30] Marcus provides a detailed discussion of the evidence for and implications of this in "The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark" (1992), 441-462; cf. Marcus (1994) 30-37. Manns places the gospel within a specifically Semitic context ("Le milieu sémitique de l'évangile de Marc" [1998], 125-142), which seems as least as likely as a Roman one. Freyne examines the historical background to this situation and to the gospel's internal social world in "The Geography, Politics, and Economics of Galilee and the Quest for the Historical Jesus" (75-122). Jonathan Price's *Jerusalem under Siege* (1992) is a systematic treatment of some of these issues.

[31] On this point see Nolland (*The Gospel of Matthew*, 2005) 14-17.

[32] Derrett ("Spirit-Possession") 286.

[33] For discussion of these traditions, see Anita Bingham Kolenkow's "Relationships between Miracle and Prophecy in the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity" in *Principat* 23.2 (*ANWR*, ser. 2) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1990, ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1470-1506, as well as Laura Nasrallah's *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (Harvard Theological Studies 52 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 2003]).

[34] See above for brief discussion of this subject, as well as note for references.

the parameters of this discussion. Similarly, discussion of the diverse and extensive pagan, rabbinic, and hagiographical traditions of exorcism narratives, is impossible under present circumstances, as is discussion of corpus of exorcism liturgies from antiquity.

In exploring the subject matter that the present scope does allow, there is no assumption that older exegesis is necessarily incorrect or obsolete, only that its methodology and conclusions require careful consideration. This is equally true of more recent exegesis. In keeping with this, both universalizing and over-specifying will be considered unsound. Within these hermeneutical parameters, as will be discussed further, a certain *a priori* value is assigned to ideas of divinity, the soul, and the numinous as concepts that may be represented and discussed in different ways but that are ultimately and necessarily indefinable for the people who hold them. Finally, the multivalence inherent in texts generally and in Mark specifically is of primary importance. The present exercise makes no attempt to offer anything more than a tentative partial reading of what might constitute one of a constellation of potentially valid readings of some of what possession is and means in Mark.

II. The Face of Possession in the Text of Mark

As noted previously, Mark uses the terms "demon," "unclean spirit," and "bad spirit" interchangeably, alternating the terms within single pericopes. The insistence on definitions, identifications, and categorizations that have become so prominent in present-day academic discourse give no evidence of having been major considerations in the world of the New Testament. Indeed, Levy notes in the introduction to his volume on the social anthropology of spirits that although it may be helpful to posit "a continuum of culturally defined spiritual entities ranging from well-defined, socially encompassing beings at one pole, to socially marginal, fleeting presences at the other... This is not to say that every locally defined spiritual being can be neatly categorized as one or the other. Indeed, as several essays in this volume make clear, some beings defy categorization."[35] It is also necessary to consider that any categories applied to demons and other spirits might reflect the anthropologist's or the exegete's culture and perspective more than anything else.[36] The very desire to fit demons and other spirits into particular frameworks and ideologies itself seems to reflect, in its current incarnation, modern academic more than ancient religious mindsets.[37] The author of Mark presumably understood more or less what kinds of entities might constitute demons, and expected the same to be true of his audience. He does not seem to consider any potential further distinctions and definitions, if any exist, worth

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[35] Levy et al. 11.

[36] This is a potentially fraught distinction, as the desire to analyze Mark's demonology in this fashion is a reflection of particular cultural, academic, and historical factors that are not at work in the gospel. This contradiction is irresolvable, but mindfulness to the relevant issues can at least limit the unwanted blurring of perspectives, even if it cannot eliminate the possibility entirely.

[37] For further discussion of this problem, see Lambek 241-242, Shanfelt 323-327.

drawing or expounding. This attitude does not seem to have been unusual. Aristotle, Plato, and Plotinus all devote attention to the identity and nature of δαιμώνες, but the Platonists are exceptional in this respect, as few other traditions evince such interests. Even the Pseudepigrapha tend to be concerned with the origins far more than the epistemic constitution of demons.[38] As Boyd notes, "there are no clearly uniform theories as to the origin of Satan in the selected literature of the early Christian tradition. On the contrary, there is a wide diversity of theories."[39] The same is true of demons. It is not until the first flowering of Greek Christian exegesis in the second and third centuries that any sort of demonology begins to develop, and even the works of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen sometimes seem only to provide a touchstone for more systematic later considerations such as Calcidius' and Porphyry's.

The commonalities between Mark and other demon-related texts, however, do not obscure Mark's idiosyncrasies. The synoptic gospels, unlike many contemporary texts concerning demons, show little interest in their genesis. That is, for all of antiquity's disinterest in the ontological identity of demons, there was considerable interest in their origins. Many of pseudepigraphal texts, such as 1 Enoch, *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, many of the *Testaments* attributed to other biblical figures, *Life of Adam and Eve*, *Jubilees*, and apocalyptic works, devote considerable discussion to the fall of the angels and the

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[38] For discussion of demons in the Pseudepigrapha, see Lester L. Grabbe's "The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation" (*Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18.2 [1987] 152-167) 155-158, 160-167; A. Piñero's "Angels and Demons in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*" (*JSJ* 24.2 [1993]), 191-214; Erkki Koskenniemi's *The Old Testament Miracle-Workers in Early Judaism* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.206) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 3005) 44-63, 219-223, 259-266.
[39] *Satan and Māra* (1975) 41.

subsequent spawning of demons.[40] The Beelzebul pericope demonstrates Mark's view that the activities and power of demons are part of the devil's[41] ongoing reign over the world, a reign that the anointed has come to destroy:

> The scribes coming down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul," and "He casts out demons in the power of demons." Calling them, he spoke to them in parables: "How is Satan able to cast out Satan? If a kingdom has been divided on itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. And if a household has been divided on itself, that household is not able to stand. And if Satan is opposed to and divided on himself, he is not able to stand but an end has [him]. But no one is able to plunder in a strong man's house, going into his property, if not first tying him, and then he robs his house.
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> Καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια. καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς Πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶς Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν; καὶ ἐὰν βασιλεία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ οὐ δύναται σταθῆναι ἡ βασιλεία ἐκείνη· καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ οὐ δυνήσεται ἡ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι. καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀνέστη ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐμερίσθη, οὐ δύναται στῆναι ἀλλὰ τέλος ἔχει. ἀλλ' οὐ δύναται οὐδεὶς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ εἰσελθὼν τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ διαρπάσαι ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δήσῃ καὶ τότ ετὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει. (3.22-27)[42]

The author either expects that his audience already has some idea of why such beings exist in the first place and what constitutes their natures, or he considers such information either irrelevant to his purposes or inaccessible. The reason that demons exist is not as important as the fact that they do exist and that their existence, or at least its peak, is now challenged and will soon come to end.[43]

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[40] For a discussion of the reasons for this discrepancy, see Cranfield 74-75

[41] The terminology is of course potentially problematic here, as the scribes attribute Jesus' exorcistic abilities to Beelzebul (3.22) and to Satan (3.23). Given present purposes and constraints, an understanding of an evil spiritual force and its agents or entities will have to suffice.

[42] For a discussion of the eschatological overtones of this pericope, see John Dominic Crossan ("Mark and the Relatives of Jesus," 1973) 81-113; Douglas Oaken ("Rulers' Houses, Thieves, and Usurper," 1988) 109-123; Vernon Robbins ("Beelzebul Controversy in Mark and Luke," 1991) 261-277; Graham Twelftree (*Jesus the Exorcist*, 1993) 106-113.

[43] See the discussion of exorcism and eschatology in the introduction for further references.

Mark's picture of demons is in many respects in keeping with common ideas about supernatural entities.[44] In particular, as van Iersel notes, "Demons are dependent on humans in the sense that they seem unable to act unless they have taken possession of a human being whom they can use as their instrument. Their knowledge, on the other hand, appears to be greater than that of humans."[45] Demons appear throughout ancient literature as intelligent beings with independent minds, wills, and personalities. There is no universal agreement as to whether they do or do not have bodies, and if so what kind of bodies, but they always seem to be less corporeal, less physically delineated, than human and other mundane beings. Ancient literature and magical materials often associate them with the spirits of the untimely dead and with the ether believed to surround the earth and celestial bodies, particularly the moon. Neither are they subject to the same sorts of physical and metaphysical limits. Mark's demons do not seem to have bodies of any sort, and they, like most of their extra-Markan counterparts, are invisible. They possess unusual knowledge pertaining to supernatural matters. If they are embodied, they can communicate with human beings in an ordinary fashion, but apparently avoid this by preference. They cry out in distress upon seeing Jesus, and Legion attempts to plead with him, but there is no indication of rational conversation apart from these instances. Their motivations are not

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[44] The following summary is in agreement with, and indebted to, the more detailed outlines and conclusions of Conybeare ("Christian Demonology IV," 1897) 581-606; Dodds (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951) 152-153, 213-215; Caquot ("Anges et demons en Israël, 1971") 113-152; Boyd 48-51; Grelot ("Miracles de Jésus et démonologie juive," 1977), 59-72; Smith (Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," 1978) 425-439; Ferguson's *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (1984); Brenk ("In Light of the Moon," 1986) 2068-2145; Bolt ("Jesus, the Daimons and the Dead," 1996) 75-102; and Forbes ("Pauline Demonology and/or Cosmology?," 2002) 51-73.

[45] van Iersel 136.

specified, but when they gain control of a human host, they want to retain that control and to cause suffering.

Mark describes the human experience of possession as well as the demonic component of it. The first and third exorcism narratives do not detail the symptoms of possession, and the Beelzebul controversy seems to offer little direct information either. Mark emphasizes the violent and debilitating characteristics of possession in two other cases for the purpose of drawing the audience's attention to Jesus' authority. The degree and severity of the symptoms seem to be what mark these accounts as unusual. Underlying all these descriptions, or the lack thereof, is the assumption that the reader/hearer already has an idea of what possession tends to entail. It is necessary to read the text closely both in its own light and within its ancient contexts to achieve any degree of understanding of what Mark assumes.

The physical manifestations of possession are obvious in some cases. At least some demons are prone to violence and even homicide. The spirit possessing the boy in Mark 9[46] inflicts episodes that resemble seizures, even if Mark does not describe the boy as σεληνιάζεται (Mt 17.15). The boy's father provides Jesus, and hence the reader, a summary of the symptoms, explaining that he has a son "who has an unspeaking spirit. When it grabs him it throws him and he slobbers and clenches his teeth and stiffens" (ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον· καὶ ὅπου ἐὰν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ ῥήσσει αὐτόν καὶ ἀφίζει καί τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ζηραίνεται, 9.17-18). Upon seeing Jesus, the spirit

[46] For further discussion of this pericope, see Sadler 186-191; Branscomb 166-167; Hunter 94-95; Taylor 395-401; Cranfield 299-305; E. Schweizer (*The Good News According to Mark*, tr. 1970) 186-190; Marcus (1999) 341-355; Edwards 276-281; Witherington (*The Gospel of Mark*, 2001) 265-268; Donahue 276-282.

provides him, and hence Mark's audience, with a demonstration: "Seeing [Jesus], the spirit suddenly convulsed [the child], throwing him on the ground [and] he rolled, slobbering" (καὶ ἤνεγκαν αὐτὸν πρὸς αὐτόν. καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα εὐθὺς συνεσπάραζεν αὐτόν καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων, 9.20). The boy's father further tells Jesus that the spirit "has often thrown him into fire and into water, that it might kill him" (καὶ πολλάκις καὶ εἰς πῦρ αὐτὸν ἔβαλεν καὶ εἰς ὕδατα ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν, 9.22). Mark makes the particulars of the boy's condition as clear as it does those of the Gerasene demoniac's.

The text may even provide some information as to the condition of the Syrophoenician girl, who scarcely makes any direct appearance.[47] The narrator offers no details related to the fact that "[the woman's] daughter had an unclean spirit" (εἶκεν τὸ θυγάτριον αὐτῆς πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον, 7.25). The woman herself is reported as having done nothing more than "exhorted [Jesus] that he might cast the demon out from her daughter" (ἠρώτα αὐτὸν ἵνα τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐκβάλῃ ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς, 7.26). Jesus asks for no further information and does not converse with the demon, or even command it directly, instead exorcizing it by will alone (7.29). When the woman returns home, per Jesus' instruction, she "found the child cast upon the bed and the demon gone out" (εὗρεν τὸ παιδίον βεβλημένον ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐξεληλυθός,

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[47] For more discussion of this pericope, see Sadler 147-152; Branscomb 129-132; Hunter 80-82; Taylor 347-352; Cranfield 245-249; Burkill ("Historical development of the story of the Syrophoenician woman, Mark 7:24-31," 1967) 161-177; E. Schweizer 151-153; Burkill (*New Light on the Earliest Gospel*, 1972) 85-90, 107-120; Camery-Hoggatt 149-151; Focant, ("Mc 7,24-31 par. Mt 15,21-29: critique des sources et/ou etude narrative," 1993) 39-75; Marcus (1999) 461-471; Edwards 216-222; Witherington 231-233; Donahue 232-238.

7.30). βεβλημένον's most common English translation is "lying down;"[48,49] "coucher" is its commonest in French.[50] These are, however, at most tertiary meanings of βάλλω. Its literal translation, "to cast, throw," which the Vulgate replicates with "iacentem supra lectum," indicates a certain degree of force or violence, as is evident in the cases of the Capernaum demoniac and the moonstruck boy (Mk 1.26; 9.26). If this is the case, a violent departure might be a sort of final manifestation of a violent, or at least highly disruptive, possession.

The fact that the woman finds her daughter on the bed might also have more specific connotations than it might immediately appear. The possible force of the demon's departure, or even fatigue after recovery from a period of being unwell, might account for the situation in full, but it is also possible that this is only part of the equation. Demoniacs, some texts suggest, are prone to wandering. The Gerasene demoniac[51] has the habit of "crying out in the graves and in the hills" (5.5), apparently roaming the vicinity of the graves but not at all confined to it, despite the efforts to chain him. In his affliction, the possessed man "was battering himself with rocks" (5.5). He does not have a single, particular rock, and

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[48] "Laid upon" (KJV, 1611; NASB, 1963 [NT]; KJ21, 1994), "lying on/upon" (Wycliffe, 1395;Tyndale, 1526; Coverdale, 1535; Bishop's Bible, 1568; Geneva, 1587; Douay-Rheims, 1589; Mace, 1729; Wesley, 1755; YLT, 1862; Darby, 1890; ASV, 1901; NASB, 1960; NLV, 1969; NIV, 1973; NKJV, 1982; CEV, 1995; NIRV, 1996; HCSB, 1999; TNIV, 2001; WYC, 2001, WEB), "lying in" (ESV, 2001), "lying quietly" (NLT, 1996), "relaxed on" (Message paraphrase, 1993), "thrown on" (Amplified, 1954).

[49] Many commentaries on Mark miss this discrepancy. With very few exceptions, they provide translations to the effect of "lying on" and do not mention that this is an unusual meaning for βάλλω. See, for example, Sadler 152-153, Branscomb 133, Hunter 82, Taylor 351, Cranfield 250, E. Schweitzer 151-153, Hendricksen 301, Donahue and Harrington 235, Edwards 221-222. Marcus (1999) 465 is one of the only exceptions.

[50] The woman usually finds her daughter "couchée sur le lit" (e.g., Martin, 1744; LSG, 1910; Darby, 1991; Ostervald, 1996; BDS, 1999) or "étendue sur son lit" (as in JB, 1966).

[51] For further background on the Gerasene demoniac periscope, see Sadler 89-100; Branscomb 89-92; Hunter 62-65; Taylor 277-285; Cranfield 175-182; E. Schweizer 110-115; Starobinski and Via ("The Struggle with Legion," 1973) 331-356; LaHurd 155-159; Camery-Hoggatt 133-138; Ådna 279-301; Marcus (1999) 341-354; Edwards 153-160; Witherington 178-186; Donahue 162-171; as well as Aus' study.

it would not seem that that the graveyard doubles as a quarry or that he is using pebbles. Perambulations might explain his having the ongoing habit of using rocks in general, rather than hitting himself with one or more particular rocks in the aorist. When Jesus confronts the demon, it "urge[s] him greatly that he not send them out of the region," a region the transition into the pericope identifies as the entire "country of the Gerasenes." There would seem, therefore, to be a distinction between a local spirit and a sedentary one.

Wandering as an effect of possession is more firmly established, and more sinister, in the *Life of Apollonius*. There, a possessed youth's mother tells Apollonius that the spirit will not allow her son to "go to school or to archery lessons, or to stay at home either, but caries him off into deserted places" (καὶ οὐ ξυγχωρεῖ... ἐς διδασκάλου βαδίσαι ἐᾷ ἢ τοξότου οὐδέ οἴκοι εἶναι ἀλλ' ἐς τὰ ἔρημα τῶν χωρίων ἐκτρέπει, 3.1).[52] The extent to which Philostratus is relying on Mark-influenced conventions or on second/third century incarnations of independent or Mark-influencing traditions is indeterminate; the categories need not be mutually exclusive. It would seem to be worth considering that possibility that Mark might imply some sort of wandering, or at least non-peaceful behaviour, as an effect of the girl's possession.

Such ambiguities of diagnosis do not arise in the case of the Gerasene demoniac, who has the habit of battering himself with rocks (κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν λίθοις, 5.5). It seems to be the severity of his "self"-inflicted violence that necessitates, or at least precipitates, his being bound, and the strength of the violent impulse that enables him to

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[52] Tr. Henderson 1.301.

shatter any bindings fashioned for him (πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἁλύσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπάσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τὰς ἁλύσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετπῖφθαι καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι, 5.4). He is manifestly a danger to himself, if not to his entire community. In *V. Ap.*, the spirit is so averse to losing his host, the victim's mother reports, that it "threatened me with cliffs and precipices, and with killing my son if I brought my complaint here [i.e., to Apollonius]"[53] (ὁ δ' ἀπλειλεῖ κρημνοὺς καὶ βάραθρα καὶ ἀποκτενεῖν μοι τὸν υἱόν εἰ δικαζοίμην αὐτῷ δεῦρο). The spirit is willing to destroy his conduit to the physical life that he wants to re-experience (3.2) rather than allow his host to regain self-control. The "cliffs and precipices," both in themselves and especially in light of the threat of destruction, recall the fate of the Gerasene swine. Philostratus is unlikely to have written with a synoptic gospel at his hand, but this is perhaps the strongest of many examples throughout the text that either the gospel motifs were so widespread by ca. 200 that he and presumably many other non-Christians were broadly familiar with them, that the motifs were established throughout eastern Mediterranean religious symbolic systems, possibly independent of the gospels, or, most plausibly, some combination of the two. It may then be the case that Legion are ordinary demons in this respect, and that the author of Mark, perhaps without any particular conscious attention to the matter, expected that his readers would recognize it.

Possession is socially as well as sometimes physically isolating. The Capernaum demoniac seems to live in the assembly hall – he "was in it" rather than "came into it" or

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[53] Ibid.

"appeared in it."[54] He seems to have no family members to intercede on behalf or to take care of him at home, just as a generic "they" bind the Gerasene demoniac. These individuals are adults but seem to be unmarried and without any support from their kin or even from particular friends such as the paralytic possesses (Mk 2.3-5). This reflects a highly unusual set of circumstances for ancient eastern Mediterranean society, at least outside certain ascetic and philosophical traditions from which these men's conditions alone likely exclude them. The Gerasene demoniac, at least, seems too violent to inhabit and receive care within a family home. The men may have no surviving relatives left, or no willing relatives, and could hardly be suitable husbands or in-laws. This social isolation adds a further dimension of suffering to the plight of the possessed.

Demons in Mark possess, in addition to violent and itinerant tendencies, spiritual knowledge, which they communicate through their hosts. Their habit of broadcasting Jesus' true identity at the wrong times seems to contribute to some of the crowd control problems that Jesus experiences. He instructs his disciples to take measures so that the crowd "not press him, for he cured so many... and whenever beholding him the unclean spirits threw [themselves] down to him and cried out, saying "You are a son of God!" (μὴ θλίβωσιν αὐτόν· πολλοὺς γὰρ ἐθεράπευσεν... καὶ τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα ὅταν αὐτὸν ἐθεώρουν προσέπιπτον αὐτῷ καὶ ἔκραζον λέγοντες ὅτι σὺ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 3.9-11). The cries come from the demoniacs, at least on the physiological level of vocalization. No disembodied spirits ever speak in Mark; the text does not mention any as doing so

[54] For further discussion of this pericope, see Sadler 14-16; Branscomb 30-32; Hunter 32-34; Taylor 171-178; Cranfield 73-81; E. Schweizer 49-53; Tolbert 131-142; Camery-Hoggatt 102-107; Marcus (1999) 186-195; Edwards 55-58; Witherington 89-94; Donahue 78-86.

independently, and Jesus' conversations with demons always take place before he casts them out. They never speak to him – and he apparently never speaks to them – after they have vacated the humans being healed. Mark's first executive summary confirms that it is the demons who speak, using their occupants' vocal apparatuses: "That day, when it was becoming evening, they brought to him everyone having ailments and the demonized… and he flung out many demons and he would not allow the demons to speak since they knew him" (Ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης ὅτε ἔδυ ὁ ἥλιος ἔφερον πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας καὶ τοὺς δαιμονιζομένους… καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλεν καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν λαλεῖν τὰ δαιμόνια ὅτι ἤδεισαν αὐτόν, 1.32-34).

