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Entangled Worlds

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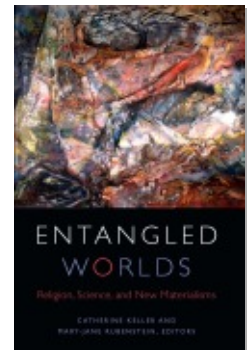
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❖ The Matter with Pantheism: On Shepherds and Goat-Gods and Mountains and Monsters

MARY-JANE RUBENSTEIN

Matter is the stage of all sorts of changes, the field of battle of contrary causes, the subject of all corruptions and of all generations; in a word, there is no being whose nature is more inconsistent with the immutability of God.

—PIERRE BAYLE, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*

*And to enrich the worship of the ONE,
A universe of gods must pass away.*

—FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, “The Gods of Greece”

CALLING NAMES

In his 1695 essay on Baruch Spinoza, Pierre Bayle excoriates the philosopher for having reduced God to “matter, the vilest of all creatures.”¹ Matter, after all, is passive, nonrational, and changeable—and as such, everything that the God of classical theism is *not*. In conversation with the renewed focus on materiality in feminist, political, queer, and complexity theories, I would therefore like to ask: What becomes of Spinoza’s unbecoming theology if matter turns out to be other than what we thought it was?

Over against the persistent—but not exceptionless—dismissals and subjugations of matter within the Western philosophical tradition, the materialist thinkers engaged in this volume call our attention to the vibrancy, activity, and animacy of matter itself. So Donna Haraway calls our attention to “morally astute dogs”; Myra Hird touts the ingenuity of bacteria and the promiscuity of mushrooms; Jane Bennett traces the vitality of iron; Mel Chen tracks the racialized workings of lead; and Karen Barad uncovers the mutual constitution of subatomic particles, experimental screens, scientists, language, “a warm bed, and a bad cigar.”² In short, these “materialisms” present us with sites of

agency—canine morality, microbial agency, animate minerality, or, while we're at it, "divine animality"—that more proper philosophies tend to deem childish, "vile," ridiculous . . . *absurd*.³ Insofar as they provoke such offense, I would like to suggest that such turns or returns to matter might find a useful supplement, were anyone to write such a thing, on the intellectual history of name-calling.

By "name-calling," the essay I am imagining would mean that perennially rejuvenated strategy of dismissing a position, practice, being, or story by affixing to it a label universally acknowledged to be distasteful. Insofar as this discursive practice presents the loathsome position as meriting no detailed elaboration, name-calling promises to save the speaker a good deal of time; to spare the speaker any possible humiliation by association; and to dissuade anyone else from adopting it, lest the speaker suffer the same sort of ridicule.⁴

Historically, some of the most notorious categories of automatic philosophical dismissal have included "schools" to which no one actually belongs ("idolatry," "nihilism," "hedonism"), "camps" resurrected and re-demolished decades after their last members have moved on ("relativism," "postmodernism," "social constructivism"), "heresies" named by their opponents ("gnosticism," "paganism," "the big bang," "Obamacare"), and "absurdities" of all flavors, whose ranks have historically been populated by such diverse teachings as heliocentrism, the hypostatic union, reincarnation, and actual infinities. Granted, many such nasty names have been strategically and even cheerfully reappropriated by the people they initially ridiculed. In these cases, the work of reappropriation demands a systematic internal evaluation of the term's boundaries and contours. "Of the mess of practices and opinions ascribed to us," the nascent group must ask, "which do we actually endorse, which should we abandon or revise, and which have been invented just to make fun of us?" Along the way, those who seek to rehabilitate a denigrated term must also come to terms with the reasons for its snarky dismissal, asking, "What is it about 'gnostics' or 'pagans' or an initial singularity or 'socialism' or 'queers' that so many people find abhorrent? Is there something perhaps *threatening* about these names we've been called?"

In this spirit, I would like to nominate a candidate for conceptual analysis and rehabilitation. As we explore the complex entanglements of materiality and theology, I think it might be useful to reflect critically on the position that most straightforwardly aligns them, which is to say, *pantheism*. And yet critical reflection is marvelously difficult when the position under consideration has been the target of such sustained and systematic name-calling among philosophers and theologians—no matter how variant and even deviant their politics, methods, and commitments. This history makes it a challenge even to define pantheism, which arguably has as many strains as critics. Etymologically, the

word names the identification of *theos*, or God, with *pan*, or “all”—but does this “all” mean “all things as a unity” or “all things” in their plurality? It is perhaps because of this unexamined, constitutive equivocity that, in the words of Philip Clayton, “no philosophically adequate form of pantheism has been developed in modern Western philosophy.”⁵ And yet the position—if one can even call it that—is perennially and almost universally rejected.