Demons, then, have knowledge that ordinary humans lack – the disciples consistently fail to notice that Jesus is a son of God – but apparently require human hosts in order to voice or otherwise express this knowledge.[55] This is clear in the Gerasene demoniac pericope, in which "*a man* in unclean spirit came down to him" (ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων *ἄνθρωπος* ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, 5.2; emphasis added). The next few verses continue the third-person singular without indicating any change of subject: it is clearly the embodied man who resides in the graveyard, breaks chains, and batters himself with stones. It may even be the man who "was crying out" (ἦν κράζων) on a regular basis, apparently unintelligibly given the lack of specification as to anything he might have said. The text makes clear, however, that Jesus converses with the demon rather than the man: "…he said, 'What of mine is yours, Jesus son of the highest god? I implore

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[55] See van Iersel 136.

you by God, do not torture me' – for he was saying to him, 'Come out from the man, unclean spirit'" (λέγει Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν μή με βασανίσῃς. ἔλεγεν γὰρ αὐτῷ Ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, 5.7-8). The man is the indirect object in this exchange; Jesus and the demon, or properly one of the demons, are the participants. The man in question is not reported as saying anything until after the exorcism (5.18), when Jesus is leaving the area at the request of the crowd that the swine-herds have called up. The demons, for their part, are silent once Jesus allows them to enter the swine (5.13).

The symptoms of possession, then, are quite specific in Mark. It would appear, however, that Mark's vision of demons was not the only one in antiquity, and that different views of demons were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many ancient sources depict demons as causing problems other than soul-displacing possession as Mark portrays it. The *Testament of Solomon*, whose origin several decades' worth of scholarly consensus places between 175 and 250,[56] offers a cornucopia of demonic mischief. Several passages indicate familiarity with Mark or with Markan-related tradition. There are many small textual indicators, such as Onoskelis' telling Solomon, "mostly my homes are cliffs, caves, [and] ravines" (τὰ δὲ πλεῖστά ἐστί μοι οἰκητήρια κρημνοὶ σπήλαια φάραγγες, 4.5).[57] Leoline (Λεοντοφόρον), for example, makes diseases incurable (11.2) but also tells Solomon,

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[56] For a summary of this consensus, see Klutz (*The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts*, 2003) 34-37, as well as the prefatory notes to Duling's translation (Charlesworth 1983, 940-944) and his later (1988) overview (87-95).
[57] For further discussion, see Duling (Charlesworth 1983) 955 and *passim*; Jackson ("Notes on the Testament of Solomon," 1988) 19-60.

> I have another activity. I involve the legions of demons subject to me for I am at the places (where they are) when the sun is setting. The name for all demons which are under me is legion… If I tell you [my thwarter's] name, I place not only myself in chains, but also the legion of demons under me… [We are thwarted] by the name of the one who at one time submitted to suffer many things (at the hands) of men, whose name is Emmanouel, but not he has bound us and will come to torture us (by driving us) into the water at the cliff.
>
> "ἔχω καὶ ἑτέραν πρᾶξιν· ἐμβάλλω τοὺς δαίμονας τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους μοι λεγεῶνας δυτικὸν γάρ εἰμι τοῖς τόποις ὄνομα δὲ πᾶσι δαίμοσι τοῖς ὑπ' ἐμέ ὀν λεγεῶνες καὶ ἐπηρώτησα αὐτόν… Ἐὰν εἴτω σοι τὸ ὄνομα οὐκ ἐμαυτὸν δεσμεύω μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ὑπ' ἐμὲ λεγεῶνα τῶν δαιμόνων… [καταργοῦμεθα] ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ μετὰ πολλὰ παθεῖν ὑπομείναντος ὑπο τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Ἐμμανουήλ ὃς καὶ ϛῦν ἐδέϛμευσεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐλεύσεται κατὰ τοῦ ὕδατος κρημνῷ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς." (11.3-6)

The influence of the synoptic Gerasene pericope hardly requires explanation. It is also apparent, albeit amidst motifs more familiar with the afflicted boy pericope, in the case of a sexually aggressive giant's spirit, which tells Solomon,

> My home is in inaccessible places. My activity is this: I seat myself near dead men in the tombs and at midnight I assume the form of the dead; if I seize anyone, I immediately kill him with the sword. If I should not be able to kill him, I cause him to be possessed by a demon and to gnaw his own flesh to pieces and the saliva of his jowls to flow down… He who is about to return (as) Saviour thwarts me. If his mark is written on the forehead, it thwarts me, and because I am afraid of it, I quickly turn and flee from him. This is the sign of the cross.
>
> Ἡ κατοικία μου ἐν τόποις ἀβάτοις· ἡ ἐργασία μου αὕτη· παρακαθέζομαι τοῖς τεθϛεόσιν τοῖς τεθνεόσι καὶ εἰ λήψομαί τινα εὐθέως ἀναιρῶ αὐτὸν τῷ ξίφει. εἰ δὲ μὴ δυνηθῶ ἀναιπεῖν ποιῶ αὐτὸν δαιμονίζεσθαι καὶ τὰϛ σάρκας αὐτοῦ κατατπώγειν καὶ σιάλους ἐκ τῶν γενείων αὐτοῦ καταππεῖν… Ἐμὲ καταργεῖ ὁ μέλλων κατελθεῖν σωτὴρ οὗ τὸ στοιχεῖον ἐν τῷ μετώπῳ εἴ τις γράψει καταρϛεῖ με καὶ ἐπιτιμηθεὶς ἀποστρέψω ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ταχέως· τοῦτο δὲ σημεῖον σταυρός. (17.2-5)

Synoptic influence is similarly obvious in the case of the Head of the Dragons, who Solomon compels to admit

> I strike men in the body and I make (them) fall down, foam and grind their teeth. But there is a way in which I am thwarted, by [a place] marked "Place of the Skull," for there a messenger of the great counsellor foresaw me to suffer, and he will dwell plainly on the cross.
>
> τύπτω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κατὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ποιῶ καταπίπτειν καὶ ἀφρίζειν καὶ τρίζειν τοὺς ὀδόντας· ἔχω δὲ τρόπον ἐν ᾧ καταργοῦμαι ὑπὸ τοῦ σημειομένου τόπου ἐγκεφάλου ἐκεῖ γὰρ προώρισεν ἄγγελος τῆς μεγάλης βουλῆς με παθεῖν καὶ νῦν φανερῶς ἐπί ξύλου οἰκήσει.

Where Mark's demons have preternatural knowledge of Jesus' nature, the *Testament of Solomon* imputes to its demons a prophetic familiarity with the gospel of Mark.

For all these allusions, however, *T.Sol*'s demons are more different from than similar to Mark's. Most of the demons Solomon interrogates are visible, to the point that he describes their appearances. Many of them appear to be corporeal as well. Several demons speak of multiple forms that they can adopt, and some specifically refer to their own embodiments. Others are described as engaging in actions that are necessarily physical and corporeal. The first demon he meets, Ornias, is a thieving, thumb-sucking vampire who "took half the wages and provision of the master workman's little boy. Also, each day he was sucking the right-hand thumb, so the little boy, who was much loved by me, grew thinner" (ἐλάμβανε τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ μισθοῦ και πρωτομαίστορος παιδαρίου ὄντος καὶ τὰ ἥμισυ σιτία. καὶ ἐθήλαζε τὸν ἀντίχειρον τῆς δεξιᾶς αὐτοῦ χειρὸς ἐφ ἑκάστην ἡμεράν. καὶ ἐλεπτύνετο τὸ παιδίον ὅπερ ἦν ἀγαπωμενον ὑπ' ἐμοῦ σφόδρα, 1.2). Such physicality seems almost an amplification of beliefs and traditions about quasi-corporeal demons, beliefs such as those reflected in the story of the disguised demon in *Life of Apollonios* 3.10 and in the rapist demon in *Acts of Thomas* 5.42-50.[58]

In the case of the workman's son, the demonic attacks do not appear to have any effect on the boy's mind or persona. On the contrary, he is able to remember the attacks and describe them to Solomon (1.4). Despite the text's dependence on Markan material, few of the demons seem to cause soul loss or personality displacement of the kind seen in

[58] See following discussion for further details.

Mark. Most of the other demons cause other forms of harm entirely, forms of harm as diverse as the murder of particular victims,[59] sexual assault and deviance,[60] idolatry or heresy and wrong-headedness,[61] wickedness general and specific[62], violence and strife,[63] illness and injury,[64] and various misfortunes[65]. Only a few demons' actions seem to be in the same vein as, for example, Legion's, and the congruence in these cases is more possible than definite. Apart from those of Leoline, Dragons' Head, and the lecherous giant's spirit, the similar effects do not seem to be more than slightly congruent. Onoskelis tells Solomon that she sometimes "pervert[s] people from their true nature" (ποτὲ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως σκολιάζω αὐτούς; 4.5), but there is no indication as to what this entails.[66]

The basic possession phenomena, however, appear to be similar between the texts in these cases. There is also, however, at least one *δαιμώνιον* in *V. Ap.* that shares corporeality with its cousins in *T. Sol.* rather than incorporeality with those in Mark:

> In Ephesus, however, the plague had arrived and nothing proved effective against it… There it seemed that an old man was begging, craftily blinking his eyes. He carried a bag and a lump of bread in it, and had ragged clothing and a grizzled face… Some of [the Ephesians] had begun to lob stones at him [at Apollonius' urging] when, after seeming to blink, he suddenly glared and showed his eyes full of fire. The Ephesians realized it was a demon and stoned it so thoroughly as to raise a pile of stones on it. After a while Apollonius told them to remove the stones and to see what animal they had killed. When the supposed target of their stones was uncovered, he had

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[59] Ornias, Onoskelis, Asmodeus, Murder, Scepter, Obyzouth, Kunopegos, and the lecherous giant (2.1, 4.5, 5.8, 9.2, 10.2, 13.3-4, 16.1-3, and 17.2 respectively).
[60] Ornias, Asmodeus, Beelzeboul, possibly The Worst, and the Winged Dragon, (2.3, 5.7, 6.4, 8.11, 14.3-4 respectively).
[61] Onoskelis, Beelzeboul, Deception, Error, Scepter, Enepsigos, and Abezethibous (4.7, 6.4, 8.5, 8.9, 10.2, 15.4-5, and 25.3 respectively).
[62] Asmodeus and Power (5.7 and 8.10 respectively).
[63] Beelzeboul, Lix Tetrax, Strife, Fate, and Distress (6.4, 7.5, 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8 respectively).
[64] Lix Tetrax, Murder, the Lion-Shaped Demon, Head of Dragons, Obyzouth, Kunopegos, and most of the thirty-six heavenly bodies (7.5, 9.5-7, 11.2, 12.2, 13.4, 16.4, and 18 respectively).
[65] Lix Tetrax, Kunopegos, and Ephippas (7.5, 16.2, and 22.2 respectively).
[66] The implications cannot be sexual in nature; *T. Sol.*, as discussed subsequently, is overt and specific in discussing sexual deviations attributed to demons (see also the preceding note).

> vanished, and instead there was appeared a large dog, like some Molossian hound in shape but the size of the largest lion, crushed by the stones and spewing foam as maniacs do. (tr. Jones)[67]
>
> ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ νόσος τοῖς Ἐφεσίοις ἐςέπεσε καὶ οὐδὲν ἦν πρὸς αὐτὴν αὐταρκες... πτωχεύειν δέ τις ἐνταῦθα ἐδόκει γέρων ἐπιμύων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τέχνῃ καὶ πήραν ἔφερε καὶ ἄρτου ἐν αὐτῇ τρύφοσ ῥάκεσί τε ἠμφίεστο καὶ αὐχμηρῶς εἶχε τοῦ προωσπου... ὡς δὲ κποβολισμῷ τινες ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἐχρήσαντο καὶ καταμύειν δοκῶν ἀνέβλεψεν ἀθρόον πυρός τε μεστοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔδειξε ξυνῆκαν οἱ Ἐφέσιοι τοῦ δαίμονος καὶ κατελίθωσαν οὕτως αὐτόν ὡς κολωνὸν λίθων περὶ αὐτόν χώσασθαι. Διαλιτῶν δὲ ὀλίγον ἐκέλευσεν ἀφελεῖν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὁ ἀπεκτόνασι βνῶναι. γυμνωθέντος οὖν τοῦ βεβλῆσθαι δοκοῦντος ὁ μὲν ἠφάνιστο κύων δὲ το μὲν εἶδος ὅμοιος τῳ ἐκ Μολοττῶν μέγεθος δὲ κατὰ τὸν μέγιστον λέοντα ξυντετριμμένος ὠφθη ὑτὸ τῶν λίθων καὶ παρατωύων ἀφρόν ὥστερ οἱ λυττῶντες. (4.10.1-3)

This *δαιμώνον* would seem to have more in common with its plague-causing, embodied, and often shape-shifting cousins in *T. Sol.* than with its soul-displacing, incorporeal counterparts in Mark. *V. Ap.* is probably approximately contemporary with or slightly earlier than *T. Sol.* in its final redaction; *T. Sol.* certainly displays no evidence of being deliberately or directly in conversation with the material of *V. Ap.*, or dependent on it. It would seem, then, that not all of Mark's ideas about demons were equally influential on later texts and traditions, or perhaps more accurately that they were not exclusively or comprehensively influential.

Consultation of the *Acts of Thomas* would seem to support such a perspective. Many so-called "Gnostic" and "Manichaean" ideas are important elements in the *A. Th.* that give no evidence of being under consideration in Mark. The generic elements of Hellenistic romance define the narrative structure and to a significant extent the content of *A. Th.* in ways and to degrees of which Mark scarcely seems aware. For all this, however, *A. Th.*, composed in Syria in the late second or early third century, is in conversation with synoptic

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[67] Christopher Jones' edition of the text and translation (2005).

gospels.[68] In the *Acts*, Thomas, an itinerant teacher and thaumaturge like his twin Jesus, encounters one demon-victimized suppliant whose case bears little resemblance to any in the synoptic materials. The afflicted woman tells him

> It happened one day, as I was coming out of the bath, a man met me, who seemed troubled in his aspect, and his voice and speech were very weak. And he said to me, "I and you shall be in one love, and you have intercourse with me as a man and a woman have intercourse." I said to him, "I did not yield myself to my betrothed, because I cannot bear a man, and you, who wish to have adulterous intercourse with me, how can I give myself to you?" And I said to the maiden who was with me, "See the impudence of this young man, who goes so far as to talk licentiously to me." And she said to me, "I saw an old man who was talking to you. And when I had gone home and dined, my heart made me afraid of him, because he appeared to me in two forms, and I went to sleep thinking of him. And he came in the night and had filthy intercourse with me, and by day too I saw him and fled from him, but by night he used to come in a terrible form and torture me. And behold, up to the present, as you see me, behold, for five years he has not left me alone. (5.43; ad. fr. Klijn 113-114)

The woman, like most of the victims in *T. Sol.*, retains complete control of her persona and her memory. This is a demon victimizing, but its or his aim is to use her body in and of itself, rather than to hijack it as a vehicle his/its own mind and persona. Her persona remains in place. The demon's spirit seems to be secure in its own demonic body, which is fluid enough to appear and dis- or re-appear, or to dematerialize and rematerialize, without apparent difficulty. Like a human being, the demon is visible during the day, at least some of the time, but not when it is dark. It is sufficiently corporeal to have intercourse with the woman, who presumably has not been eager to help it in this matter, but not so embodied as to beget children on her, a capability that many fallen angels and in *T. Sol.* even some rank-and-file demons exhibit. The evidence of this narrative, in light of many others, suggests that the synoptic depiction of exclusively invisible, incorporeal, and almost uniformly soul-displacing demons is unique. Such demons do appear in other texts, but not

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[68] See Klijn 6-8 and *passim*.

with the near-exclusivity that characterizes them in Mark and its most immediately dependent writings, Matthew and Luke.

Given the repeated specification of demonic motives in other texts, Mark's lack of them appears to be idiosyncratic. As will become clear, the author may have assumed either that his audience would have enough of an existing idea of their aims that he did not need to detail them, or that they were impenetrable, irrelevant, or both. Given Mark's lack of aetiologies in general, these factors seem very likely to account for at least part of the situation. It would nonetheless be unwise not to consider that such reasons may not be the only ones for Mark's not stating or proposing demons' motives. Demon-related texts outside the synoptic materials frequently ascribe erotic motivations to demons, both those that persecute their victims externally and those that possess them from within. Indeed, it would be more efficient to list the non-canonical demon-related texts that do not ascribe erotic motivation than those that do ascribe it. The rapist demon in *A. Th.* exemplifies this quite obviously: it desires the beautiful Christian virgin, a trope in early Christian literature, and it is determined to share her body, albeit not quite in the same way that Legion shares the Gerasene demoniac's.

The demons in *T. Sol.* and *V. Ap.*, among other texts, seem to occupy a sort of middle position between the synoptic materials and *A. Th.* in this respect. Asmodeus, identified in other traditions as the consort of the infant-strangling Lilith, confesses to Solomon "I am always hatching plots against newlyweds; I mar the beauty of virgins and cause their hearts to grow cold" (νεονύμφων ἐπίβουλός εἰμι· παρθένων

κάλλος ἀφανίχω καὶ καρδίας αλλοιῶ, 5.7). That is, his interest is in frustrating the success of procreative activities at an earlier stage than other demons, such as Murder (9.6) and Obyzouth (13.3-4). The Winged Dragon has a more direct approach to inducing sexual abnormalities:

> I do not copulate with many women, but only a few who have beautiful bodies…I rendezvous with them in the form of a winged spirit, copulating through their buttocks. One woman I attacked is bearing (a child) and that which is born from her becomes Eros/desire. Because it could not be tolerated by men, that woman perished. This is my activity.
>
> οὐ συγγινόμενος πολλαῖς βυναιξίν. ὀλίγαις δὲ καὶ εὐμόρφοις αἵτινες τοῦ ξύλου τούτου τοῦ ἄστρου ὄνομα κατέχουσι. Καὶ ἀπέρχομαι πρὸς αὐτὰς ὡσεὶ τνεῦμα πτεροειδὲς συγγιϛόμενον διὰ γλουτῶν καὶ ἡ μὲν βαστάζει ᾗ ἐφώρμησα καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἔρως γίνεται· ὑπ ἀνδρῶν δὲ μὴ δυνηθὲν βασταχθῆναι ἐψόφησεν ἄρα και ἡ γυνὴ ἐκείνη. αὐτη μου ἡ πρᾶξισ ἐστιν. (14.4-5)

Ornias, the first demon, tells Solomon that he has three forms, in one of which "a man who craves the bodies of *young girls and/or effeminate boys*[69] and when I touch them, they suffer great pain" (ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἔχων ἐτιθυμίαν εἴδους παιδίων θηλυκῶν ἀνήβων καὶ ἁπτομένου μου ἀλγῶσι πάνυ, 2.3). The authors or redactors of *T. Sol.* are familiar with Mark's presentation of demons, but their own characterization independently externalizes, sexualizes, and in many cases embodies them.

Demons' lack of physicality, where this is a feature, does not necessarily preclude sexual connotations for possession in ancient literature. In *V. Ap.*, only the plague-bearing dog demon seems to be corporeal, and only his activities lack overt sexual components.

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[69] Duling gives "effeminate boys" in the text but supplies "young girls" as an alterative reading for *παιδίων θηλυκῶν*. Given the ambiguity of the grammatical gender, the range of Ornias' and other demons' proclivities in *T. Sol.*, and the diversity of ancient beliefs and values about appropriate and inappropriate sexual conduct for various permutations of age, gender, power, and social groups, it seems unwise to commit to either reading over the other, or to insist that the text could not mean both. Indeed, if this were the case, the demon could have desired a singular rather than plural objects (e.g., "who sometimes craves the body of a young girl and/or effeminate boy").

The demon possessing the youth causes him to behave so as to acquire "such a reputation for shamelessness that he had once been the subject of bawdy songs" (4.20.1). That is, the demon has been using the youth's body to enjoy sensual pleasures, including sexual pleasures, that are necessarily embodied. The first victim's mother

> said, "This boy of mine is rather handsome to behold, and the demon desires him... [The demon] said he was the ghost of a man who formerly died in war, and died still passionate for his wife; but the woman broke their marriage bond three days after his death by marrying another man, and from that time, he said, he had loathed the love of women and had transferred his affection to the boy.
>
> τοῦ παιδὸς τούτου" ἔφη "τὴν ὄφιν εὐπρεπεστέρου ὄντος ὁ δαίμων ἐρᾷ... δῆτα ἔλεγεν εἶναι μὲν εἴδωλον ἀνδρός ὅς πολέμῳ ποτὲ ἀπέθανεν ἀποθανεῖν δὲ ἐρῶν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γυναικός ἐπεὶ δε ἡ γυνὴ περὶ τὴν εὐνὴν ὕβρισε τριταίο κειμένου γαμηθεῖσα ἑτέρῳ μισῆσαι μὲν ἐκ τούτου τὸ γυναικῶν ἐρᾶν μεταρρυῆναι δὲ ἐς τὸν παῖδα τοῦτον. (3.38.2)

It would appear that while the youth's demon experiences semi-vicarious sexual gratification through the behaviour that it induces, the boy's demon receives some form of it from the possession itself. His sharing of the victim's body is an incorporeal, or perhaps semi-corporeal, substitute for sharing his once-beloved wife's body and affections.[70] *V. Ap.* represents one of many permutations of the apparently widespread idea that sexual perversion tends to underlie demonic possession and activity in many cases.

The absence of such themes from Mark is conspicuous in light of their prevalence elsewhere. It seems unlikely that the author was unfamiliar with the concept, but it is possible that he did not subscribe to it. It is also possible that he assumed this motif to be too well-known to require any particular mention, and perhaps too unseemly to mention

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[70] This aspect is problematic in terms of the demon's motivations, since his wife's love for him was not what he had hoped, and the boy's own consciousness has been removed from the situation, leaving him unable to love (or perhaps more likely fear or detest) the demon in return.

unnecessarily. There may be hints of it in the Gerasene demoniac pericope; in Greek and Latin alike, as Derrett notes, "'Entry into' can obviously include '[sexual] commerce with.' Roman and Greek schoolboys knew that 'pig' means the *pudendum muliebre*."[71] Few subsequent studies have considered this interpretation, but the possibility may be worth considering, at least with due caution, considering Mark's reticence toward material with sexual connotations. Jesus heals, for example, "a woman who was in a flowing of blood for twelve years" (γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη, 5.25), which is a rather discrete way of describing her condition; as Marcus notes, "if it had been, say, 'a little bleeding at the nose' [and not vaginal], Mark would not have been so shy about specifying the location."[72] Mark also has a crowd referring to Jesus as "the son of Mary" (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας, 6.3) without mentioning his father's name. This is a shameful way of identification, not only insulting to Mary but also implying Jesus' illegitimacy and questionable paternity: children were identified by their fathers' names and/or professions unless their mothers had married down in social status.[73] It is difficult to imagine that Mark's use of such shocking phrasing is not deliberate, especially given that pains that Matthew and Luke take to address the issue and the independent traditions on which they draw to do so (Mt 1.18-25; Lk 1.26-56). The author finds no way to avoid recounting this shameful incident, but declines to explain or

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[71] Derrett ("Spirit-Possession") 290. Drawing on a number of anthropological studies, he continues, "Possessed persons can utter obscenities with impunity. Possession has strong sexual potential, and can be experienced as orgasm... As for the obscenity [in the Gerasene demoniac periscope], that is no problem. Jews accused gentiles of bestiality with animals [sic], and the Talmud discusses he hiring of animals for bestiality" (290; internal citations omitted). It might be wise to take issue with some of his generalizations, as well as with using the Talmud to interpret first-century Jewish literature, particularly literature that it not "proto-rabbinic." Aus (98-99) disagrees with this interpretation.

[72] 357.

[73] For further discussion of these issues, see Corley 202-204, 203n.61, as well as Dewey 482.

address it as he does others such as the Beelzebul pericope and the crucifixion.[74] Given this, Mark's non-mention and non-implication of any sexual connotations to demon possession may reflect nothing beyond an idiosyncratic conception of them, or a perceived lack of need to mention them due to familiarity or triviality. It may equally reflect an aspect of great importance to his demonology that the author does not wish to mention, just as Jesus' identity as son of God and son of Mary. As Countryman notes, Mark is disinterested in physical impurity in general and perhaps in sexual impurity in particular.[75] It is possible only to say, and it may be necessary to say, that sexual abuse may be a crucial part of demonic motivation, identity, and possession in Mark, and that equally it may be absent or irrelevant. Mark's audience seems more than likely to have been acquainted with such themes, and their presence or absence in Mark is necessarily of importance in understanding Mark's demonology. The lack of evidence as to whether it is the presence or absence of sexual connotations frustrates any attempt to make more definitive conclusions. The same is true of the implications possession in Mark as well as the symptoms of it. It seems worth considering that Mark equates sexual impurity with the demonic powers from which Jesus is liberating the world.

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[74] There is no direct discussion of Jesus' paternity; Jesus unambiguously addresses God as *his* father only three times (8.38, 13.32, and 14.36) and as everyone's father once or twice (11.25 and possibly 11.26), and God only directly identifies Jesus as his son once (1.11). It is noteworthy for all this reticence about Jesus' paternity, everyone from the narrator to the demons knows that a υἱός τῆς Μαρίας, one whose identification sounds like that of a child of disgrace, is also ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, the son of God.[74] Matthew and Luke provide information as to how this is possible; taken together, they provide evidence for at least two traditions of explanation. Mark, however, does not explain to its readers why or how someone called a "son of Mary" at a gathering is also "the son of God," worthy of their devotion. This is much less surprising than a crucified messiah, but Mark's apparent reluctance even to treat this issue, unlike his treatment of the contradiction of a crucified messiah, merits some consideration here.

[75] William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex* (1985), 83-87.

III. The Mind and the Soul

Having examined the immediate textual representation of possession in Mark, it is necessary to examine the ways in which it has been interpreted, especially within the context of recent biblical scholarship. As noted in the introduction, most ancient interpreters accepted the literal meaning of possession and exorcism accounts *prima facie* but were more interested in allegorical interpretations. In more recent centuries, scepticism about the possibility and the place of possession has become the more common response. It has been almost automatic, in some hermeneutical traditions, to equate ancient possession with modern mental illness. Such equation is misleading, but Mark, it will become clear, does imply a limited area of contact between "madness" and possession as the gospel's author sees them. Despite this, the spirit seems to be a more important issue than the brain in ancient possession beliefs.

Modern scepticism toward exorcism began with the Reformation. Europe's Protestants tended to dismiss the historical rationale for baptismal exorcisms, but their consequent beliefs and practices differed, at east initially. Following the reasoning in Luther's 1526 *Taufbüchlein*, Nischan notes, "most Lutherans favoured exorcism [but] refused to see it as more than an adiaphoron – that is, a ceremony which could be readily omitted because it did not belong to the essence of the sacrament... More resolute was the attitude of Bucer, Zwingli, Calvin, and their followers, who uniformly condemned exorcism as a 'papal relic' that had to be eliminated."[76] The exorcistic formula disappeared from Lutheran

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[76] "The Exorcism Controversy and Baptism in the Late Reformation" (1987), 33.

baptismal formulae in the seventeenth century. The debate over whether exorcism should be a part of baptism concerned different issues from the later debate over whether possession in fact could exist, but it established a precedent for institutionalized scepticism about possession and exorcism.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw rationalist and anti-rationalist theologians alike reject the miracles of exorcism as such.[77] Their rejections took a variety of forms in different relationships to questions of biblical miracles in general. It might be possible to describe a schema of interpretations of possession that developed in this period and have reverberated through subsequent exegeses. The first item would explanations of miracles, including or especially exorcism, as inventions or mistakes of the New Testament authors. The second involves explanations of miracles as misinterpretations of natural phenomena and exorcism as the cure of mental or neurological illness. There also exists a third category of interpretation that accepts the literal value of some or most biblical miracle accounts but adopts the psychiatric view of possession and exorcism, as well as a fourth that entertains the possibility of and sometimes accepts the interpretation of demons and exorcisms as real events in their own right. Each category claimed the support of influential

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[77] A. Schweitzer's *Quest for the Historical Jesus* (1911) provides a useful context for understanding the development of the concerns of modern NT scholarship. Van der Loos' *The Miracles of Jesus* (1965) provides a detailed and specific scheme of opinions on the issue of miracles and exorcisms (203-211). Kümmel's *The New Testament* (tr. 1970) examines the issues that have proven most vexing to modern NT scholars. The first and second volumes of Baird's *History of New Testament Research* (1992) detail the development of several schools of thought in regards to miracles and other issues. Ford and Higton's *Jesus* (2002) provides a somewhat more detailed but less expansive and specific exploration of the subject. Kealy provides a chronology of interpretation specific to Mark, while Meier discusses the problem of miracles in particular (511-521).

New Testament interpreters: the first Woolston,[78] Thiry,[79] Eichhorn,[80] Strauss,[81] Renan,[82] Bousset,[83] and Bultmann;[84] the second Hess,[85] Herder,[86] Paulus,[87] Bauer,[88] and Bruce;[89] the third Lardner,[90] Wesley,[91] Semler,[92] Neander,[93] and Ewald;[94] and the fourth Calmet,[95] Bengal,[96]

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[78] Thomas Woolston (1699-1731), a deist Anglican pastor, praised the church fathers' anagogical interpretations of miracles and advocated the re-adoption of this paradigm. He suggested that "if any *Exorcist* in this our Age and Nation, had pretended to expel the Devil out of one possess'd, and permitted him to enter into a Flock of Sheep, the People would have said that he had bewitch'd both; and our Laws and Judges too of the last Age, would have made him to swing for it" (*A Discourse on the Miracles of Our Saviour* [1728] 1.34-35).

[79] Paul-Henri Thiry (1723-1789), a naturalist and materialist who quoted extensively from the anonymous *Critical History of Jesus Son of Mary*, attributed at its publication to "Salvador, a Jew." Thiry's willingness to rely on such a document raises questions on a number of levels. See Ford and Higton 313-314.

[80] Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827). See Kümmel 101-103.Eichhorn's primary interests were philological, but he engaged in exegetical work as well.

[81] David Strauss (1808-1874). See Schweitzer 82-83; Sabourin 129-131; Kissinger 23; Dawes 92-106; Zachman 12-13.

[82] Ernest Renan (1823-1892), a sometime-Catholic popular writer. See Sabourin 119-120; Kissinger 26; Baird 1.379-381.

[83] Wilhem Bousset (1865-1920), associated with the history of religions school; Kümmel 259-262; Neyrey 127-129.

[84] Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976); Sabourin 131-136; Dawes 267-273; Zachman 13-14.

[85] Johann Jakob Hess (1741-1828), one of the early advocates of historical Jesus research. See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1911), 29-30.

[86] Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), a somewhat unorthodox historical critic (see Schweitzer 34-39; Baird 1.177-180).

[87] Heinrich E.G. Paulus (1761-1851), who gained notoriety for the extent of his rationalizations. See Sabourin 129-131; Baird 1.177-180.

[88] Georg Lorenz Bauer (1955-1806), a forerunner to the demythologizers. See Kümmel 104-105.

[89] See Alexander Balmain Bruce (1831-1899), *The Miraculous Elements in the Gospels* 172-192. Bruce was ordained in the Free Church of Scotland.

[90] See subsequent note.

[91] John Wesley (1703-1791), a pietist and a Methodist founder. See Baird 1.86-87; cf. Schweitzer 49-57. For further discussion of pietism and rationalism, see George Becker's "Pietism's Confrontation with Enlightenment Rationalism: An Examination of the Relation between Ascetic Protestantism and Science," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30.2 (Jun. 1991), 139-158.

[92] Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791), who, like Neander and Ewald, sought a "middle ground" between rationalism and skepticism. See Baird 1.123-124.

[93] Johann August Wilhelm Neader (1789-1850); Baird 1.237-240.

[94] Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), an orientalist, philologist, and opponent of the Tübingen school. See Schweitzer 246; Baird 1.290-291.

[95] August Calmet (1672-1757), a Benedictine monk. See William Baird's *History of New Testament Research* 1.157-160.

[96] Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), a Lutheran pietiest; Baird 1.69-80.

Trench,[97] and Taylor.[98] All of these schools of thought still have their influence, as is well known to instructors of New Testament courses.

The most prominent post-Enlightenment Western interpretation of biblical possession and exorcism has been that ancient demoniacs were in fact suffering from mental illnesses that were erroneously attributed to diabolical agents. There is usually little distinction here between the historical Jesus and Jesus as Mark depicts him. In this view, Jesus' historical exorcisms, if he performed them, were either miraculous cures of conditions such as schizophrenia, or else had a sort of charismatic placebo effect. Nathaniel Lardner, a Presbyterian pastor who was among the first to develop this hypothesis, suggested that

> the afflictions which they laboured under who are spoken of as having evil spirits, were mere bodily diseases and indispositions: though it was then the prevailing opinion, that they were under the power and influence of some evil spirits. And those persons themselves, and their friends, attributing their distempers to Satan, and dæmons under him, our Saviour sometimes adapts his expressions to that opinion, without countenancing or approving it.[99]

This view has appeared as an assumption in much of New Testament criticism to the present day. Subsequent interpreters have modified and expanded upon Lardner's work in various ways, but most have taken it as foundational.[100] The interpretation of ancient possession as mislabelled mental illness thus became predominant more than a century before the emergence of the discipline of psychiatry. Lardner's influence has been such that

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[97] Richard Chenevix Trench (1809-1886), a philologist and a minister in the Church of Ireland. See his *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord* 161-181.

[98] William MacKergo Taylor (1829-1895), a Presbyterian and Congregationalist minister in Scotland and New York respectively, and author of a number of books both scholarly and popular. See the relevant discussions in *The Miracles of Our Saviour Expounded and Illustrated* (1890).

[99] "Of the Dæmoniacs mentioned in the New Testament" (1758), 4.489.

[100] No study of Mark is perfect, and therefore consideration of any of them involves careful consideration of perspectives and assumptions represented, rather than uniform and complete acceptance of all of them or of every conclusion.

Mann's translation of the story of the Syrophoenician woman has "a woman whose daughter had a disorder of the mind" begging Jesus "to drive the disorder out of her daughter's mind."[101] The option of dismissing exorcism narratives as mistakes became rare after the eighteenth century, but explaining them as psychiatric cures continued through most of the twentieth.

It is possible, even likely, that some people believed to be "possessed" were suffering from the same neurological, biochemical, and environmental-psychological conditions that today are understood as mental illness. There can be no certainty about this matter, given both the lack of information and the existence of ancient categories of mental illness. The text of Mark itself documents both a distinction and a degree of commonality between the categories of mental illness and possession. In the pericope of the Beelzebul controversy,[102] Jesus faces two hostile groups responding to reports about his unusual behaviour. His relatives try to seize him "for they said, 'He went mad'" (ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη" (3.21), while the Pharisees allege that "he has Beelzeboul"[103] (Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔκει, 3.22). There is no indication as to whether Jesus' relatives are acting on the same information as the Pharisees or on different information. Matthew and Luke omit the relatives from the pericope,[104] suggesting originally independent traditions. The combination of them in Mark contributes to the impression that both the people around Jesus and the

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[101] C.S. Mann, *Anchor Bible: Mark* (1964). Mk 7.25-26.
[102] For general discussion, see Sadler 54-61; Branscomb 67-75; Hunter 49-52; Taylor 233-245; Cranfield 133-144; E. Schweizer 82-88; Tolbert 142-148; Camery-Hoggatt 123-129; Marcus (1999) 269-286; Edwards 117-16; Witherington 153-160.
[103] Or, less likely, "Beelzeboul has him."
[104] Mt 12.22-37; Lk 11.14-26.

author of Mark had a concept of mental illness unrelated to demons. The *Life of Apollonios of Tyana*, composed 150 years later in different socio-cultural circumstances, reflects a similar idea:

> ...there happened to be present at the talk a foppish youth with such a reputation for shamelessness that he had once been the subject of bawdy songs... The youth greeted [Apollonius' religious] remark with a loud, licentious laugh, at which Apollonius looked up at him and said, "It is not you who commits this outrage, but the demon who controls you without your knowledge."
>
> In fact without knowing it the youth was possessed by a demon. He laughed at things that nobody else did and went over to weeping without any reason, and he talked and sang to himself. Most people thought that the exuberance of youth produced these effects, but he was being prompted by the demon...
>
> ...παρέτυχε μὲν τῷ λόγῳ μειρράκιον τῶν ἁβρῶν οὕτως ἀσελγὲς νομιζόμενον ὡς γενέσθαι ποτὲ καὶ ἁμαξῶν ᾆσμα... τὸ μειράκιον κατεσκέδασε τοῦ λόγου πλατύν τε καὶ ἀσελγῆ γέλωτα· ὁ δὲ ἀναβλέψας ἐς αὐτὸ "οὐ σὺ" ἔφη "ταῦτα ὑβρίζεις ἀλλ' ὁ δαίμων ὃς ἐλαύνει σε οὐκ εἰδότα.
> Ἐλελήθει δὲ ἄρα δαιμονῶν τὸ μειράκιον· ἐγέλα τε βάρ ἐθ' οἷς οὐδεὶς ἕτερος καὶ μετέβαλλεν ἐς τό κλάειν αἰτίαν οὐκ ἔχον διελέγετό τε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ ᾖδε. καὶ οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ τὴν ϛεότηατ σκιρτῶσαν ᾠοντο ἐκφέρειν αὐτὸ ἐς ταῦτα ὁ δ' ὑπεκρίϛετο ἄρατ ῷ δαίμονι... (4.20.1-2)

Philostratos may or may not be not be writing from a position of specific familiarity with Mk 3, but he seems to have expected his audience to have understood that possession could be confused with other problems in diagnosing the same phenomenon, while also understanding that the diagnoses were essentially different and in some cases mutually exclusive. That he and Mark's author apparently expected the same knowledge of their respective audiences, who were separated by chronology, geography, cultural background, formal education, social status, and economic and political position, suggests that the idea of apparent similarities and fundamental differences between explanations of unusual behaviour was established and pervasive.

This state of problematized but consistent differentiation is not surprising in either ancient or comparative context. As Lewis notes in his global study of modern possession cults, such distinctions are a cross-cultural feature of possession beliefs:

> ... where spirit possession is a regular explanation of disease, the fact that certain forms of insanity and epilepsy *may* also be regarded as manifestations of possession does not necessarily mean that the people concerned are unable to differentiate between them and other forms of possession. The range of conditions which are interpreted in terms of possession is usually, as we have seen, a very wide one; and within this insanity (or epilepsy) is usually clearly distinguished from other possession states.[105]

Indeed, a broader examination of ancient evidence reveals that "in spite of [modern] assertions to the contrary... the ancient word perceived and expressed the difference between demonical possession, insanity, and other diseases."[106] The concepts of mental illness, possession, and other explanations for unusual behaviour could overlap at times but also remained separate, at least in some cases. If either the author of Mark or his sources had understood the demoniacs as mentally ill, a category with which they were acquainted, presumably they would have described them as such. That the text does not reflect any such identification is theologically significant and unwise to ignore. It is necessary to disagree with Hooker's assessment that "this poor man [the Gerasene demoniac] believed himself to be possessed, not by one unclean spirit, nor even by seven, but by a whole legion of them."[107] Mark gives no indication of what the man believes, or whether he even believes

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[105] I.M. Lewis (*Ecstatic Religion*, 1971) 183-184.

[106] Sabourin 165. See alwso Hendricksen (*New Testament Commentary*, 1975) 64. Matthew terms the boy σεληνιάζεται (17.15), literally "moonstruck" but widely acknowledged synonymous with several other words for the discrete condition of epilepsy (see Nolland [*The Gospel of Matthew*, 2005] 710-711). For more on Greek ideas about epilepsy, see Dodds (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951) 65-66, 83n.10-11, 84n.20. It would appear that what is today identified as "epilepsy" was recognized similarly in the ancient Greco-Roman world. There was no consensus as to its aetiology, whether natural or supernatural, but it was an acknowledged category. For present purposes, it must suffice to note that it is not a category that Mark considers relevant.

[107] Hooker (*The Message of Mark*, 1983) 38.

anything at all. The text only says that the spokesdemon, a real demon within the narrative, states that they "are many," and then confirms this assertion with the account of the destruction of the pigs. Indeed, as Berger notes, "In contrast to modern assumptions about demonic possession, nowhere does the New Testament speak of the delusions of the possessed, or even of their anxieties. On the contrary, the demons are regarded as fundamentally reasonable and generally sane. Jesus can speak with them in a fully rational manner. In their encounters with Jesus, the demons may have become mute, but they are never confused."[108] Whatever may be afflicting Mark's demoniacs, it is not, in the author's understanding, "madness" *per se*, although it may appear very similar in some respects.

The equation of ancient possession with modern mental illness, despite its popularity in interpretation, is problematic on clinical as well as textual grounds. The information that an unknown deceased person was believed to have been "possessed by a demon" would be insufficient grounds for a mental health professional even to hazard a guess as to whether mental illness existed, let alone to infer the details of its course and aetiology. The equation of possession and mental illness thus appropriates the findings of the mental health professions without considering their context or basis. Specific criteria and symptom profiles are necessary to diagnose mental illness. Starobinski suggests that

> what we designated a moment ago as the natural given (schizophrenia, epilepsy, athétose) has nothing of the fundamentally natural [i.e., these terms only describe the natural]. Perhaps, rather than using terms borrowed from the discourse of present-day medicine, we should have remained solely in the 'phenomenology' of the acts mentioned by the evangelist: solitude, wandering, crying out, violence, self-inflicted wounds.[109]

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[108] Berger 51.
[109] Starobinski and Via, ("The Struggle with Legion," 1973) 354.

Mark describes these actions, but it provides no interpretation of them other than demon possession. The mere fact that afflicted people do these things, with no further data concerning the course or pattern of the affliction, precludes any sort of valid diagnosis. It might not require any psychiatric training to recognize that someone with no environmental or organic risk factors who had consistently experienced delusions or hallucinations outside a culturally approved context is probably schizophrenic, but Mark provides no information of this kind.

Furthermore, superhuman strength and knowledge, as are evinced in the cases of the Capernaum and Gerasene demoniacs, or rather their demons, are symptomatic of mental illness only in Gothic and Romantic and subsequent literatures, not in observed fact, and certainly not in modern psychiatric definitions. Even the most violent patients do not share with the Gerasene demoniac an ability to shatter forged metal with their bare hands, a fact that would have been far more obvious to an author writing before there existed anything analogous to a psychiatric hospital. Mark depicts the Gerasene demoniac as engaging in impossible, not disordered, acts. His audience would likely have understood this better than a modern one unaccustomed to sustained confrontation with poorly controlled mental illness, just as it would have interpreted the demon(iac)s' instant apprehension of Jesus' messianic identity as supernatural rather than schizophrenic.