The most common bases for this nearly exceptionless rejection are pantheism’s identification of God with matter, which allegedly compromises divine agency, and its identification, therefore, of God with the world, which allegedly compromises divine freedom and infinity. But developments during the last century in nonlinear biology, quantum mechanics, complexity theory, and inflationary cosmologies have shown us in a profusion of ways that matter is not simply passive, and that “the world” is neither determined nor, in any simple sense, finite. It is my hunch, then, that many objections to “pantheism” stem from a misconstrual of materiality and worldliness alike. This chapter, therefore, traces a conceptually viable, and perhaps even theologically compelling, “pantheism” by reanimating the “*pan*.” Its efforts take the form of a multilocational trek from contemporary theologies back through the hills of Arcadia, the stable in Bethlehem, and a New Jersey suburb, seeking out those pantheistic strains that center on the following affirmation: that the “vibrant,” “intra-active,” material “world of becoming” is itself divine⁶—that the ever-emergent universe is what we mean when we say the word “God.”

PAN(ICKED)THEOLOGY

Strikingly, no matter who “we” are, pantheism tends to be the position we are trying to avoid. It is the cliff over which we will not go, the slope down which we must prevent ourselves from slipping, whether by means of Thomistic analogy, a high-octane apophatics, various blustery atheisms, or any number of carefully calibrated panentheisms. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with any of these positions; there are plenty of reasons one might reject the identification of God with the material world. What I find perplexing is not the rejection itself, but the *haste* with which it is usually performed. As Grace Jantzen has remarked, “In many quarters, if a proposal is seen as pantheistic or leading to pantheistic consequences, that is deemed sufficient reason to repudiate it, often with considerable vitriol.”⁷ Ninian Smart attributes such vitriol to a “horror of pantheism in traditional Western theology.”⁸ Indeed, this horror finds dramatic enactment nearly everywhere one searches for it—even before the term “pantheism” existed.⁹ One formidable exemplar of such *horror pantheismus* is Pierre Bayle’s essay on Spinoza. As is well known, Spinoza dismantled Descartes’s dualism between spiritual and physical substances, calling his single, ideal-material substance “God, or Nature” (*Deus sive Natura*).

Disgusted by this conflation of divinity and materiality, Bayle finds Spinoza's "singularity of substance" so repugnant as to call it "the most *monstrous* hypothesis that could be imagined, the most absurd, and the most diametrically opposed to the most evident notions of our minds."¹⁰

Certainly, Bayle was not the first to express such rancor in the face of this teaching; Spinoza was infamously excommunicated from his Jewish community in Amsterdam for having maintained "that God has a body," namely, the body of the world itself.¹¹ Perhaps needless to say, this position flagrantly violated the monotheistic insistence on God's incorporeality. For the heresy of giving God a body (which is to say, the world), Spinoza was therefore expelled bodily from the synagogue "with the anathema with which Joshua anathematized Jericho"; to wit,

Cursed be he by day, and cursed be he by night, cursed be he when he lieth down, and cursed be he when he riseth up; cursed be he when he goeth out and cursed be he when he cometh in; the Lord will not pardon him; the wrath and fury of the Lord will be kindled against this man . . . and the Lord will destroy his name from under the heavens; and, to his undoing, the Lord will cut him off from all the tribes of Israel.¹²

In keeping with this genealogical break, the local council imposed a social quarantine, as well: "We ordain that no one may communicate with him verbally or in writing, nor show him any favour . . . nor be within four cubits of him, nor read anything composed or written by him."¹³ On this matter, at least, the orthodoxies of Christianity and Judaism could agree; after all, the church had been cursing, uprooting, and even murdering proto-panteists for centuries.¹⁴

Granted, identifying God with a material creation is a highly unorthodox move. But what is it about pantheism that fuels *this degree* of horror? What is it that prompts the elders' multidimensional anathematical topography (cursed be he by day, by night; when he's up, down, in, and out); that cuts the proponent off from all relation (perhaps to prevent infection?); and that constitutes not just an error, but an unforgivable one? Whence stems the *horror religiosus* that not only excommunicates Spinoza, but in the hands of Christian hierarchs condemns John Scotus Eriugena, executes the followers of Almaric of Bena, burns Giordano Bruno at the stake, incinerates Marguerite Porete, suspects even Jonathan Edwards of heresy, and would have obliterated Eckhart if he hadn't died first?¹⁵

*panic, n.: (of fear): groundless . . . ; strong, infectious, unreasoning feeling of any kind.*¹⁶

Among the orthodox, the para-orthodox, and the guardians of rationality, pantheism often inspires something like panic: a strong revulsion with no discernible source, accompanied by an effort to dismiss it at all costs. In recent years, the most vocal critic of this generalized panic has been the late feminist philosopher of religion, Grace Jantzen. In the late 1990s, she began to argue that all the oppressive dualisms structuring Western thought were held in place by the fundamental difference between God and “the physical universe.”¹⁷ For Jantzen, the (binary) ontological distinction between God and creation establishes God’s *mastery* over creation, securing in turn the supremacy of everything associated with this God (spirit, masculinity, reason, light, humanity) over everything else (matter, femininity, passion, darkness, animovegeto-minerality).