Differences between post-Enlightenment possession accounts and understandings of mental illness also contribute to an understanding of the difference between the two categories in antiquity. Collins, comparing both ancient and modern descriptions of

possession and ideas of mental illness, notes that "unlike schizophrenia, in the case of 'demonic possession' the voice develops into a secondary system of personality."[110] Schizophrenia patients with auditory hallucinations – madmen, in ancient terms – hear internal voices and themselves may speak strangely in response.[111] Possession victims as Mark represents them do not speak at all; the demon, not the person, speaks. Such differences in the course and understanding of possession versus mental illness suggest that possession occupies a place in some religious systems, including those that Mark reflects, distinct from the role of mental illness in cultural and social understandings of the person, the mind, and health. This picture is incompatible with that of Lardner and his diverse followers, in which the historical or Markan Jesus[112] is miraculously equipped, even in rationalist studies that avoid this terminology, with an understanding of modern psychiatry.

The 1960s and 1970s saw an increasing number of critiques levelled at Freudian psychoanalytic theory itself and more specifically at its application across historical and cultural barriers to people who might not be amenable to the explanations it supplied. The alternative readings of possession that began to develop during this period, however, tend to retain it in some form. The historical/Markan Jesus is no longer attributed miraculous

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[110] Collins 47-48.

[111] There is considerable, long-standing controversy within the psychiatric community over whether dissociative identity disorder (formerly known as multiple personality disorder) is a valid diagnosis or concept at all. There is agreement that if it is valid, it is so rare that the vast majority of mental health professionals in any cultural setting will never encounter it in practice. The cross-cultural diagnostic standards are incompatible with possession as depicted in ancient literature, as is its epidemiology. If such a disorder does exist, it is not feasible that its prevalence was sufficient to establish a broad cultural awareness of it in the form of possession beliefs such as existed in antiquity. For further information, see the entry in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV* (rev. 2000) (*DSM-IV*).

[112] The distinctions between the two tend to blur or disappear in most studies of exorcism, since Mark is the most exorcistic not only of the gospels but of much of ancient Mediterranean material.

knowledge of Freudian and psychiatric analysis, but these themes remain present. Hollenbach was among the first to develop an interpretation of Jesus' exorcisms as acts of political protest.[113] Nearly every subsequent study of politicized New Testament exorcism[114] has cited it and dependent research extensively. Hollenbach adopts the psychiatric model in its entirety, as do his followers: "[Jesus] regularly exorcised demons. In modern terms this means that Jesus healed people who had various kinds of mental or psychosomatic illnesses."[115] He uses this equation to posit ancient possession as mental illnesses induced or motivated by colonialism and thus Jesus' exorcisms as confrontations of previously repressed, or at least subverted, hostility toward social and political authorities.

Hollenbach and subsequent authors draw on the mid- to late twentieth-century anthropological studies of Lewis, Bourguignon, and above all the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon[116] to support the conclusion that the possession cases in the New Testament were historically and are literarily frustrated reactions to colonial and social oppression. These studies based on anthropology, ritual studies, sociology, and other disciplines, tend to assume psychological or psychoanalytic themes to lie at the foundation of the behaviours

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[113] Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities" (1981). He draws on John B. Brown, "Techniques of Imperial Control: The Background of the Gospel Event" (*Radical Religion* 2.2/3 [1975]: 73-83), which touches on exorcism among other issues.

[114] Herman C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power* (1991); John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus* (1994); Charles Wanamaker, "The Historical Jesus Today" (1996); Santiago Guijarro Oporto, "The Politics of Exorcism" (1999); Richard Horsley's *Hearing the Whole Story* (2001) and *Religion and Empire* (2003); Werner H. Kelber, "Roman Imperialism and Early Christian Scribality" (2004); Stephen D. Moore, "Mark and Empire" (2004);as well as Hollenbach's "Help for Interpreting Jesus' Exorcisms" (1993).

[115] 1981: 567.

[116] For a sympathetic discussion of the use of Fanon's research in the interpretation of Mark, see John 79-85.

and rituals under study.[117] This may be legitimate in some studies of modern groups where qualified researchers have access to information about mental health in the groups involved, but it remains problematic for interpretations of ancient data. This is especially true when political exegeses of possession and exorcism draw on the conclusions of Fanon's research on the Algerian war of the 1950s and 1960s.[118] Fanon's extensive survey of mental illness affected or induced by colonialism includes only a handful of potentially psychotic cases, which together exhibit the weakest causal connections to colonialism. The first is that of a French "interrogator" who heard the screams of his victims when he was not torturing them or even near them but who knew that he was hallucinating and who also experienced major depression.[119] There is little basis for categorizing his symptoms as inextricably linked to colonialism *per se*: Any number of regimes and interests worldwide have practiced and continue to practice torture, many of them in contexts unrelated to colonialism. The second involves symptoms associated with primary manifestations of severe peri- and post-partum depression and anxiety.[120] The only other involves the onset of psychosis in a previously

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[117] An excess of either naïveté or scepticism on a researcher's part is of course problematic (see Mary Kelly, *The Hammer and the Flute*; Robert Shanafelt, "Magic, Miracles, and Marvel in Anthropology").

[118] Hollenbach (1981, 1993); Waetjen 116-117; Crossan 85-93; Guijarro Oporto; Horsley (2001) 144-146.

[119] 189-192. The patient here was a Frenchwoman who was angry at and ashamed of her deceased father, who had tortured Algerians.

[120] 201-202. These women were traumatized by war and displacement. Here the relevant consideration is whether such traumas and symptoms are unique to colonial conflicts, or whether they occur in other cases where there is violence and displacement. For example, it might be helpful to examine the cases of London women pregnant during the Second World War, who experienced the trauma of war but never the German colonial plan's fruition. More recent situations of this type have existed in the Balkan peninsula, Somalia, and post-colonial Algeria, to name only a few. Given the likelihood of continued civil war in Iraq following the withdrawal of foreign troops, and indeed the impotence of the foreign powers currently involved in and significantly responsible for it, another entry to the list seems imminent.

normal nineteen-year-old Algerian male with little exposure to the political conflict, i.e., a classic case of organic schizophrenia.[121]

None of the patients in his study claimed to be possessed by an external spoke, spoke in voices other than their own, felt a loss of control or actually lost control of their own bodies or speech, heard voices inaudible to others, reported visual hallucinations, engaged in pathological levels of physical self-harm, or had faints or seizures. Fanon recorded, instead, one case of psychologically induced erectile dysfunction;[122] several of apparent post-traumatic stress disorder, involving "*pulsions homicides indifférenciées chez un rescapé d'une liquidation collective*,"[123] "*psychose anxieuse grave à type de dépersonnalisation après le meurtre forcené d'une femme*,"[124] a family abuser with no delusion symptoms;[125] assorted "*troubles du comportement chez de jeunes Algériens*,"[126] and a number of cases relating to depression and anxiety. Fanon does not once allude to a patient, family member, informant, or rumour of anything related to possession beliefs. Even if Mark's possession accounts are of misinterpreted mental illness, Fanon's work has little bearing on them.

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[121] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV* [*DSM-IV*], 298-316.
[122] 181-185. The patient cared for and respected but had never loved his wife, who was beaten and gang-raped by government inspectors when she refused to divulge information about her "insurrectionist" husband's activities and whereabouts.
[123] 185-187. Post-traumatic stress disorder had not been formally named as such at the time of Fanon's study.
[124] 187-189. Given current psychiatry's uniform rejection of so-called "temporary insanity," it seems that the patient was not deranged when he committed the murder, but merely angry. The woman was a French officer's wife, but whether this bears on the psychological consequences of the murder is questionable: a generally non-homicidal person who does commit a murder under extreme circumstances, colonial or otherwise, might expect to difficulties adjusting.
[125] 192-194. This patient was a French police officer who battered his wife (a Frenchwoman) and their children. Fanon includes no cases of family violence among Algerians, despite the cross-cultural existence of family violence and the greater number of Algerians in his study. This raises the question of whether Algerian patients did not report family violence or whether Fanon somehow did not consider it pathological for Algerians.
[126] 194-196, 200-201.

Questions of whether the Roman imperial machine was as effective as the French one also remain. The French occupying force in Algeria had the efficiency of industry in its arsenal. It could employ a wide network of paid informants, exploit the possibilities of technology to track data, amass and analyze innumerable data about people under surveillance, imprison indefinitely, torture, and kill large sections of the populace without affecting the economic production that made the colony desirable in the first place, and mobilize its forces with speed and consistency unimaginable in the ancient world. This contrasts with the Roman situation, in which troop mobilization was much more time-consuming and environmentally dependent, no professional police force and less in the way of a civil court system existed, prisons existed largely as holding cells for the condemned, data were more difficult to gather, and agricultural production in a zero-sum economy only slightly above subsistence level made it unwise if not impossible to disable any significant portion of the labour force. Ancient European colonizers, unlike modern ones, were little inclined to send their own representatives to "settle" conquered territories or to transform them culturally, being interested rather in tributes. The possibilities for negotiating this situation – economic deprivation but little cultural imperialism – were more nuanced than the resistance/collaboration dichotomy that Hollenbach and his followers suggest.

The modern political analogies that appear in these interpretations of possession are, if anything, more problematic than the anthropological ones. Crossan's discussion of possession assumes it to be mental illness and interprets medical approaches as a hegemonic

system of controlling social dissent. He suggests exorcism as a constructive alternative to mental health treatment in some modern cases as well as in biblical interpretation, citing

> Felicitas D. Goodman's terrifying account[127] of what happened to a young university student from Klingenberg, in rural Bavaria, between 1968 and 1976. The student was being simultaneously being treated by psychiatrists and priests, the former prescribing anticonvulsant drugs such as Dilantin and Tegretol, the latter practicing repeated exorcistic rituals. Since the patient herself, as well as her family and friends, believed she was possessed, the priests had the far better chance of success. But for the exorcisms to work, she had to become entranced, and the drugs impeded that possibility... The diabolical met the chemical, and the chemical won. Anneliese died in the summer of 1976."[128]

The first and greatest problem of this analysis is Crossan's misunderstandings of the facts that Goodman reports. Anneliese Michel did not die from her medications' side effects, as Crossan implies; she had in fact ceased all medical treatment a year earlier. She died of malnutrition and dehydration, weighing only 31 kilograms at the time of her death, as a result of the repeated fasting required for repeated exorcism. Her parents and the priests involved were convicted of manslaughter as a result. Crossan provides no evidence to support his claim that "the priests had the far better chance of success." The fact that repeated exorcisms – sixty-seven over ten-month period, according to the evidence presented at the trial – failed to cure Michel and ultimately killed her would tend to belie it. Investigations after her death revealed that she had been medically treated for epilepsy but not schizophrenia, from which she suffered. The clerics consulted in the investigation confirmed that medical consultation need not have precluded exorcism. Several priests, including the ones Ms. Michel's parents initially contacted, refused to exorcise her on the

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[127] *The Exorcism of Anneliese Michel*, 1981. Large English-language news sources covered the trial at the time as well: "A Phenomenon of Fear," *Time* 1976; "Tidings: Exorcism by Death," *Time* 1978; and numerous newswire articles.

[128] Crossan 85-86.

grounds that she was not possessed. Some of her symptoms at the end of her life seemed deliberately imitative of those depicted in the film *The Exorcist* rather than organic to her case. Furthermore, her mother and a few others who advocated exorcism over medical treatment refused to accept that epilepsy was a chronic condition and held what might be termed unorthodox beliefs about possession and exorcism. It would seem that the facts of the case undermine Crossan's and his followers' analysis of it.

What emerges from all these considerations, with reference to present questions, is that ancient ideas of mental illness sometimes overlapped with contemporary concepts of possession, but that the same is not necessary true of modern mental or neurological illness and alleged modern demon possession. Modern ideas of mental illness might not correspond perfectly with ancient ideas of mental illness, let alone possession. Furthermore, although, possession and "madness" could overlap in antiquity, it is clear that at least as often as not they remained distinct, as in the cases of the people Jesus heals in Mark. A demon not possessing a body, it would appear from Mark, is not able to speak to human beings, and neither is a possessed human. Rather, the demon speaks from his/her body, and Jesus and those around him seem to consider it futile to address any person him/herself. Jesus never commands possessed persons to be freed or healed, instead commanding the demons directly. Conybeare seems to have grasped the issue as well as any of his successors, noting that "it is illustrative of the power of physical constraint ascribed to demons that the vocal organs of one possessed were controlled by the demon which had

overmastered him. It was not the man that spake, but the devil within him [Mk 1.25]."[129] The demon seems to have sole access to voice, leaving the possessed person incapable of expressing his or her own, dispossessed mind. It is not clear whether the demoniac voice is the victim's own or a strange one, as in the case of a possessed boy in *Life of Apollonios* (3.38). Regardless of whose voice (as opposed to whose vocal apparatus) demons use, the possessed person is not speaking or reacting. He or she may not be present in any meaningful sense at all. In occupying a human body, it would seem, a demon evicts its person – the soul, consciousness, personality, character, and memory of the normal inhabitant. Some form of connection to the host personality may remain, however weakly.

In the Gerasene demoniac pericope, there is an implicit shift in subject from ὁ ἄνθρωπος in 5.2 to τὸ πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρον in 5.7, with some ambiguity in the intervening verses as to whether the actor kowtowing to Jesus is the man, Legion, or some combination of the two. This is made manifest in the fact that

> "...[there is] contradiction in the way the [Gerasene] demoniac approaches Jesus. His physical bearing is full of respect, but his tone of voice and utterances are aggressive. The doubleness betrayed by this is not surprising because the one who acts and speaks is double himself: the demon and his victim, who, although they appear to have diverse interest, are thrown into each other's company, a partnership to which to which the man cannot but submit... [In asking Jesus' identity], the demoniac reverses the roles so that the irony is carried to extremes. He speaks to Jesus in the language of an exorcist dealing with a case of demonic possession."[130]

A similar blurring of identities occurs in considering whether it is the man or the demon who cries out in the Capernaum synagogue in 1.23. A focus on the possessed *body*, which

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[129] Conybeare (1896a) 581.
[130] van Iersel 198-199.

some studies have emphasized and advocated,[131] thus seems to be particularly misplaced in this instance. It is the body that the demon inhabits, but the body is not equivalent to the individual in any cosmological or realized anthropological sense. To be sure, people recognize one another in large part by their physical bodies, and there is a close association between the person and his/her body in any culture's anthropology. It would be mistaken, however, to go so far as to equate the two; as differently as body, mind, soul, and the boundaries between them are understood between cultures and religious systems, they are rarely or never understood to be entirely and exclusively the same thing. Few, if any, cultures would maintain that someone who has lost a limb has lost part of his/her soul, or that Jean Doe at age six is not at all the same entity as Jean Doe at age sixty. The persona and the soul are *seated* in the body, but they are not coterminus with it. The Syrophoenician woman has been living in a house with her daughter's living body, but not with her daughter. The problem in possession is not with a person's body, but with a person's being displaced from the somatic grounding that is necessary for earthly life.[132] A possessed body, in Mark, is suffering, but its sufferings are identifiable and possible to delineate. The displacement of the person or spirit is, however, the cause of this suffering, and it may entail for the person/spirit consequences beyond bodily injury and death.

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[131] See, for example, Kelly, in whose work this issue amounts only to a small point, and Crossan (*Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 1994) 76-93.

[132] Many shamanic systems worldwide, of course, maintain that the persona, spirit, and/or soul can in fact leave the body or share it. Such circumstances, however, are always temporary or intermittent, and they occur as necessary and rare components of the religious and cosmological systems within which they are situated. (Lewis' *Ecstatic Religion* provides a book-length study of these trends, as does Kelley's *The Hammer and the Flute*.) This is not the case with possession in Mark, which uniformly appears as pathological and has no valid place in the cosmology.

Philostratus' possession cases are similar to Mark's in this respect. In *V. Ap.*, both an afflicted boy (παίς) and a youth (μειράκιον) lose their own personalities and consciousness to invading entities. The mother of the first victim, a sixteen-year-old possessed for two years, tells Apollonius that the demon

> ...will not allow [my son] to be rational, or go to school or to archery lessons, or to stay at home either, but carries him off into deserted places. My boy no longer has his natural voice but speaks in deep, ringing tones as men do, and his eyes, too, are more someone else's than his own. All this makes me weep and tear my hair, and I naturally scold my son, but he does not recognize me... the spirit confessed who he was, using my son as a medium.
>
> οὐ ξυγχωρεῖ αὐτῷ νοῦν ἔχειν οὐδὲ ἐς διδασκάλου βαδίσαι ἐᾷ ἢ τοξότου οὐδὲ οἴκοι εἶναι ἀλλ' ἐς τὰ ἔρημα τῶν χωρίων ἐκτρέπει καὶ οὐδὲ τὴν φωνὴν ὁ παῖς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἔχει ἀλλὰ βαρὺ φθέγγεται καὶ κοῖλον ὥστερ οἱ ἄνδρες βλέπει δὲ ἑτέροις ὀφθαλμοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ. κἀγὼ μὲν ἐπὶ τούτοις κλάω τε καὶ ἐμαυτὴν δρύπτω καὶ ϛουθετῶ τὸν υἱόν ὁπόσα ὁ δὲ οὐκ οἶδέ με... ἐξηγόρευσεν ὁ δαίμων ἑαυτὸν ὑποκριτῇ χρώμενος τῷ παιδί... (3.38.1-2)

This spirit displays a number of similarities with Legion, to the extent that he "he issued me a threat to kill my son with cliffs and high places" (ὁ δ' ἀπειλεῖ κρημνοὺς καὶ βάραθρα καὶ ἀποκτενεῖν μοι τὸν υἱόν, 3.38.3), just as the possessed swine "swarmed off the cliff into the lake... and were drowned" (Mk 5.13). This is common demonic behaviour, perhaps indicating that Philostratus is drawing on widespread cultural tropes in common with the author of Mark. The mother's situation here may illuminate that of the Syro-Phoenician woman. She lives in a house with the ghost of a married man who died in a war (3.38.2), a man who has hijacked her son's body. The woman gives no indication of knowing the current location of her son himself, only of his material being. The dead man has her son's physical form, but throughout her plea she makes clear that she has been interacting with an embodied ghost and not with her son. She knows only that her son might die if she angers the ghost (3.38.3).

The possessed youth is not affected to the point that he cannot recognize his own acquaintances. Nor does his demon drive him away from society; on the contrary, it apparently seeks company. In his case, in fact, Apollonius demonstrates an ability that never surfaces on Jesus' part in Mark, namely the ability to recognize possession where everyone else has failed to do so, as occurs in 4.20.1-2.[133] It would perhaps seem that the possession behaviour in this case is a morbid exaggeration of the energies typical of a *μειράκιον*, a young man of about twenty years of age. With due acknowledgement to cultural particularities, lewdness and excessive levity are rarely considered uncommon faults in people at the end of adolescence, particularly boys. The young man's subsequent healing leaves little indication as to whether he was unconscious of his previous behaviour, or merely unable to control it:

> The youth, as if waking up, rubbed his eyes, looked at the sun's beams, and won the respect of all the people gazing at him. From then on he no longer seemed dissolute, or had an unsteady gaze, but returned to his own nature no worse than if he had taken a course of medicine. He got rid of his capes, cloaks, and other fripperies, and fell in love with deprivation and the philosopher's cloak, and stripped down to Apollonius' style.
>
> τὸ δὲ μειράκιον ὥσπερ ἀφυπςίσαν τούς τε ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔτριψε καὶ πρὸς τὰς αὐγὰς τοῦ ἡλίου εἶδεν αἰδῷ τε ἐπεσπάσατο τάντων ε'ς αὐτὸ ἐστραμμένων ἀσελγές τε οἰκέτι ἐφαίνετο οὐδὲ ἄτακτον βλέπον ἀλλ' ἐπανῆλθεν ἐς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ θύσιν μεῖον οὐδὲν ἢ εἰ φαρμακοποσίᾳ ἐκέχρντο μεταβαλόν τε τῶν χλανιδίων καὶ λῃδίων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης συβάριδοσ ἐς ἔρωτα ἦλθεν αὐχμοῦ καὶ τρίβωνος καὶ ἐκ τὰ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου ἤθη ἀπεδύσατο. (4.20.3)

Apollonius confronts the demon directly as he exorcises it (4.20.2), but it is not clear from their exchange or from the subsequent changes in the youth's character whether the demon had fully hijacked his body, as in the boy's case, or was merely acting as a hitch-hiker with a

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[133] See preceding discussion.

tendency toward backseat driving. In any event, Apollonius cures the problem of the youth's literally not being entirely himself.

In all this, then, the problem is that of the soul, or more accurately the spirit, τὸ πνεῦμα. Most of Mark's uses of the word refer either to unclean spirits, as previously discussed, or to the Holy Spirit (1.8, 10, 12; 3.29; 12.36; 13.11). There are, however, a few references to the individual spirit. Two are to Jesus' own: "And Jesus, suddenly understanding in his spirit..." (καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπιγνους ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι) in 2.8 and "And sighing in his spirit, he said..." (καὶ ἀςαστενάζας τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ λέγει) in 8.12. In Gethsemane, he laments to a drowsy Peter that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον ἡ δέ σὰρξ ἀσθενής, 14.38), which could refer to an individual's spirit or to the will of the Holy Spirit. There are also two references to the mind or soul, ἡ ψυχή: the quotation "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind..." (καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας) in 12.30 and "My soul is troubled unto death" (Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου) in 14.34. The idea of an individual soul or spirit is, in Otto's terms, an *a priori* value, an axiomatic concept with universal analogs. Different cultures, societies, and religious systems may have very different concepts of and beliefs about the soul or spirit, but it is universally recognized as the part of a person that is gone once the corpse has begun to

rot.[134] Ancient Mediterranean cultures and religions, in common with most others, had no schema or ontology of the soul or spirit, although Berger suggests that there existed an implicit concept of individual selfhood, determined by:

> ·an ability to be summoned and addressed by words (angels carry out commands of God)
> ·an ability to speak and thus to be able to communicate with God or with human beings.
> ·possession of a will and therefore, in a certain sense, independence (thus unpredictability) and responsibility
> ·possession of a name.[135]

This would qualify unclean spirits as people in some senses, just as people seem to have individual spirits in the same way that individual spirits have them. The essence of the soul itself, however, appears to have been a concept like divinity: occasionally described or theorized in philosophical literature, but generally understood as being in its essence beyond rational or full human comprehension.[136]

In cases of possession in ancient narratives, it would seem, the soul is either driven out of or suppressed within its ordinary residence in the human individual. Such a view would be in keeping with the understanding of many cultures with possession beliefs that

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[134] As Jan Bremmer notes, some research has "accepted as universal a common Western belief that, after death, the soul represents the individual. But there are other peoples for whom either the body survives, or the deceased are said to become theriomorphic beings, spirits, or revenants. In some places, too, the terminology for the soul of the dead is completely different from that of the living" (*The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* [1983], 71). For all this, as Bremmer tacitly acknowledges, the living soul is always gone from the body at death. References to shades being drawn up, as in 1 Samuel 28, and to the shades of dead individuals in Sheol, indicate that ancient Israelites and Jews shared this element of belief with their Greek contemporaries. The reliance of the "common Western belief" on biblical and patristic, as well as classical, references, among other sources, is in keeping with these circumstances.

[135] Klaus Berger, *Identity and Experience in the New Testament* (tr. 2003), 27. For discussions of the lack of a schema of spirits, see Lambek 241-242.

[136] This is not to say that there were no specifications, especially concerning souls lingering around the graves of untimely dead or improperly buried bodies, the propensity of wronged spirits to return for vengeance, and the general similarity of the souls of the dead to bats and full-winged insects. For further discussion, see Nitzsche (*The Genius Figure in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 1972) 10-12, 15-37; Bremmer 70-124; Maurizio Bettini, *Anthropology and Roman Culture* (tr. 1991), 197-226. For the lack of "specification" about spirits, see Lambek 241-242.

"To the degree that spirits are embodied, they impinge on the selfhood of their hosts."[137] In most ancient Mediterranean understandings of possession, it would seem that the demon displaces or suppresses the soul and vital force, which were understood as residing in the breath. Thus, when he dies, "Jesus, sending out a great cry, expired" (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφεὶς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν, 15.37). A reflection of this belief also occurs in the *Aeneid*, where Anna follows the common practice of taking or sharing a dying relative's last breath in a kiss: "...date, vulnera lymphis/ abluam et extremus si quis super halitus errat/ ore legam..." ("Grant [my] washing [her] wounds with soft water [i.e., tears] and if any there is any breath lingering above, taking [it] in [my] mouth," 4.683-685). Similar beliefs seem to underlie the common requirement for demons to prove their departure by causing ripples in a bowl of water placed near the victim,[138] placing a ring of power under the victim's nose,[139] and such instructions to exorcists as "while conjuring, blow once, blowing air from the tips of the feet up to the face, and it will be assigned" (*PGM* IV.3007-3086).[140] It also accounts, at least in part, for the death-like state of the possessed boy after Jesus has exorcised his demon (9.26-27). All this would seem to indicate that the possessing spirit interferes with the demoniac's life-force and soul, rather than with his or her mind only.

The implication that arises from demonic interference with soul and vital force is that possession renders its victim an example of the living dead. The soul is gone from the body, or at least from its proper place in the body, but the body continues to function as a

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[137] Lambek 241.
[138] See, for example, *V. Ap.* 4.20 and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 8.49.
[139] Eleazar's exorcism in *Antq.* 8.49 is the clearest example.
[140] Betz 97.

living organism. It is perhaps not surprising that Mark does not elaborate on this problem. As Bourguignon notes, "As Luc de Heusch has pointed out (1962), belief in spirit-possession implies a belief in the temporary absence of a soul... [But] while this may be logically indisputable, nonetheless people with highly developed possession theories usually appear to pay little attention to this concomitant facet of their interpretation."[141] It is possible, as Bolt argues in his essay,[142] that ancient authors believe demons' goal in possessing people to be worsening their fate after death, perhaps out of simple malice. In the case of many New Testament texts, this might imply condemnation or a lack of salvation in the final judgment. The texts offer little basis for drawing firm conclusions in this respect, but the possibility that people at least feared this outcome might be worth considering. In any event, the fear of possessed people's relatives and fellows, in Mark, is for the victims' souls as well as for their minds. It does not necessarily follow that Mark assumes them to have any specific idea of what exactly has happened to the victims' souls or what the consequences will be. Nor does it follow that Mark assumes them to afford such matters no consideration at all. It is only possible to say that as Mark depicts it, possession threatens to destroy the soul.

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[141] 1966, 9.
[142] "Jesus, the Daimons, and the Dead" (1996), 75-102.

IV. Possession as Political Protest

As noted previously, the application of psychiatric frameworks to politicized analysis of New Testament exorcism, drawing on Fanon's work on modern Algeria, has become a prevalent practice in North American exegesis since the early 1980s. This approach is prominent and intriguing enough to merit full consideration, offering as it does particular insight on the Gerasene demon pericope. Despite the understanding that this interpretation can yield, however, it is potentially misleading, a situation all the more troubling given the attention and influence it has garnered.

Although earlier authors hint at this idea, to the point that it was receiving criticism by the early 1970s,[143] Paul Hollenbach was largely responsible for introducing this reading into mainstream scholarship. Hollenbach places exorcism at the core of all opposition to Jesus and makes it, rather than the temple incident (11.15-19) or any blasphemy (14.55-65), both the high priests' and the Romans' primary reason for crucifying him:

> The disciples spread out through Galilee, doing and preaching the same things as Jesus. This activity appeared to Herod and others to be similar to John the Baptizer's movement and to be, similarly, a threat to Herod's position and security (Mark 6:14-26)... once again we find a public authority responding hostilely to Jesus specifically in connection with his exorcising activity because that activity threatened to upset the social and political status quo in relation to demoniacs. It was all right to have numerous demoniacs of various kinds filling various niches in the social system, and it was all right for professional exorcists to ply their art; but it was not all right for an unauthorized exorcist to make so much over demon possession and demoniacs that he identified their healing with God's saving presence and led a widespread exorcising mission that attracted a large following, thereby challenging the prevailing social system and its underlying value system. If Josephus's description of Palestine during Jesus' time is correct – that it was relatively free of public disturbances – this condition would make Jesus' movement all the more exceptional, visible, and threatening. Such a challenge had to be met head on and its leader liquidated [sic]. Thus it was that Jesus as an exorcist struck out directly into the vortex of the

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[143] Starobinski asks rhetorically, "Why were there so many demons in the Palestine of Jesus?... Must we accept the suggestions of those who see in the loss of political autonomy one of the causes for the transfer of interest to sick individuals and their healing – to psychic health and the salvation of the soul?" (353). He cites E. Troeltsch's *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (1960) as a source of this opinion (353n.4).

> social turmoil of his day and before long became a public figure of sufficient stature that at first local, but finally national, authorities had to take account of his movement. Jesus' movement would threaten to effect the release of the soldering discontent which appeared more and more until its final explosion in 66-70 C.E. In this way, then, Jesus' first exorcism led inevitably to his crucifixion.[144]

Readings in this vein, often incorporating the work of René Girard and Franz Fanon,[145] have become prevalent. Further specific studies of the matter, as noted above, have proliferated to the point that even introductory and general-audience commentaries[146] seem obliged to repeat the arguments, as do most books and articles[147] that make sustained reference to ancient possession and exorcism.

Both the circumstances of Mark's composition and the text of Mark seem potentially incongruent with Hollenbach's reading of it. People across the social and political spectra in pre-modern colonial societies fell ill and required healing. Individuals and communities may have construed illness in any number of ways, but the fact that occurred and caused suffering under any political circumstances nowhere appears as a matter of dispute. It is Jesus' and his disciples' entire healing ministry, not solely the exorcisms, that draws Herod's attention:

> He was going through the villages teaching. He summoned the twelve and send began to send them out by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits… And they went out and preached in order that [people] might repent, and they cast out many demons, and applying oil to many of the sick cured them. And King Herod heard…
>
> Καὶ περιῆγεντ ὰς κώμας κύκλῳ διδὰσκων. καὶ προσκαλεῖται τοὺς δώδεκα καὶ ἤρξατο αὐτοὺς ἀποστέλλειν δύο καὶ ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν ἀκαθάρτων… Καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκήρυξαν ἵνα μετανοῶσιν, καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ

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144 1981: 583; cf. Hollenbach (1993), 127-128.

145 For a discussion of the effects of Girard's ideas on interpretations of exorcism in Mark, see John 70-78, as well as 79-84 for a discussion of Fanon's impact.

146 See, for example, the discussions in Marie Noonan Sabin's *The Gospel According to Mark* (2005).

147 E.g., Lisa Bellan-Boyer's review (2003) of Donald Capps' *Jesus: A Psychological Biography*; Mark Brummitt's "Recent Books in Biblical Studies" (2003). See n. 109 for further references.

> ἐξέβαλλον, καὶ ἤλειφον ἐλαίῳ πολλοὺς ἀρρώστους καὶ ἐθεράπευον. Καὶ ἤκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρῴδης... (6.6b-14)

The exorcisms and healings themselves do not frighten Herod, who himself displays no overt hostility toward Jesus anywhere in Mark. Herod is frightened, rather, because he, unlike those around him (6.15-16), believes Jesus to be the reincarnation of John the baptizer, who he had imprisoned and executed against his own wishes at Herodias' request (6.17-29).[148] John makes no revolutionary demands, not calling for Herod's overthrow, rebellion against Roman or local authorities, or a redistribution of economic resources or socio-political power. He instead makes personal demands, which he apparently delivers to Herod in person: "For John was telling Herod that it was not allowed for him to have his brother's wife for himself" (ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὁ Ἰωάννης τῷ Ἡρῴδῃ ὅτι οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, 6.18). Mark gives no indication as to whether John's disapproval was spreading dissent among the people; the opening of Mark does not depict his complaint against Herod as contributing to his following. Herod fears revenge, not revolution. This is hardly surprising in a text that is often described as anti-authority but not politically systematic.[149]

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[148] The historical reality of the situation and Herod's exact role in it are subject to debate, but this is the scenario that Mark presents, and therefore the one that any interpretation of Mark must take into account.

[149] As Moore notes, "even if Mark lacks the explicitly hostile attitude toward Rome evident in Revelation, he also lacks the explicitly 'quietiest' attitude toward Roman rule evident in [Romans and 1 Peter]....Generally speaking (and putting it rather too mildly), Mark does not enjoin its audience to respect human authorities. Every human authority in Mark, indeed, whether 'religious' or 'political' (a distinction largely meaningless, however, in the context), is a persecutor, or potential persecutor, of John, Jesus, or the disciples of Jesus, aside from [Jairus, the scribe in 12.28-34, and Joseph of Arimathea]... Jesus is repeatedly represented in Mark as urging his followers not to aspire to authority, glory, power, or wealth, but to adopt for emulation instead such liminal role models as the child (*paidion*) and the servant (*diakonos*) or slave (*doulos*). Mark's relentless narrative undermining of Jesus' own elite corps of disciples, themselves the repositories of significant authority by the time the gospel was written, may be regarded as a further component of this elaborate anti-authoritarian theme" ("Mark and Empire" [2004], 142-143). See also Furnish (War and Peace in the New Testament," 2004)

The evidence for a conflict over official authority to heal is lacking as well. There is no evidence indicates formal or even informal regulation of healers, whether physicians or miracle workers, in ancient Palestine. The conflict concerns the supernatural source of Jesus' power to perform miracles, not whether the proper earthly agency had authorized him to perform them. No such earthly agency existed. Laws and social sanctions against harmful actions such as curses and against certain forms of divination had a long history in the ancient world, particularly in Rome, but there was no registry or standard of who might and might not try to perform miracles, healings, or exorcisms. Disputes over exorcists outside the Jesus movement[150] indicate that the concern is unique to people in positions of social and legal authority and that the power in question is not of this world. The absence of exorcism-related charges from the conspiracy to kill Jesus further suggests that they lack revolutionary signification in Mark.

Bryan's extensive study of the Roman empire and the Jesus movement provides a more detailed model for understanding the relationship between the two. Bryan suggests that in investigating it, "the most we can say with certainty is... that, to a person contemplating the situation vis-à-vis Roman rule in Judea and Galilee during the period between AD 6 and 66, at least four possibilities, four options, will have been open. Certain groups at certain times appear to have followed one of them, rather than another."[151] He defines these options, which need not be seen as permanently exclusive within a given

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363-364; Wolfgang Schrage (*The Ethics of the New Testament*, tr. 1988) 109; Meeks (*The Origins of Christian Morality*, 1993) 12; Gundry ("Richard A. Horsley's *Hearing the Whole Story*," 2003) 137-139.

[150] Mk 9.38-41 par.; Acts 19.11-20.

[151] Bryan 34.

community, as acceptance and collaboration, acceptance with exceptions to egregious abuses, non-violent rejection, and violent rejection,[152] noting that

> there is, on the one hand, no need to idealize any who chose any of them, or, on the other, to suppose any to have been entirely devoid of honour or piety. Those who chose the first option, full cooperation with Rome, may well have considered themselves to be following faithfully the examples of Joseph, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Those who chose the second, cooperation with Rome coupled with willingness to question or challenge it, might have looked to Queen Esther and Daniel. Both groups might have seen themselves as interpreting and applying to their own situations the principles implied by Jeremiah for those who found themselves in continuing exile. Those who chose the third option, nonviolent rejection, may have seen as their examples Eleazar and the mother with seven sons, all of whom died rather than obey Antiochus Epiphanes. Those who chose the fourth option, violent rejection, doubtless were inspired by the examples of Judith and of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers.[153]

The Roman colonial situation was not the first time Judeans and Jews could have simultaneously hated and accepted their conquerors. Prophets had interpreted Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and others as detestable instruments of God's just punishment for Israel's transgressions. The uprisings that did take place in Judea in the first centuries of the common era suggest that many people were perfectly aware that they hated Rome and wanted its power destroyed. The writings of Josephus, Philo, and others make equally clear that others saw Rome's power as an act of God directed against sin. The fact that apocalyptic literature from the Maccabbean period onward.

Modern colonized peoples have usually had recent historical memories of sovereignty or ideals of self-rule or democracy to inspire them. Israel-Judah in the New Testament period had no ideal of democratic or republican rule and no history of it. The Maccabean state, which collapsed three generations before Jesus, had been and remained in

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[152] Bryan 34-35. He puts Roman clients such as the Herodians and "aristocratic" Sadduccees in the first category, Josephus and Philo in the second (noting *Bel. Iud.* 2.169-174, 184-203 and *Embassy* 2.299-305 as instances of dissent), Horsley's interpretation of Jesus in the third category, and Judas the Galilean (*Bel. Iud.* 2.118), the Sicarii, and the Zealots in the fourth.

[153] Byran 35.

memory controversial; a search for self-rule prior to this would have to look to the eighth century BCE. Apart from the doomed and probably isolated Zealots,[154] there was little context in Jesus' or Mark's time for concrete steps toward popularly based self-rule.[155] There was also little chance, as the uprising of 66-70 would have made clear, that organized, active resistance would have brought about freedom instead of destruction. Furthermore, any politicized interpretation of the New Testament, as Furnish notes, must account for the fact that the New Testament originated in a community[156] that "unlike ancient Israel, had never had a national history of its own and had no experience of political or military power. The earliest believers constituted a sectarian minority... without effective political power... a religious movement which considered itself to be in the world but not of it."[157] Some degree of foreign domination would likelier have been a fact of life, perhaps as disliked as plague or drought,[158] but no more avoidable. Negotiations of this state of circumstances could include simultaneous acceptance and contempt of Roman rulers for Jews either within or outside the Jesus movement.

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[154] See Bryan 34-37.

[155] See Freyne 75-122 for a more complete description of the social and political circumstances in the textual world of Mark.

[156] The New Testament of course developed in many different communities, but Furnish's point is that even collectively they would have been a marginal group.

[157] Furnish 364.

[158] Theodicy and popular belief of course addressed these crises, attributing them to divine wrath, sorcery, etc. None of the sources, however, conceive of a post-lapsarian, pre-eschatological world without these misfortunes. Specific instances might be averted or alleviated, but plagues and droughts presumably would continue to occur throughout the world. Similarly, the Romans might be hated, as were the Babylonians, but the fact of foreign rule in some form may have been easy to take for granted, at least without the marginalized Zealots. There had been independence in the past, just as there were good agricultural years with little human disease, but it is unwise to assume that anyone specifically expected them as a matter of course, or saw them as potentially obtainable.

Anger at colonialism was of course as apparent in first-century CE Judea as it has been in any colonial situation since then. Passive resistance, uprisings, rebellions, revolutions, and independence movements have coexisted throughout any number of permutations over the course of the centuries. One or two cases seem to bear some resemblance to the situation that the political liberation reading of Markan possession and exorcism posits. Crossan points in particular to the evolution of possession beliefs among the Lunda-Luvale people of southern Africa during the European colonial period:

> [The Lunda-Luvale people] always had... traditional ailments called *mahamba*, which resulted from possession by ancestral spirits. But they then developed a special modern version called *bindele*, the Luvale word for "European," which necessitated a special exorcistic church and a lengthy curative process... *Legion*, I think, is to colonial Roman Palestine as *bindele* was to colonial European Rhodesia, and in both cases colonial exploitation is incarnated individually as demonic possession. In discussing Jesus' exorcisms, therefore, two factors must be kept in mind. One is the almost split-personality position of a colonial people. If they submit gladly to colonialism, they conspire in their own destruction; if they hate and despise it, they admit that something more powerful than themselves, and therefore to some extent desirable, is hateful and despicable... Another is that colonial exorcisms are at once less and more than revolution; they are, in fact, individuated symbolic revolution.[159]

Potential problems with Crossan's reading of "Legion" having been discussed above, here there arise problems with his analogy. The prevalence of possession concerns amongst all social strata of the Roman empire distinguishes them from Lunda-Luvale possession concerns. Roman colonists and their collaborators seem to have been just as concerned about evil spirits as were their political victims, to the point of summoning colonized Judeans as exorcists.[160] Nineteenth-century English overseers, in contrast, exhibited little tendency to become possessed by their own or their ancestors' spirits. Their respect for Lunda-Luvale cosmological systems and religious practices seems to have been even less, in

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[159] Crossan 90-91.

[160] Josephus' *Antq.* (8.48) is the clearest description.

fact dramatically less, than the Romans' for Jewish ones. Of all the possession belief systems that have developed throughout history, which are found in 74% of societies where enough data exist for study,[161] only one conforms to Crossan's model of colonization and possession. Given the number of analogous situations throughout history – i.e., colonization and cultural imperialism in a society with possession beliefs – the resemblance seems more coincidental than substantive. Politicized changes to possession beliefs might have been expected to occur when post-Enlightenment European colonized China, subcontinent India, the Gold Coast, North America, or even Ireland, or at some other point in the European colonial adventure. Given the pre-modern and to some degree non-Western precedents that Crossan proposes, it might also have been expected to emerge somewhere else in the documented history of colonialism. There is instead a global pattern of colonial non-possession and non-colonial possession traditions. This being the case, it seems misleading to seize upon the sole documented exception and present it as a parallel to Mark based on a single word.

The mere existence of military and political connotations for "Legion" do not make the term revolutionary. It is possible to interpret it as apolitical or eschatological precisely because of its political overtones. Chapman, noting Israel's long history of colonization, suggests the interpretation of "Legion" as a

> reference to the Roman occupation in order to cue 'those who have eyes to see' that [Mark] is explaining about the occupying forces. It now becomes apparent why the demons begged Jesus not to send them out of the country. Mark, reasoning backward, concluded that it was by Jesus' permission that the Romans remained in the holy land... The swines' death in the sea prefigures what will happen to Romans and unbelievers alike in the near future, by

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[161] Bourguignon (1976) 28.

> recalling the fate of Pharaoh's army. Mark pictures the healed demoniac arousing fear because Jesus has convinced his followers that neither [the Zealots'] armed resistance nor allegiance to Rome is necessary.[162]

This reading is not definitive, but given Mark's oft-noted attitude of simultaneous hostility and indifference toward earthly authority,[163] it seems to represent at least one possible meaning of a multivalent text. Even Chapman's ambivalent reading of "Legion" may overdetermine its political connotations. A legion was indeed a unit of the Roman army, but the demons involved here do not associate it with power itself. Their leader rather tells Jesus, "My name is Legion, for we *are many*" (Λεγιὼν ὀνομά μοι *ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν*, 5.19). A legion is many, just as the two thousand swine are many. The demon does not describe its hordes as powerful or fearsome, merely numerous. Number of troops correlates with military might, but if strength rather than number were the issue, the demons might better be δυνατοί or μεγάλοι than πολλοί. There were other symbols of Roman power as well, any number of weapons, emblems, and political offices. The spokesdemon might have given the plural name of a weapon, for example, and explained something to the effect of "we are fearsome." The lack of such available terminology, among other features in Mark, suggests that the legion truly belongs to Beelzebul's army, not Caesar's.