Admittedly, this is a well-rehearsed set of hierarchies, which feminist thinkers of both secular and sacred varieties have struggled for decades to dismantle. But as far as Jantzen is concerned, the only way to collapse the structure is to go for its root, which is to say the opposition between God and the world. “If pantheism were seriously to be entertained,” she ventures, “the whole western symbolic . . . would be brought into question. Pantheism rejects the split between spirit and matter, light and darkness, and the rest; it thereby also rejects the hierarchies based on these splits.”¹⁸ While affirming the spirit of this critique, one might take issue with the absolute priority Jantzen gives to the God/world opposition, which other feminist thinkers have exposed as the product of ancient patriarchies and perennial racisms.¹⁹ It might therefore be more helpful to see these vectors of power as rhizomatically entangled than as arboreally rooted:²⁰ The integrity or destruction of each would depend on the integrity or destruction of the others. And for Jantzen, the position that promises to unearth the whole thicket of oppressions is pantheism.

Throughout her argument, Jantzen is careful to explain she is not working from a “realist” (or “anti-realist”) stance; rather, she is working at the level of the *symbolic*. In other words, Jantzen is not saying that God is (or is not) the universe or that the universe is (or is not) divine; rather, she is trying to recode “divinity” as a concept, whether or not an “entity” called God “exists.” Understandably, many feminisms, materialisms, posthumanisms, and queer theories prefer to sidestep the God-issue, having had more than enough of the Guy in the Sky. From Jantzen’s perspective, however, this circumvention inadvertently leaves the God intact *conceptually* as a disembodied, omnipotent, anthropomorphic Father. Even atheists reinscribe the concept of the very God they don’t believe in; for example, “theists and atheists tacitly agree on the masculinized nature of the God whose existence they dispute. Thus whether it is held that there is a God or not, the *concept* of the divine serves to valorize

disembodied power and rationality.”²¹ And of course, the concept of the divine is the most highly valued concept we have.

For the sake of our threatened planet, in the face of our waning biodiversity, and in solidarity with those living and nonliving beings whom the Father-aligned continue to master, colonize, denigrate, and destroy, Jantzen suggests that feminist philosophers begin deliberately to project a pantheist God—a God who *is* the material universe in all its multiplicity. In her words, “If we took for granted that divinity—that which is most to be respected and valued—*means* mutuality, bodiliness, diversity, and materiality, then whether or not we believed that such a concept of God was instantiated . . . the implications for our thought and lives would be incalculable.”²² That was in 1998. Jantzen’s *Becoming Divine* continues to be circulated and widely taught, and yet I don’t know of anyone who has taken up its call to a feminist pantheism. Nor has anyone really argued against it.²³ A voice crying in the wilderness at the end of the second Christian millennium and then radio silence.

Silence, dismissals, and anathemas aside, there are plenty of serious objections to pantheism. The most common of these are its purported atheism, immanentism, deification of evil, denial of freedom, and denial of difference. And although each of these would in a lengthier essay merit its own elaboration and response, it seems to me the last of these is most pressing, especially insofar as it gathers so many of the rest toward it. The systematic theologian Colin Gunton weaves these objections around a common concern for “difference” when he argues, “For there to be freedom, there must be space. In terms of the relation between God and the universe, this entails an ontological otherness between God and the world. . . . Atheism and . . . materialism are in effect identical with pantheism, for all of them swallow up the many into the one, and so turn the many into mere functions of the one.”²⁴ In short, the argument is that if there is no difference between God and the world, there can be no difference *at all*, inasmuch as the ontological distinction grounds all other distinctions. And if there is no difference, then none of the parties involved is sufficiently autonomous to be “free.” So if we antiracist, gender-queer, postcolonial ecophiles know what is good for us—that is, if we want things like difference, diversity, multiplicity—we’d better hang onto the ontological distinction.