Attempts to construe possession along subversive, anti-hierarchical lines with respect to non-Roman authorities encounter problems of their own. A politicized reading of possession based on the Gerasene demoniac pericope, even if correct, must confront the fact that both this demoniac and the Syrophoenician girl are Gentiles living in Gentile

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[162] Adapted from Chapman 120-122.
[163] See previous discussions.

territory. The Capernaum demoniac and the convulsing boy also lack apparent pro- or anti-Roman agenda. Potentially repressive aspects of Galilean and Gerasene society have provided other possibilities for exploration. Hamerton-Kelly, for example, interprets the stories of the Gerasene and Capernaum demoniacs in light of René Girard's work:

> The demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum is a scapegoat figure. He is unclean and outcast because of his affliction... The central location of the demoniac indicates that the synagogue needs him. Just like the Gerasene demoniac whom his fellow citizens needed so much [that] they attempted to chain him down, so this demoniac is essential to the functioning of his religious community. The polity lives by its scapegoats.[164]

Readings along these lines explore significant social and pastoral themes but may overextend themselves with respect to the text. Nothing in the text of Mark suggests that the Capernaum demoniac is a φάρμακος, and neither Hamerton-Kelly nor others who rely on Girard, such as Waetjen,[165] offer exegetical or external evidence for such a reading apart from the fact that the text marks the man as "different." This difference makes him "unclean," in Hamerton-Kelly's reading, but not so unclean that he is excluded from worship services on the Sabbath. He is similarly rare among "outcasts" if he is cast out of society to live in its community center and place of worship. If the synagogue "needs" this "scapegoat," it does not need him enough to suffer any apparent ill effects from his recovery. The Gerasene demoniac does not seem to have been any more "needed" as a community scapegoat. Mark reports that he was chained not in order to tether him to the community but because "he was striking himself with rocks" (κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν

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[164] Robert Hamerton-Kelly (*The Gospel and the Sacred*, 1994) 75.
[165] Herman Waetjen (*A Reordering of Power*, 1989) 115-119.

λίθοις, 5.5).[166] Waetjen suggests that in reading this pericope "the figurative language of this myth should not be construed literally. The shackles and chains may simply represent different types of social control."[167] The shackles and chains in such a multivalent text as Mark would not seem fit *solely* for literal construction. This is, however, a narrative, not a psalm or a didactic discourse: absent any argument that the narrative entirety of Mark is allegorical, and given the context, it would be unusual for a text to depict chains and their effects in such detail if they had no literal meaning at all.

There remains also the question of why, if Mark is so thoroughly anti-Roman, it took 1,910 years and the accumulation of tremendous socio-cultural barriers before anyone realized it. After Nero's purges in the 50s, at least a decade before the composition of Mark, state persecution became a potential risk for Jesus followers, a situation reflected in Revelation. Christian communities that were not persecuted must have been aware of others in the empire who were persecuted during the first three centuries of Christianity. Both Roman persecutors and Christian apologists documented the controversies. Nowhere in all the accusations against Christians, whether preserved in hostile or apologetic sources, are any charges implying political subversion or revolutionary insurgencies such as those that politicized readings of possession suggest. Christians eager to die publicly for their faith might be expected to have claimed or engaged in insurgency in its name had they considered it a tenet of their belief system. Roman authorities who felt that Christians were a threat to their security similarly might have been expected to raise or invent this allegation if

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[166] On this point see also Derrett ("Spirit-Possession") 287.
[167] Waetjen 117.

Christians were engaging in, or suspected of engaging in, the sort of political activities that Hollenbach et al suggest. Responses to such allegations might then appear in the apologetic writings or in exhortations to martyrdom. The available evidence, however, suggests that none of the early audiences of the synoptic gospels and traditions, including many or even most early Christians, ascertained this meaning of the gospels, despite the inseparability of their lives and deaths from the Roman empire and all that its power entailed. This absence of sociopolitical subversion among early Christians who were not afraid to die for their beliefs, or reluctant to encourage others to do likewise, suggests that they did not associate their religion with any lasting earthly political order, whether the Roman one or any proposed egalitarian alternative to it. This suggests that interpreters from the first century through the twenty-first have failed to develop a systematic political reading of possession and exorcism not because of any entanglement with imperial powers – although many have been so entangled – but because the text does not lend itself to such readings.

The appearance of concerns about possession in pro-imperial texts compromises the political liberation hypothesis as well. Josephus,[168] as noted previously, reports that Vespasian's court was impressed a Jewish sage's exorcisms. At least three exorcisms number among Apollonios of Tyana's miraculous deeds in the *Life* commissioned by an empress herself, Julia Domna. The connotations of exorcism may have changed as it was reinterpreted over the centuries, but it would be surprising if an emperor of Vespasian's experience failed to notice its supposedly obvious political overtones. Guijarro Oporto

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[168] *Antiquities* 8.127.

suggests that "viewed in their original peasant context and in the political situation of first-century Galilee, the exorcisms of Jesus reveal subversive connotations that might have been lost in part as his literate followers recorded his words and deeds in a new situation in which exorcisms had different connotations (Oakman: 109-10)."[169] If the original "subversive connotations" were as prominent as Guijarro Oporto himself claims, however, they would have been difficult for a redactor to overlook. His primary argument, following Hollenbach, is that Jesus' exorcisms were essential to the authorities' hostility toward and plots against him. This scenario requires that Jesus' exorcisms appear revolutionary to his immediate followers, literate Pharisees, scribes, and Sadduccees in Jesus' lifetime, presumably literate Roman officials, and illiterate repositories of the oral traditions arising from the interactions between these groups, but hidden from the author or editor who heard and collected these oral traditions in the midst of an anti-colonial war forty years later. Absent further evidence, such a claim seems improbable.

If Jesus' exorcism ministry as depicted in Mark is a strategy of anti-imperial resistance, it is an ineffective one. Possessed people are cured of their demons, but their respective positions vis-à-vis Rome remain unchanged. The Capernaum demoniac is no longer a charity case; instead, he is restored to normalcy. Mark gives no indication of what becomes of him after the exorcism, but given that the text depicts an effective healing and no remarkable aftermath, the likeliest speculation would seem to be that he resumed life as a productive part of the local economy, a source of taxes and tributes for the empire. Jesus

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[169] Guijarro Oporto 125.

commands the Gerasene ex-demoniac not to bring good news to the poor or to preach liberation from the evil empire, but only "said to him, 'Get up to your house and your [friends, family] and give them news of how much the Lord has done for you" (λέγει αὐτῷ Ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς καί ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν, 5.19). There are no explicit promises that the Lord will do anything for the people of the Decapolis, and Jesus does nothing more for them during his lifetime. Neither are there instructions as to what the people of the Decapolis should do as a result of this news, whether to revolt against their oppressors, to pray, to repent, or to react in any other way. Obeying Jesus, the man "departed and started to preach in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him" (ἀπῆλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηπύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 5.20). The result, as is typical for Mark, is that "everyone marvelled," (πάντες ἐθαύμαζον, 5.20), not that everyone established collective farms or started a rent strike. If possession had been the Syrophoenician girl's only recourse against the demands of a repressive patriarchy, Jesus' exorcism worsens her situation by removing her only available defense. As a healthy, normal girl, she presumably faces eventual marriage, motherhood, and service to her husband's household in a society that oppresses women, whereas she presumably could have avoided this fate by remaining a demoniac under her mother's care. The convulsive boy, similarly, must now negotiate the reality of his subordinate place in a patriarchal household, rather than avoiding or subverting it as a possession victim. If possession in Mark is a reaction to oppression, Jesus appears not as a liberator but as an oppressor.

The misunderstanding of possession in Mark as solely a matter of sublimated political protest goes beyond the level of a simple error. The anthropologist Robert Shanafelt notes that investigations of human and social behaviour entail "ethical consequences" of which researchers must remain aware:

> ...one should hardly forget the truth-claims of seekers can have consequences that go beyond harmless mental fascinations. I am not content to let go unchallenged the claims of people who think there are vampires and then act in the world as if they are vampires, especially if this leads to cases like that of the Kentucky teenagers who sacrificed animals, drank each other's blood, murdered two parents in Florida, then headed to New Orleans in an apparent attempt to meet Anne Rice, author of *Interview with a Vampire* [sic].[170]

The implications of exclusively political readings of possession and exorcism in Mark present similar ethical questions. Crossan's use of the Anneliese Michel case, for example, is difficult enough on its own, but subsequent studies in the same vein have cited his conclusions and extended them without addressing any of their problems. Information about the case is not lacking, and scholars can hardly fail to be aware of an increasing number of similar cases over the past two decades. There have been a number of widely reported cases of individual deaths resulting from exorcisms intended to cure neurological and psychiatric illnesses in recent years,[171] as well as cases of non-fatal exorcisms that caused

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[170] Shanafelt 334 (internal citations omitted). *Interview with the Vampire* is a novel.

[171] Examples include: 1966: Bernadette Hasler, 17, beaten, Zurich; 1976: infant boy, 3 months, battered and choked, Washington, D.C. area; 1978: Lisa Morales, 5, drowned, Santa Ana; 1980: Leon Justine Abraham, 20 months, burned, New York; 1985: brain-injured Robert Bloom, 27, beaten, near Washington, D.C.; Daniel Martin Jr., 4, beaten, Philadelphia; 1987: Tina Mancini, 17, abuse and suicide, Miami; Kimble Denise Lawrence, 8, stabbing, Baton Rouge; 1988: four British Columbia schizophrenia patients treated only with exorcism, suicide; Kimberly McZinc, 4, starved, Florida; 1990: Encarnacion Guardia, 36, beaten and poisoned, Granada; 1993: Mary Odegbami, 26, starved and choked, London; Maria Ylenia Politano, two months, beaten, Calabria; 1994: Mrs Joan Vollmer, strangled, Australia; 1995: Kira Canhoto, 2, starvation and choking, Ontario; schizophrenia patient Ha Kyung-A, 25, beaten, California; 1996: Kyung Jae Chung, 53, beaten, California; 1997: Amy Michelle Burney, 5, poisoned, New York; 1998: Charity Miranda Martin, 17, suffocated, Long Island; 1999: Saimani Amele, 4, throat crushed, Sydney; 2000: Victoria Climbié (also called Anna Climbié), 8,

or threatened significant damage.[172] The "ethical consequences" of modern exorcism seem to fall by the wayside of possession studies.

There has emerged in the modern world one example besides the Lunda-Luvale of possession cults developing in response to social oppression and tension. This has taken place over the last ten to fifteen years in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the former Zaire.[173] Possession cults and beliefs in the region predate the colonial period, apparently by centuries at least, and have been associated with beliefs in witchcraft. These beliefs have changed radically over the past few decades.[174] Historically, both possession and witchcraft could be positive or negative. A malevolent witch or a person possessed by

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tortured, London; 2001: "Adam," 8, cause indeterminate, London; Significance Oliver, 4, drowned, New York; 2002: Camille Seenauth, 31, beaten, Guyana; 2003: autistic Terrance Cottrell, 8, suffocated, Michigan; Walter Zepeda, 19, dehydration, Ontario; 2004: Keum Ok Lee, 37, strangled, New Zealand ; epileptic Farhana Khan, 20, whipped, New Zealand; 2005: schizophrenia patient, Sister Maricica Irina Comici, 23, crucified and smothered, Romania; infant, dismembered, and thirteen-year-old, stoned, Penjamo, Mexico; 2006: Malissa Mayfield, 29, strangled, Liverpool; Lichma Devi, 35, beaten, Rajasthan. See bibliography for citations.

[172] 1980s and early 1990s: repeated group assaults on Carla Jinine Morris, a woman in her twenties, Sydney; early 1990s: sexual abuse and torture of several women in an Anglican parish, London; 1996: terrorization and forced exorcism of a fourteen-year-old boy by a school counsellor, New Mexico; abuse of Laura Schubert, 17, Texas; the stabbing and assault of a woman who had just given birth, Australia; 1997: beating of an eight-year-old boy, New York; 2002: starvation of adult depression patient Isaac Muñoz in an evangelical church, Argentina; 2004: assault on Amutha Valli, 48, Singapore; 2005: confidence scheme, Germany; 2006: dysmenorrhea patient, 26, prescribed exorcism rather than medical treatment by a London gynaecologist. See bibliography for citations.

[173] Approximately 75% of the population of the DRC identifies itself as Christian, the result of Western missionary influence beginning in the 19th century. There as everywhere, the texts and traditions of "Christianity," however defined, interacted with the local culture in unique ways.

[174] The overviews in the following section draw on the official reports of several government commissions, human rights organizations, and academic studies. These include Javier Aguilar Molina's "The Invention of Child Witches," 2005; Eleanor Stobart, "Child Abuse Linked to Accusations of 'Possession' and Witchcraft,'" 2006; Human Rights Watch [HRW], "What Future?," Apr. 2006; Naomi Cahn, "Poor Children," winter 2006; and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children [APPG], "'Child witches', child soldiers, child poverty and violence," Nov. 2006. Given the recent emergence of this issue, the mass media is also a source of information. Relevant articles are, from 1999, Jeremy Vine, "Congo witch-hunt's child victims"; 2003: James Astill, "Congo casts out its 'child witches'"; 2005: BBC, "Call for action on child exorcism"; Cindi John, "'Exorcisms are a part of our culture'"; Angus Crawford, "Congo's child victims of superstition"; Tony Thompson, "Churches blamed for exorcism growth"; David Blair, "Starved and beaten with nails"; Richard Hoskins, "Torment of Africa's 'child witches'," 2006: Jonathan Clayton, "At eight years old, Cedric..."; Scott Baldauf, "In Congo, superstitions breed homeless children."

an evil spirit would undergo exorcism, or "deliverance" in the local dialect. This involved established ceremonies involving special prayers, dances, and ceremonial objects. Possession by an evil spirit was a common misfortune that could and often did befall anyone. Exorcism was a regular feature of the religious system, controlled and performed by the same priests as the rest of it. Possession was no reflection on the character or family of the affected person, who was fully re-integrated into normal life after the routine exorcism. At worst, a malevolent witch possessed by an evil spirit might be required to live at the outskirts of a settlement. Most possessed people were adults and came from all levels of society. As Christianity became prevalent, it tended to absorb these practices. Exorcisms might take place in churches rather than the traditional caves, for example, and crosses might replace animist fetishes, but there was little change in either the cosmological or the sociological dimension of the belief system in this respect.

The brutality of dictators, the effects of neighbouring conflicts that have spread into Congo, economic collapse, an ongoing war that his killed more people than any conflict since World War II, rapid urbanization, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic have combined to destroy nearly all of DRC's social and political infrastructure systems. Child soldiers, especially those who have been abducted and indoctrinated, have been instrumental in the military conflicts, especially given the large population of AIDS orphans. The result is that "never have children occupied such a prominent place in Congolese society. Children... are perceived by this society as actors and aggressors, as a threat rather than needing to be protected... [especially] the *kadogo*, made famous on Kabila senior's arrival in Kinshasa in

1996, are known for being child soldiers capable of incarnating evil and death."[175] This has contributed to a widespread fear of children, especially resented orphans dependent on economically disadvantaged, often ill, distant relatives for care. An estimated 250,000 children have been forced out of homes and onto the streets in DRC in recent years,[176] and multiple human rights investigations have found that about 70% of these children were expelled after being accused of sorcery and subjected to non-traditional exorcism ceremonies[177] that began to develop in specifically anti-colonial contexts in the 1920s.[178] Exorcisms of children accused of being witches or possessed exist in a context outside established churches in non-hierarchical, charismatic churches in which anyone can become a pastor. These ceremonies are far removed from traditional, routine prayer ceremonies. The well-reputed charity Save the Children, in its report on the homeless "child witches," provides insight into the workings of these exorcisms:

> Having visited almost a hundred of these churches, our programme found deplorable and inhumane conditions: children living outside in bad weather, a lack of sanitation or drinking water, children sleeping in basic conditions, one on top of the other... We sometimes observed children chained up. It is often a very sad sight: adults, people suffering from psychiatric problems, mingling with children... starving and paralysed through fear or mistrust. Deliverance itself usually takes place at night... There is a whole range of practices including: anal flushing with holy water, purging through the ingestion of oils and other substances, collective incisions using just one razor blade and the administration of dangerous substances to the eyes...[179]

Other credible investigations have found routine "fasting" for weeks at a time, beating, whipping, burning, sexual assault, having oil or other substances poured into the ears, and

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[175] Aguilar Molina 19.
[176] APPG 3.
[177] HRW 47.
[178] Aguilar Molina 25.
[179] Aguilar Molina 30.

rubbing spices into the genitals. Those children who survive the exorcisms are then abandoned rather than re-integrated into their families. The majority of street children surveyed in human rights investigations reported having been subjected to these practices. The responsible parties are rarely investigated, much less punished. Many children apparently have been killed, although precise figures are not available.

The English-language news media has covered this phenomenon for several years, particularly after the surfacing of a number of child abuse cases among Congolese communities in London. This is a case in which biblically influenced possession beliefs are indeed a means of subverting oppressive social and political conditions and coping with life stress outside the acceptable confines of a hierarchical system. These features of the phenomenon seem to risk limiting the response to it:

> Any idealisation of cultural practices and notions of survival must be avoided. This bad practice, which continues to undermine certain university-inspired pieces of research, is unable to distinguish between the admirable resilience of people and destructive or pathological social practices. The accusations of witchcraft made against children are [here] more in line with a notion of social cleansing and a search for profit than an attempt to reintegrate children.... Far from the rather idealistic description of some academics and anthropologists – who see the [exorcistic] churches as alternatives to violence – for the most part we found real profit-making enterprises, hiding behind the façade of religion.[180]

The "exorcism" and abandonment of child "witches" had not begun in any large scale when Hollenbach and Crossan published their respective studies. At this date, however, Horsley and Ched Myers are still advocating possession-as-peaceful-revolution hypotheses[181] with no reference to this unmistakable and disastrous parallel. This must owe to a simple lack of information, as their intentions are unmistakably good, but it remains troubling. The DRC

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[180] Aguilar Molina 34-35.

[181] A November, 2006 symposium at the Presbyterian College in Montreal had them advocating these views.

situation, coupled with Horsley's willingness to construe Ayatollah Khomeini almost as another, simply misguided modern religious liberator of the poor akin to Jesus,[182] suggests certain methodological problems. Both religious movements and possession beliefs, recent history has proven, can be effective agents of social change, including anti-imperial social change. This same history has not proven them to be positive ones.

The politicized reading of possession and exorcism in Mark at best overstates the text's own evidence and convolutes its more general critique of oppression. Such a reading also retrojects modern sociological theories onto ancient religious beliefs: Jesus or Mark exchange miraculous psychoanalytic training for miraculous familiarity with post-modern academic Marxist theory. At worst, this approach risks romanticizing atrocities currently being perpetrated. The politicized reading seems well-intentioned and in may offer insight into some dimensions of the Gerasene demoniac pericope, but ultimately it fails in its goal of making Mark's exorcisms understandable for modern readers.

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[182] Horsley (2003) 54-68. He depicts the anti-shah movement in Iran as a unified force behind the Ayatollah, who eventually succumbed to the machinations of right-wing clerics. Scholars familiar with Iranian history, especially those hostile to the U.S.-backed shah, would seem disinclined to endorse this depiction. See, for example, Minoo Derayeh, *Gender Equality in Iranian History*, 2006; Haleh Esfandiari, *Reconstructed Lives*, 1997; Hammed Shanidian, *Women in Iran* (2002), vol. 1 and 2; Ehsan Naraghi, *From Palace to Prison*, 1991; Morris Mottale, *Iran* (1995) 30-35; Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran* (2003) 214-222.

V. The Unknown, Fear, and the Numinous

The lack of specificity about the nature demons and the apparent opacity of their motives in ancient narrative, especially in Mark, may themselves be critical in understanding demons' cosmological and religious functions.[183] It is easy to forget, so many centuries later, that the people in Mark's universe are very much afraid of demons. The particular understanding of demons was transformed out of recognizable existence centuries ago, and rationalism has eroded the memory of it further. The modern academic tendency to build upon the Greek philosophers' interest in categorization and classification adds another layer of difficulty. Lambek's observations about this tendency in anthropology could apply equally well to many disciplines: "Anthropology has tended to focus on that which is most systematic or most elaborate, hence to provide the most elegant analysis of fullest reading. But the unsystematzed is not necessarily unimportant, either for the locals or for refining our own theoretical understanding of religion and culture. Indeed, this *absence* of system may be part of what Weber meant by enchantment."[184] Mark's use of the vocabulary of fear in relation to demons φόβος in explicit connection with demons complicates the matter. The only explicit use is in 5.15, when the Gerasenes "came toward Jesus, and saw seated clothed and sound-minded the demoniac having had Legion, and they became afraid" (ἔρχονται πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ θεωροῦσιν τὸν δαιμονιζόμενον καθήμενον ἱματισμένον καὶ

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[183] At this point it might seem natural to consult the findings of Mary Douglas (*Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1966]), as LaHurd (156-158) does via Victor Turner. This would be a mistake. As will be discussed subsequently, the nature the phenomena under consideration here, and the terror that they hold, arises in part from the fact that they are outside and beyond any such system of organization of ordinary taboos and other categories. For a discussion of Douglas' work in connection to other literature of fear, see Carroll (*The Philosophy of Horror*, 1990) 27-35.

[184] "Afterword: Spirits and Their Histories" (1996), 241.

σωφρονοῦντα τὸν ἐσχηκότα τὸν λεγιῶνα καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν). Their fear may be of Jesus' power more than anything else, as they have just lost a great deal of livestock, but if this were the only issue, one would expect them to be more angry than frightened. Legion's behaviour, or the victim's, was upsetting enough; Jesus' power is even greater, and he has just exercised it in a rather inconvenient manner.

The whole situation is one of what Geyer terms the "anomalous frightful" Fear is not a major component of the explicit vocabulary of demons and possession in Mark. The gospel often discusses fear and being afraid, even ending with "for they were afraid" (ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ, 16.8). Many people are afraid in Mark: the Gerasenes, woman with the issue of blood, the disciples, and Herod are only a few examples. Φόβος and φοβέω appear thirteen times in eleven pericopes,[185] with two additional instances of trembling (τρόμος, 5.33 and 16.08). The counts are not significantly different for Matthew[186] and Luke,[187] but most of instances there are in Markan pericopes, rather than M, L, or Q material. Fear, then, is a special concern of Mark's. Most of Mark's mentions of fear relate to demonstrations of Jesus' identity, as the first instance demonstrates. Fear occurs in connection with Jesus' stilling of the storm, *after* which he asks his disciples, "'Why

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[185] 4.40; 5.15; 5.33, 36; 6.20; 6.50; 9.06; 9.32; 10.32; 11.18; 11.32, 12.12; and 16.8 – the stilling of the storm, the Gerasene demoniac, the bleeding woman, Herod and John, walking on the sea, the transfiguration, the journey through Galilee, the passion prediction on the road to Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the arguments with the scribes, and the women at the tomb.

[186] Matthew has φόβος or φοβέω twenty times (1.20; 2.22; 8.26; 9,8; 10.26, 28 (twice), 31; 14.5, 26, 27, 30; 17.7; 21.26, 46; 25.25; and 28.4, 5, 8, and 10) and τηροῦντες once (28.4): twenty-one uses distributed among eleven pericopes. Only the first two uses, in Joseph's stories, are distinctive of Matthew.

[187] Φόβος and φοβέω are in 1.12, 13, 20, 50, 65, 74; 2.9, 10; 5.10; 7.16; 8.25, 35; 9.34, 45; 12.4, 5 (three times), 7, 32; 18.2, 4; 19.21; 20.19; 21.26; 22.2; and 23.40, a total of twenty-six uses; τρέμουσα appears in 8.47. The first eight instances are in the annunciation/nativity portion of the gospel. The remaining eighteen, in addition to the one of trembling, are divided between mostly Marcan pericopes, with the exception of the widow's son at Nain (7.16), or in parables.

are you cowardly?' And they feared [with] great fear and were saying to one another, 'Who is this that the very wind and sea/lake submit to him?'" (Τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὔπω ἔχετε πίστιν· καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, Τίς ἄρα οὑτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ, 4.40). The text does not explicitly state that the disciples are frightened until after the storm, but it would be idle to question whether the prospect at hand is a frightening one: "A great storm of wind came and the waves threw [themselves] into the boat so that the boat was already being flooded... [the disciples] said to him, "Teacher, is it not a care to you that we are being destroyed?" (καί γίνεται λαῖλαψ μεγάλη ἀνέμου καὶ τὰ κύματα ἐπέβαλλεν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ὥστε ἤδη γεμίζεσθαι τὸ πλοῖον... καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ Διδάσκαλε οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα, 4.40-41). The disciples go from being afraid of dying (4.38) in the storm to being afraid of Jesus' powers.

Immediately after this, Jesus' rebuke of incorporeal beings into the sea frightens another group of people by virtue of its power.[188] After Jesus exorcises the local demoniac, the Gerasenes "came toward Jesus, and saw seated clothed and sound-minded the demoniac having had Legion, and they became afraid" (5.15). In this case it is not the demon or the former possession phenomenon that frightens them, but rather Jesus' demonstration of power over the demons, a spectacular demonstration with detrimental consequences to them.[189] This is the only one time explicitly fear-related language occurs in connection with

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[188] For further discussion of the connections between the pericopes, see Tolbert 164-182; Camery-Hoggatt 131-134; Edwards 159.

[189] Any number of commentators have criticized the Gerasenes for asking Jesus to leave, inferring from the text that they consider the economic value of their livestock more than the well-being of their neighbour (e.g.,

possession and exorcism. The text does not state that the demoniac and his conduct, or perhaps the demons themselves, were formerly a source of fear to the townspeople, but it is possible that the author intends readers to infer this. Given the often-noted stylistic commonalities and the interweaving between the Gerasene pericope and the storm at sea,[190] it would seem unwise to dismiss the possibility on its face, although certainty is not possible. Mark's first exorcism narrative establishes a possible connection between possession/exorcism and the sense of reverent fear that borders on conventional fear: "They were awestruck at his teaching, for he taught as someone having power/authority and not as the scribes. Suddenly there was in their assembly a man in unclean spirit..." (καὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς. καὶ εὐθὺς ἦν τῇ συναγωγῇ αὐτῶν ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, 1.22-23). Ἐκπλήσσομαι does not denote fear *per se*, but it does suggest that they were both surprised and more impressed than they could have expected when suddenly (εὐθύς) the demoniac interrupted. The "shock and awe" of Jesus' spiritual wisdom, status, and power immediately draws demons into conflict with him. It would be as idle to deny that demons are afraid of Jesus as to deny that the disciples are afraid of the storm. "What [is there] to you and to me, Jesus Nazarene; did you come to destroy us?" (Τί

Hunter 63; Newheart [*My Name is Legion*, 2004] 45-46). Even from the perspective of a modern reader, from which the destruction of the blameless animals is upsetting in the extreme, this seems wrong-headed and uncharitable. Jesus' display of power is quite spectacular on its face; it is hardly surprising that the townspeople, who know nothing of Jesus, should be overwhelmed or frightened by it, especially if they are supposed to be understood as subsistence farmers who have just lost 2,000 head of large livestock. It is worth considering here that every ancient angel appears to humans with the greeting "Fear not!" – in Mark's cultural context, fear at the sudden intrusion of any supernatural power into the ordinary seems to be instinctive rather than blameworthy.

[190] See Edwards (*The Gospel According to Mark*, 2002) 159; Aus 91-92.

ἡμῖν καί σοὶ, Ἰήσοῦ Ναζαρηνέ; ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς, 1.24) are not the words of a confident or complacent demon. "Being destroyed," as the demon here and the disciples in the storm describe themselves, is a fearsome prospect; there can be little need for the demon to add, "Because I would be frightened if that were the case." The same is true of Legion, who after Jesus' initial command of "Come out from the man, unclean spirit," (Ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, 5.8), echoes the Capernaum demon's words but emphasizes his/their plight at Jesus' hands: "What [is] to me and to you, Jesus son of God most high; I implore by God, do not torture me" (Τί ἐμοί καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱε τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν μή με βασανίσῃς, 5.7). To demand specific verbal proof of the fearsome nature of the prospect of destruction and torture would be akin to demanding specific verbal proof for the pain experienced during crucifixion. If the possession/exorcism pericopes are verbally subtler, they are situated to remind readers or hearers of the atmosphere of fear in which Jesus often operates in Mark.

Immediately after Jesus frightens his disciples and the Gerasenes, as well as, implicitly, Legion, he frightens the bleeding woman with his supernatural awareness of having been touched (5.30): "But the woman fearing and trembling, came throwing herself before him" (ἡ δὲ γυνὴ φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα ὁ γέγονεν αὐτῇ, 5.33) and tells Jairus, who has expressed no explicit fear, "Fear not, only believe" (Μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε, 5.36). These later instances have less of a thematic connection to the Gerasene demoniac pericope than does the storm-stilling one, but they do situate the lengthiest and most detailed, and most explicit, demon-related pericope in the gospel within a context of

fearing. Jesus' most substantive exorcism is the most verbally connected to relief and the inducing of fear, establishing a context of fear promotion and deliverance for the operation of the exorcism ministry and the problem that necessitates it. It is in such a context, as Geyer notes, that

> before the crucifixion story there are already in the Gospel [of Mark] stories of fear, indeterminacy, perplexity, and uncertainty. These stories not only stand in the shadow of the Gospel's culminating death, but their themes also foreshadow that death and its terror, ghastliness, hopelessness, and revenge. These stories represent the anomalous and the frightful, and they are found in Mark 4:35-6:56, a literary cycle that focuses on anomaly, uncertainty, indeterminacy, impurity, violence, revenge, the demonic, fear, and loss of place and community.[191]

Geyer's exploration is primarily of this section of Mark (4.35-6.56), but fear is a central theme in the gospel as a whole. It ends with a crucifixion and a resurrection, the witnesses to which "said nothing to anyone; for they were frightened" (οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γαρ, 16.8). The importance of fear in Mark would therefore be difficult to overestimate. Given its importance, its multivocality would seem equally significant, especially given the difficulty of getting any two interpreters to agree on the range of meanings for potentially clearer words and themes in Mark, such as ὁ Ἰησους.

Mark, then, is a gospel about fear, among other subjects. An exploration of what fear means and signifies within Mark, and how it functions, is beyond the present scope, and indeed perhaps beyond the scope of any one book. It is, however, critical to understand, insofar as it is possible, the connections between fear and demons in Mark, which requires at least a limited exploration of fear itself in Mark. Here cross-disciplinary perspectives are useful, as Mark does not necessarily "construe" or "represent" fear in the same way as it may

[191]Geyer 4. Aichele (*The Phantom Messiah*, 2006) provides a book-length study of the eerie features of Mark, although exorcism is not his primary focus.

construe or represent other things. Such a representation is probably impossible. There has emerged over the past four decades cross-disciplinary consensus for a multi-modal model of fear, a consensus following the collapse of the classical conditioning model due to the accumulation of contradictory empirical evidence.[192] For that matter, fear itself has been known for decades not to differ between complex vertebrates.[193] The neurobiological "circuitry" of fear has been known for more than a century, without dispute, to be ruled by the amygdala, a "primitive" portion[194] of the limbic system associated that is similar among most animals with complex brains[195] and not associated with complex thought, and by the medulla oblongata, which controls reflexes, i.e., non-conscious functions.[196] The few anthropological studies that have attempted to investigate cultural differences in the immediate experience, i.e., the reflex, of fear, as opposed to social beliefs about, have been frustrated by their failure to find any such differences,[197] any more than they would find cultural differences in the immediate experience of any other reflex.

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[192] For a history of the failure of the conditioning model, see Rachman's (1990) chapter on "The Conditioning Theory of Fear Acquisition... And Why It Failed" (ch. 11; 165-184). Ehrlich (2005) provides briefer and less technical discussions (216, 366-367n.9). For a description of the multi-model model, which posits a complex system of fear acquisition by reflex, instinct, a few forms of conditioning, and other factors, see Graham Davey (2002); Ronald Kleinknecht (2002); Riche Poulton and Ross Menzies (2002); David Schmitt and June Pilcher (2004).

[193] i.e., mammals, birds, reptiles, and some fish.

[194] In evolutionary biology, "primitive" denotes that a characteristic appeared relatively early in the history of the evolutionary branch in question.

[195] I.e., reptiles, birds, amphibians, and true fish. Arthropods, of course, also have brains, but of a different variety.

[196] For an overview of the general function of the amygdala and of the limbic system in relation to fear, see Alain Boissy (1995); Alexander Ploghaus (1999); Ron Vannelli (2001) 95-105, 112-124, 147-150. Belina Liddell (2005).

[197] Wolff and Langley's "Cultural Factors and the Response to Pain: A Review" (1968) is one of the last examples at an attempt, an attempt at which it fails. Scarry's *The Body in Pain* (1985) explores particular cultural manifestations, or rather inabilities to express manifestly, of the reaction to pain; the introduction (3-21) is particularly useful. See also Cohen ("The Animated Pain of the Body," 2000) 37. For a discussion of the

This is not deny that humans might develop symbolic associations and systems constructed around fear in its post-immediate phase,[198] nor that individuals are incapable of extinguishing or "overcoming" fear in some cases. Instances of both these situations manifestly exist in abundance. What it indicates, rather, is that the immediate experience of fear, like that of pain, is a reflexive "common denominator" in the face of which ordinary systems of thought, communication, and representation become meaningless or inaccessible. People everywhere, with almost no linguistic or cultural variations, tend to narrate pain with the equivalent of "it hurt" or "I was in pain."[199] At most, they may describe or quantify particular pain experiences by likening them to other, obviously painful, phenomena, along such lines as, "It was as though I had been stabbed." Literary depictions of pain do not attempt to identify it as a category per se: pain defies such attempts, which are in any case unnecessary due to the universality of the pain experience. Narrative mimesis, the inducement from the audience of emotional identification with the characters, requires no description of pain, only a mention of it. Authors may attempt to quantify pain by indicating whether something is very painful or only slightly painful, or they may distinguish between sharp, dull, stinging, and other forms of pain. Pain itself, unqualified in its essence, nevertheless remains the common denominator. All available evidence indicates that the same is true of fear.

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neurological genesis of the pain response, see Ploghaus et al ("Dissociating Pain from Its Anticipation in the Human Brain," 1999) 1979-1981.

[198] Joanna Bourke provides an excellent discussion of cultural constructions and function of fear in the West, especially the post-industrial West, although the distressing nature of many the examples and the detail in which she explores them may render her book effectively inaccessible to many potential readers.

[199] Scarry 4-5; cf. Cohen 37.

Explorations of fear along these lines are part of the task of the legitimate field of socio-biology. This is field is so misunderstood within the humanities, albeit sometimes with only itself to blame, that a detour is in order to explain it.[200] Briefly, rigorous socio-biology confines its observations to behaviours that occur across cultures and across species, basing its extrapolations on what might legitimately be heritable instincts.[201] The decoding of genomes, contrary to popular understanding, means only that it is known which individual base-pair sequences code for which polypeptide products. In some cases, this can be associated with particular, discrete phenotypic expressions; in others, such information is elusive. On the level of behaviour, genes obviously code for the structure and function of the brain, some pathways of which are known or reasonably postulated to govern reflexes or instinctive behaviours that are observed in multiple species. From this point, it becomes possible to undertake or examine investigations into the evolutionary history of the adaptive functions and evolutionary costs of such behaviours.

Socio-biology has developed disreputable associations due to the popularization and attention given to overenthusiastic and dubious research. Often such hypothesizing receives no support from the scientific community, relying as it often does on tenuous methods and basing its conclusions on insufficient or faulty evidence, or sometimes entirely on conjecture.

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[200] Only the roughest and barest outline is possible in the present circumstances. Further discussion of the subject is of course desirable. Stone et al.'s textbook *Genes, Culture, and Human Evolution* (2007) is one of the best and most recent overviews of this material. Rice and Moloney's *Biological Anthropology and Prehistory* (2005) provides an overview of a particular range of related questions. Vannelli's *Evolutionary Theory and Human Nature* (2001) is less comprehensive, but it is useful for readers approaching the question from a humanities perspective. Ehrlich's *Human Natures* is less technical but provides useful information accessible to a well-informed wide audience.

[201] On this point see Feinman ("Cultural Evolutionary Approaches and Archaeology," 2000) 3-8.

Critiques of socio-biology's excesses, errors, and over-enthusiasm have been many and just, although misunderstandings of science are common enough in the humanities that some critiques do not seem germane to their target.[202] The problems and excesses associated with socio-biology, and widespread misunderstand of it, do not, however, negate the fact that responsible research based on extensive and properly gathered cross-species evidence has yielded some insight into instinctive, non-conditioned behavioural patterns. Post-enlightenment science was hardly required to demonstrate that most people and animals have the same immediate reaction to painful and frightening stimuli, and that all of them are interested in staying alive and reproducing.[203] Legitimate research in socio-biology and genetics has yielded specific empirical descriptions of behavioural patterns that appear to be

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[202] For a considered, thorough, and often concessive consideration and rebuttal of some of these critiques by an evolution-oriented sociologist, see Sanderson's *The Evolution of Human Sociality* (2001) 1-95. Sanderson notes the shortcomings and inaccuracies of many of the common critiques from purely theoretic sociology, functionalism, social constructionism, (post-)structuralist, and postmodernist perspectives of various kinds. He also provides critical analysis of the approaches he sees as more supportable (e.g., 106-108, 114-119). It must be admitted that his own particular analysis, set forth in the book's fifth section (161-330) exemplifies exactly the kind of research that valid critiques of socio-biology attack. The first sections of the book, however, are both useful and commendable.

[203] The experience of fear in mammals exists in measurable form as a set of common reactions to stimuli perceived as immediately threatening. The reactions are familiar: sudden vocalization or silence, fleeing, freezing, acceleration of vital signs, upsets or activations of the digestive system, stimulation of the excretory system (this varies, of course: many animals do not sweat, and marine and aquatic animals' bladders differ from those of their terrestrial counterparts), and loss of consciousness or other neurological symptoms. The commonalities of the stimuli themselves are also remarkably similar across many groups of mammals. Stimuli that even the sharpest critics of socio-biology and evolutionary psychology acknowledge as non-conditioned fear arousers in primates include those associated with snakes, large predators, heights, being "borne down on," sudden approach, forms of intense scrutiny, and "creepy-crawlies," and above all these things the sudden and unknown, the aggressively unfamiliar. (See Morreal 360-362; Boissy 1995, 165-191; Panksepp and Panksepp 108-131; Matthen 105-132; Davey 151-158; Poulton and Menzies 147-149, with a caveat about failure to consider potential supplementary or complementary hypotheses; Kleinknecht 159-163; Grinde 904-909; Schmitt and Pilcher 643-649; Bracha 2006, 827-853, with caveats about over-enthusiasm and the failure to consider potentially maladaptive consequences of running away from the food. Many of these authors disagree with one another's conclusions, strenuously in some cases, but agree on certain fundamental issues.) Some of these factors, as many authors note, may be associated with fear of or revulsion toward corpses, excrement, decaying matter, etc.

innate upon activation.[204] Successful reproductive and defensive strategies are most heavily favoured selectively, while unsuccessful ones receive tremendous negative selection.[205] Such instincts and impulses are therefore highly conserved, and many are observed across both cultures and species. This includes many behaviours that are subject to abstract cultural and symbolic valuations, particularly in the areas of danger response, food gathering, sexuality,[206,207] and kinship,[208] although there is wide variation in the construction of

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[204] That is, a very small child might instinctively fear predation stimuli, but one frightening encounter with an unhappy large dog may be sufficient to induce a fear of snakes as well, even absent conditioning. See preceding note for references providing more detailed explanations.

[205] See preceding note on overviews of questions pertaining to socio-biology.

[206] For example, all animals that reproduce sexually are heavily invested in mate recognition and incest avoidance strategies: non-human animals are much like human ones, among whom Roman Egypt is the only culture ever known to have condoned primary incest (alleged other examples having largely proven to be based on mistranslations of ancient texts, misunderstandings and misconstruals of maternal uncles' "parenting" roles in many matrilineal societies, and inaccurate extrapolations of very limited ritual royal incest, some of which seems to have been symbolic and not performed). This does not mean that incest never occurs. As Robin Fox states, "Incest does sometimes occur. But usually for one reason or another it does not. And if all laws against it were dropped tomorrow it still would not" (*Kinship and Marriage* [1983] 76). There is in agreement with him a consensus, *contra* Freud and Lévi-Strauss (who did no fieldwork or systematic research), among sociologists, anthropologists, ethologists, zoologists, geneticists, evolutionary biologists, ecologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists that all animals that reproduce sexually are heavily invested in kin recognition and incest avoidance strategies, the latter in humans probably best explained by the Westermarck effect. For more detailed discussion, particularly with reference to humans and other primates, see the second edition (1983) of Fox's *Kinship and Marriage* (1967), 54-76; Shepher's *Incest* (1983), especially 7-49, 69-131; Turner and Maryanski's *Incest* (2005), 27-52, 83-161, 189-200; and the following conference papers collected in Wolf and Durham's *Inbreeding, Incest, and the Incest Taboo* (2001): Wolf's introduction (1-23), Patrick Bateson's "Inbreeding Avoidance and Incest Taboos" (24-37), Alan H. Bittles' "Genetic Aspects of Inbreeding and Incest" (38-60), Anne Pusey's "Inbreeding Avoidance in Primates" (61-75), Wolf's "Explaining the Westermarck Effect, or, What Did Natural Selection Select For?" (76-92), Walter Scheidel's "Ancient Egyptian Sibling Marriage and the Westermarck Effect" (93-108), Neven Sesardic's "From Genes to Incest Taboos: The Crucial Step," 109-120), Durham's "Assessing the Gaps in Westermarck's Theory (121-139), and Larry Arnhart's "The Incest Taboo as Darwinian Natural Right" (190-218).

[207] Complex animals, including human beings, also regularly engage in a number of non-reproductive sexual behaviours (e.g., autoerotic stimulation and same-sex erotic activities). Rigorous research (e.g., long-term field studies of animals in the wild and multi-modal, multi-factorial, trans-cultural studies of humans) has produced consensus across the same fields noted in the preceding note that these behaviours are instinctive, species-predictable, and do not appreciably vary between human societies regardless of prevailing attitudes toward and beliefs about this. This does not mean that people do not attach very different social and symbolic meanings to the same instinctive impulses and the behaviours toward which they impel humans and other animals. For further explanation and discussion, see Ehrlich 184-194; Sanderson 33-35, 55-57, 184-190; Rice and Moloney 203-206.

sociological categories around them.[209] Facial expressions are also automatic; suppressing or modifying them requires conscious effort and is only successful under controlled, limited circumstances.[210] Humans in all known cultures practice care for the sick and injured and rituals and ceremonies around the disposal of corpses, although the specific forms of such care and traditions vary significantly.

The accumulation of evidence has given rise to a cross-disciplinary understanding of the basis of fear as "multi-modal," based on considerable empirical evidence from ethological, cognitive psychological anthropological, and sociological field studies, relying

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[208] Although systems of conceptualizing, regulating, and understanding kinship vary dramatically between and even within cultures, there are some universals. Maternity is universally recognized, and so, therefore, is uterine siblinghood. A woman's children are always seen as related to her mother and to her uterine siblings, regardless of ideas about gender, parenting, etc. For further discussions of kinship reckoning, see Barnard and Good (*Research practices in the study of kinship*, 1984) 37-66; Hughes (*Evolution and Human Kinship*, 1988) 1-21, 34-71, 116-131; Harris (*Kinship*, 1990) 9-46; and the following essays collected in Parkin and Stone (*Kinship and Family*, 2004): editors' introduction, 1-23; Parkin's "Introduction: Descent and Marriage," 29-42; Robert H. Lowie's "Unilateral Descent Groups" (1950), 44-63; Adam Kuper's "Lineage Theory: A Critical Retrospect" (1982), 79-96; Parkin's "Introduction: Terminology and Affinal Alliance," 121-135; W.H.R. Rivers' "Kinship and Social Organization" (1968), 136-144; and Harold W. Scheffler's "Sexism and Naturalism in the Study of Kinship" (1991), 294-308.

[209] Ideas of marriage and family, and of parenting customs, demonstrate such variations. For example, anthropologists historically used the term "marriage" to describe any consenting relationship between the biological or social parents of a child, regardless of whether a culture itself has any ceremonies or legal constructs analogous or similar to Western ideas of "marriage" per se. The trend has changed in recent years in order to reflect the fact that many societies have more than one model of "marriage," or no concept of it at all. "Family," suggesting "default" assumptions of a the nuclear family that only became prominent it the West in the 17th and 18th centuries, is now generally recognized as a misleading catch-all, at best, for the diversity of ideas about kinship groups and human (and sometimes also non-human) relationships. For all these differences, however, human mothers, like those of other species, possess a universal instinct to smell and lick their infants, despite often receiving little or no cultural impetus to do so. It may only be the need for assistance during childbirth and the presence of negative pressures that keeps human mothers from instinctively consuming the placenta, as occurs in some cultures and most mammalian species. They also reflexively tend to hold their infants across the left breast, in proximity to the soothing heartbeat, regardless of which hand or side is dominant.

[210] See Cohen 37.

heavily on longitudinal ones.[211] The multi-modal model of fear in complex animals holds that some fears are the result of cultural and social influence, some are the result of specific traumas, and some are the innate products of natural selection on the reflexive portion of the neurological system. A stimulus that induces pain on an individual's first exposure to it will induce fear in subsequent confrontations, an observation true of all vertebrates. What has become increasingly clear over recent decades is that once an immature individual has experienced some fears of particular stimuli, other stimuli, including non-similar ones, will begin to induce fear upon the first encounter, before the individual has had any experience with them or suffered any pain because of them. As Morreal notes, "while most instances of fear in adults involve... mental representations and have intentional objects. Unlearned, objectless fear involving arousal and readiness to flee or protect oneself is common in the lower animals and in infants; adults, for all their own learned fears, also experience it."[212] Fear, then, is intimately connected to pain, as well as to the unknown and the indefinable. It is also connected to religion in many cases; Lovecraft is as accurate as any scholar in the field of religious studies in observing that

> no amount of rationalization, reform, or Freudian analysis can quite annul the thrill of the chimney-corner whisper or the lonely wood. There is here involved a psychological pattern or tradition as real and as deeply grounded in mental experience as any other pattern or tradition of mankind; coeval with the religious feeling and closely related to many aspects of it, and too much a part of our innermost biological heritage to lose keen potency over a very important, though not numerically great, minority of our species.[213]

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[211] The analysis in this section relies significantly on Boissy 1995, 165-191; Panksepp and Panksepp 108-131; Matthen 105-132; Davey 151-158; Poulton and Menzies 147-149; Kleinknecht 159-163; Grinde 904-909; Schmitt and Pilcher 643-649; Bracha 2006, 827-853.

[212] Morreal 360.

[213] *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1945) 13. See also Keller ("The Place of Fear in the Scheme of Things," 1946) 53-54.

Social and methodological developments since this writings might necessitate some refinement of the premise and problematize the unscientific appeal to biology. The essential point stands nonetheless, and Lovecraft states it as keenly as any exegete could hope to state it.

A fear reaction to sudden encounters with unknown environments or phenomena does not seem to require even this much conditioning, and it may be for this reason that across cultures, it is possible to observe regular, similar instances of fearful states with no obvious stimuli, and complexes of fear surrounding entities or states that are not believed to be possible to detect by any ordinary means. There is no known culture whose constituents are unfamiliar with fear of ghosts, wicked spirits, or other harmful, invisible entities whose presence cannot be detected by ordinary means. Distinction between these and "ordinary" spirits and beings is commonplace; as Shanafelt notes, "in non-Western contexts, contexts between normal and ultra-normal are also readily found... Boyer has observed that the Fang 'find stories of flying organs and mysterious witchcraft killings fascinating as well as terrifying, precisely because they violate their expectations of biological and physical phenomena.'"[214] As Geyer notes,

> "[James McClenon] argues that subjects often experience anomalies, or unexplained events in general, with 'wonderment.' Subsequently, individuals attribute explanations to those wondrous experiences that often do not agree with traditional explanations, even those from their own dominant cultures. Committed Buddhists, Christians, or atheists... typically did not use their religious or philosophical affiliations to explain what they thought had happened to them"[215]

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[214] Shanafelt 323. His article elaborates on this idea.

[215] Geyer 42. He notes that "Experiences identified as anomalous in McClenon's study include extrasensory perception, encounters with apparitions, out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, spiritual possession, pain and heat immunity, psychokinesis, encountered poltergeists, miraculous healings, and contact with the dead" (42).

Terror in the face of the supernatural is thus a "normal" response to the abnormal in many religious systems,[216] defying neat attempts at categorization. This is true whether the supernatural subject in question is benevolent or malevolent, but in either case the effect seems to be amplified when the encounter occurs outside "normal" religious contexts. The disquieting effects of Jesus' exorcisms, particularly in the case of the Gerasene demoniac,[217] become apparent in this context.

None of this indicates that of Mark's readers or hearers, now or in the first century, would have had a fear reaction because of encountering the text, or of any other demonic narrative. Indeed, it is usually the case that "one fears having confrontation with [a fearful stimulus] more so [sic] than one fears its mere existence... [fear] is an experience of the probability of coming-into-contact-with [sic] a threatening phenomenon."[218] Nor does this situation even suggest that many ancient people, upon encountering a demoniac, would have reacted as if they had suddenly encountered a discontented viper. Of significance, rather, is the fact that ancient evidence associates demon with feared, painful phenomena, and that Mark in particular emphasizes these elements of fear and suffering. The state of fear and suffering is why "spirits demand to be taken literally, in the here and now. Possession is an embodied phenomenon. It manifests itself in physical pain, spiritual trauma, convulsive behaviour, temporary dissociation, and sometimes... with explicit auto-aggression. It

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[216] For a detailed discussion of ancient beliefs about the role of fear in religion, see Gray (*Godly Fear*, 2003) 1-106.

[217] See Newheart (2004) 60-61.

[218] McFarlane 86. The adaptive value of instinctive fear responses (i.e., the selective pressure that necessitates them) is precisely the likelihood of facing a real threat.

demands a response..."[219] As McFarlane notes, "fear is much more than the substantial objects we claim to fear... [fear] becomes the condition of significance of these objects."[220] In representations of possession, the suffering and fear inherent to possession are the locus for the interaction between the text and the emotional mimesis and audience sympathy and interest that it seeks to elicit.[221] The text recalls readers' and hearers' knowledge of the universal experiences of pain and fear to produce a reaction that enables them to comprehend the text.

Biblical texts, including Mark, associate the experience of fear not only with negative phenomena such as destruction, but also with human/divine encounters that they depict positively. Divine messengers from Genesis onward tend to announce their presence with "Fear not!" or some variation thereof. "Fearing God" has a positive valence in most biblical texts, indicating or being commanded for righteousness.[222] Paul explains to the Corinthians that "Thus knowing fear of the lord we persuade people" (Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, 2 Cor 5.11) and urges that "Therefore having these proclamations, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of every stain of flesh and spirit, making complete [our] holiness in fear of God" (ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀγαπητοί καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἐπιτελοῦντες ἁγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ, 2 Cor 7.1). Mark does not refer to fear of God

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[219] Lambek 239.
[220] McFarlane 29.
[221] On this, see Carroll (*The Philosophy of Horror*, 1990), who notes the need to examine "the emotional response that horror is *supposed* to elicit" (30).
[222] For a discussion of positive fear in Hebrews, see Gray 187-214 (and 109-184 on the ideal of fearlessness in Hebrews). For philological analysis of fear-related vocabulary in the Hebrew Bible, see Gruber ("Fear, Anxiety and Reverence in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and Other North-West Semitic Languages," 1990) 411-422.

in this way, but fear at even benevolent demonstrations of Jesus' power and identity indicate immediate and concrete fear of the divinely connected. It is perhaps with reference to instances such as these that Otto, in speaking of the numinous as the ultimately *tremendum* and *mysterium*, notes of miracles that "Nothing can be found in all the world of natural feelings bearing so immediate an analogy *mutatis mutandis* to the religious consciousness of ineffable, unutterable mystery... This will be all the more true if the uncomprehended thing is at once might and fearful..."[223] Otto's universalizing and generalizing statements might be questionable, but he makes a useful observation concerning the awe-inducing and overwhelming effects that miracles and other "numinous/mundane" collisions are often depicted as having. This is particularly true, he posits, in connection to New Testament narratives

> which point to spontaneous responses of feeling when the holy is directly encountered in experience [e.g. Mt 5.8; Lk 5.8, 7.6]. Especially apt in this connexion is the passage in Mark 10.32: *καὶ ἦν προάγων αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο* ("and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid"). This passage renders with supreme simplicity and force the immediate impression of the numinous that issued from the man Jesus[224]... To this place belong further the belief in Jesus' supremacy over the demonic world and the tendency to legend that began to take effect from the start; the fact that his own relatives take him for a man "possessed,"[225] an involuntary acknowledgement of the "numinous" impression he made upon them...[226]

What all this means for interpretations of Mark's demonology is that in depicting frightening figures and evoking fear in the audience, Mark aims at least to recall a primary experience beyond rational comprehension. As fear relates to demons, the very vagueness of their

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[223] 65-66.
[224] This assessment stands for present purposes if applied to "the man Jesus *as Mark depicts him.*"
[225] Otto does not specify Mark here, but the material to which he refers is Markan. In assuming that the depiction of Jesus as an exorcist arises from "the tendency to legend that began to take effect from the start," he follows the "first category" of post-Enlightenment interpretations previously discussed.
[226] 162-163; parenthetical material original to Otto.

identity may be a component of the reaction that they inspire, or are assumed likely to inspire, in the audience. If the question is there identity or their epistemic status, it would seem that, as with many "uncanny" phenomena in Mark and elsewhere, "not having the answer is the answer."[227] The confrontation between Jesus and the demons represents the encounter between immediate, unnameable fear and an embodiment[228] of the equally unnameable, and in many respects equally terrifying, of the ultimate numen. As Geyer notes,

> If the anomalous frightful is treated as a literary theme in a narrative like Mark... then interpretation should proceed with an understanding that the anomalous frightful evokes rich experiences of indeterminate perception mixed with fear. At its best, it beckons to be *felt* as much as *explained.* Repulsion, disgust, confusion, or annoyance are as much the outcomes of anomalous frightful as are any identifications of redactional trends in the texts that report them.[229]

Given this interconnection between fear and salvation in the greater schema of Mark, it is apparent that the eschatological and individual contexts of exorcism incorporate both the demon-deliverance ministry and individual deliverance into Mark's ongoing eschatology. That is to say, the impending ultimate conflict between God and the evil powers of the world, in which God presumably will triumph, is not, for Mark, entirely separable from the liberation of any one individual from demonic possession. The two are points on a continuum, or parts of the same process. Individual exorcisms may be a "microcosm" of God's triumph, as they have often been termed, but they are also an embodiment of it.

Any attempt to describe definitively the nature of ultimate divinity within a belief system is of course inherently futile. While it is possible to examine sociological and other

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[227] This is the argument of his third chapter, as well as its title.
[228] "Son of God," of course, does not necessarily mean the same thing in Mark as it does in Matthew and Luke. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that in Mark, the man Jesus has a uniquely close relationship with the Father and a unique mission from the Holy Spirit.
[229] Geyer 43.

factors in worship and the cultural constructions of what are believed to be supernatural forces, eventually any scholarly endeavour must confront the fact that such descriptions, while potentially valid and useful, are ultimately inadequate. Adherents of a given system might concur with anthropological, sociological, socio-biological, evolutionary political, economic, or other interpretations of their religious complexes, as has often been the case, or they might disagree with them. It remains very difficult, however, to find any who would agree that such analyses capture the entirety of the situation. The practices and representations of Taoism, for example, might well represent fulfillments of given socio-economic needs and historical patterns, but devotees who agree that this is the case will maintain that the tao that can be spoken is not the eternal tao. The definitive response to the existence and identity of demons, from Mark's perspective, is a point at which ὁ υἱος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου must also be recognized as ὁ υἱος τοῦ θεοῦ, understanding and doing what can never be possible for his mortal fellows. The terror that demons evoke, the evil that they represent, and the magnitude and nature of the embodied divinity that overcomes them, are the point at which the task of understanding Mark's theology and demonology becomes one of contemplation rather than comprehension. Understanding what demons and evil mean in Mark's theology becomes, after a certain point, similar to understanding what God means in it: something ultimately unknowable, or at least indescribable.

VI. Conclusion

Demons, demon possession, and exorcism are polyvalent elements in Mark. They both embody and represent the evil powers ruling the world. This situation of the demonic not only anchors it in Mark's unfolding eschatology,[230] but also anchors the eschatology in the conflict with and triumph over the demons. Demons are a real force in and of the world, from which the world and its human population much be freed. At the same time, it would be highly idiosyncratic of the author of Mark not to assume that demons are also, in some respects, forces almost external to the creation. Jesus begins their banishment, with the implication that it will be complete on the final today. The theologies of eschatology and deliverance operate on both individual and corporate levels, to an extent that it becomes potentially fallacious to make too rigid a distinction between the two. God or ὁ υἱος τοῦ θεοῦ is ridding humanity, and perhaps by extension the cosmos, of demons by ridding individual people of demons. The gospel illustrates the beginnings of this process in Jesus' earthly ministry and suggests that its effects are ongoing, to be completed at the conclusion of the unfolding eschaton.

Mark operates from the perspective, common in the ancient world, that demons were literal, intelligent, minimally corporeal supernatural beings with the ability to dislodge from or stifle within the bodies of living human beings their souls. The information that Mark provides about possessed people's behaviour, although limited, seems congruent with that in other ancient sources. Mark's possession victims possess supernatural knowledge that they

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[230] That is, Jesus' exorcisms represent the beginning of the breaking of Satan's hold over the world.

proclaim loudly and spontaneously. They also wander, rave, and abuse their own bodies. The demons responsible for such conditions, in Mark as elsewhere, seem to act on motivations that do not necessarily appear rational to human comprehension. They seem to have goals including the promotion of heresy and idolatry, committing homicide, perpetrating sexual abuse, and the general infliction of illness and suffering on human beings, perhaps on some occasions out of what might be seen as little beyond a sense of sadism. The author of Mark appears disinterested in their motives as such, but may assume his audience to have an existing idea of them.

The effects of demon possession could be like those of mental illness or disorders such as epilepsy, and Mark indicates a degree of overlap between the symptoms and the pathologies. These categories do not seem to have been mutually exclusive in and of themselves in antiquity, and they probably are not mutually exclusive in Mark. It seems to have been possible to ascribe similar symptoms to demons in some cases and mental disorders in others, without denying the possibility of the alternative diagnosis in other cases. Mark expresses interest only in demon possession, contrasting the gospel with Matthew and with other ancient literature. An accurate reading of Mark's picture of possession acknowledges, then, that it resembles some forms of mental illness but is fundamentally distinct from ordinary "madness." Demons do not disturb the mind, but rather dislodge the soul.

Jesus' exorcisms in Mark do possess political overtones in certain cases. The name Legion for demons that go into pigs is not accidental, particularly given Mark's likely time of

composition. Mark depicts Jesus as at least a perceived, and possibly a real, threat to Roman imperial order, both by his very nature and mission and in his specific actions. The analogy between freeing humanity from demons and freeing people from the empire is clear, particularly in the case of the Gerasene demoniac. As necessary as this interpretation is to an understanding of Mark's demonology, however, it has proven easy to overextend. Neither the historical belief complex around nor the experience of seems to have been a form of political or social protest. Attempts to liken possession as represented in Mark to modern forms of politicized possession cults are at best over-ambitious and based on mistaken applications and misinterpretations of available evidence both ancient and modern. At worst, they wilfully ignore the manifest content of Mark and other ancient texts and in their analysis risk romanticizing ongoing human rights abuses and crimes. It is necessary, therefore, to extrapolate and integrate the political aspects of Mark's demonology with the greatest of caution, and with due acknowledgment of the limits of this type of analysis.

Perhaps the greatest problem with demons in Mark is not that they are understood as political enemies, but that they are not understood at all. Mark presents them as objects of disorder and fear, sources of terror beyond immediate comprehension. Demons deprive human beings of their lives, their social networks, their minds, and their humanity. Their victims, and the people around their victims, appear to be helpless in the face of them. Mark does not enable its readers to understand or categorize demons in a systematic way because it is not possible to do so. Their very nature is in many respects definable only in opposition to divine nature, which exceeds Mark's or any other theological author's capacity

to describe. It might be possible to describe or to infer some aspects of the organization of beliefs about divine or anti-divine nature as presented in Mark or in any other source, but it is necessarily impossible to say anything comprehensive or conclusive about the matter. Demons are terrifying manifestations of the ultimate evil, in the face of which human beings are utterly helpless. This evil is the adversary against which Mark, in part, defines his portrait of the messiah, the anointed one of God the ultimately indescribable. To understand the content of Mark's demonology and its role in the gospel's cosmology, therefore, is in the final analysis an exercise in contemplation and not in resolution.

VII. Works Consulted

Abbreviations:

AAR	American Academy of Religion
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABS	Anchor Bible Series
ANWR	Aufsteig und Niedergang der römischen Welt
Authenticating	*Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans
BBE	*Brain, Behavior & Evolution*
BETC	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
Cambr. GkTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, ed. C.F.D. Moule
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
C&S	*Church & Society*
CTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
CV	*Cummunio viatorum*
ER	*Ecumenical Review*
EstT	*Estudios teológicos*
ETR	*Études théologiques et religieuses*
ExT	*Expository Times*
Fear	*Fear in Animals and Man*, ed. Wladyslaw Sluckin
FN	*Filologia neotestamentaria*
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion, ed. Caroline Bynum and George Rupp
History	*Gods, Spirits, and History: A Theoretical Perspective*, ed. Alan Howard and Jeanette Marie Mageo
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
Imagination	*The Demonic Imagination: Biblical Text and Secular Story* (AAR Studies in Religion (60), ed. Robert Detweiler and William G. Doty
Interfaces	Interfaces, ed. Barbara Green, O.P.
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Literature*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRH	*Journal of Religion and Health*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic Periods*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
Losing	*On Losing the Soul: Essays in the Psychology of Religion*, ed. Richard K. Fenn and Donald Capps
Mof. NTC	The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, ed. James Moffatt.
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NT Sup.	Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*, ed. M.M Mitchell and D.P. Moessner et al.
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTT	New Testament Theology, ed. James D.G. Barr
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart Ehrman
Pillar NTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary, ed. D.A. Carson.
PNP	*Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology & Biological Psychiatry*

PPR	*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*
PR	*The Philosophical Review*
Principat	*Principat, vorkonstantinisches Christentum: Vchaeltnis zu roemischem Staat und heidischer Religion*
R&E	*Review & Expositor*
RHRP	*Révue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
Roaring Lion	*Like a Roaring Lion: Essays on the Bible, the Church, and Demonic Powers*, ed. Pieter G.R. de Villiers
S&E	*Science et Ésprit*
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBL: AB	SBL: Academia Biblica, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Mark Allan Powell
SBL Dis. Ser.	SBL Dissertation Series, ed. Saul M. Olyan (OT) and Mark Allan Powell (NT)
SBLS	SBL Annual Meeting Seminar Papers
SCL	Sather Classical Lectures
SEA	*Svensk exegetisk arsbok*
ser.	Series
SET	Studies in European Thought, ed. E. Allan McCormick
Soc. NTS Mon. Ser.	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, ed. G.N. Stanton
ST	*Studia theologica*
Structural	*Structural Analysis and Biblical Exegesis* (Pittsburg Theological Monograph Ser. 3 (n./ed.)
sup.	supplement
Synoptic Gospels	*The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (BETL 110), ed. Camille Focant
Torch	Torch Bible Commentaries, ed. John Marsh, Alan Richardson, and R. Gregor Smith
TS	*Theological Studies*
WUNT2	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament: Reihe 2 (ISSN 0340-9570), ed. Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius
ZNWK	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der alten Kirche*
ZRG	*Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*

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