At this point, however, one might ask whether the only options out there are a two-column hierarchy on the one hand and a “denial of difference” on the other. One might even go so far as to ask whether the “two” and the “one” are really such different positions to begin with. After all, the metaphysical framework that stems from God-versus-world—opposing in turn form and matter, male and female, eternity and time, colonizer and colonized, etc.—does not establish the second as genuinely different from the first, so much as

a derivation, deviation, and/or bad copy of it. One might think here of Judith Butler's analysis of lesbianism as a purported imitation of heterosexuality, or of Homi Bhabha's "colonial mimicry," which produces non-Europeans as "almost the same, *but not quite*."²⁵ The oppositional logic of classical metaphysics does not, then, give us two; it gives us one, and a falling-short of that one. Nor, one might add, does this binary scheme secure the "freedom" of both terms; rather, it secures the freedom of the historically dominant term at the expense of its subjugated other.²⁶ And so the real concern over pantheism is not the collapse of some abstract notion of "difference"; it is the collapse of one particularly insistent and damaging way of *configuring* difference—one that gathers each instance of "difference" into a category benevolently overseen by a single metaphysical life-partner.

Again, there may be good reasons to reject pantheism's identification of God and the universe, whether from a realist or symbolic perspective, whether for sacred or secular reasons. But, to rely a bit more on Jantzen, "insofar as 'pantheism' is treated as a swear word, greeted with dismay and repudiation," it becomes an object not of critical evaluation but of *fear*. Specifically, she argues, "the fear of pantheism bespeaks a perceived if unconscious threat to the masculinist symbolic of the west."²⁷ Jantzen detects this panicked masculinity in the surprisingly recurrent language of pantheism's "swallowing," "consuming," and "assimilating" all otherwise "free" beings into some dark abyss, some ridiculous "night in which all cows are black."²⁸ "From a psychoanalytic perspective," Jantzen ventures, "one could speculate about what dread of the (m)other and the maternal womb lurks just below the surface of this fear of pantheism; what exactly is the abyss, this horror of great undifferentiated darkness into which at all costs 'we' must not be sucked?"²⁹

While Jantzen's diagnosis might seem to rely on a rhetorical sleight of hand—or a set of Lacan-geeky pun(ctuation)s—a quick survey of recent rejections of pantheism does confirm the presence beneath them of something like gender-panic. For example, the evangelical theologian William Lane Craig defends the ontological distinction against pantheism (and panentheism) with the following illustration: "In marriage the antithesis of two persons is *aufgehoben* as husband and wife come together in a deep unity even as their distinctness as persons is preserved. In the same way, the opposition between infinite and finite, God and world, is *aufgehoben* in that God is intimately related to the world in various ways even as the ontological distinctness between God and the world is preserved."³⁰ Pantheism's demolition of the ontological distinction between God and world therefore amounts to a demolition of the sexual distinction between man and woman, the first of whom is aligned with infinity and God, while the second gets finitude and world. Reaffirming this alignment, Craig explains that God "embraces . . . his creatures . . . just as a

husband embraces his wife.”³¹ So we’d better hang onto that difference; otherwise who knows who might embrace whom and what *unaufgehoben*able differences might emerge.

In his defense of global capitalism as the economic vehicle for a truly global Christianity, theologian Stephen H. Webb rejects the planetary viability of a “sacred earth” cosmology. “Judaism, Islam, and Christianity,” he cautions, “are unlikely to dismantle their notions of divine transcendence in order to embrace an earth goddess.”³² In this declaration, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, Webb is linking the demise of divine transcendence to the emergence of divine femininity. This femininity is furthermore tied to the earth—the mother is matter, of course, and as such, is reduced to “resources” for human (read: male) development—and earthly femininity is tinged with the mild sexuality of an “embrace” that sounds strikingly like Craig’s. Fascinatingly, at the other end of the theological spectrum, we find Richard Dawkins calling pantheism a “sexed-up atheism,” so wherever you stand, pantheism is not only “absurd” but also feminized—and dangerously seductive.³³ Taking these positions together, then, what Bayle would call the “monstrosity” of pantheism—the thing that inspires such panic—amounts to a complicated hybridity of divinity, femininity, materiality, and sex, undesirable (which is to say all-too-desirable) to theists and atheists alike. And this, I suggest, is the real matter with pantheism: It threatens the Western symbolic not just with a (m)other-womb, but with a wider and more complex range of monstrosities—with parts combined that ought to be kept separate and boundaries crossed that ought to be maintained.

Of course, it all depends on what you mean by pantheism.

So far in this essay, I have opted to define the pantheist position as one that identifies God with the universe in all its vibrant materiality, emergent complexities, and intra-constituted agencies. In so doing, I have ascribed both temporality and multiplicity to the hypothetical pantheist God-world: The universe is constantly evolving, accelerating, producing new forms not incipient in the old; and as such, the universe—what the pantheist means by divinity—is not a monist totality but rather an irreducible multiplicity. To be clear, “multiplicity” here is different from numerical plurality; the idea is not that “there are a lot of things, the sum of which is God.” Such a position would be impossible for anyone who takes matter seriously because (1) the world is open, evolving, and relationally self-exceeding, and therefore not a “sum,” and (2) “things” themselves are open, evolving, and relationally self-exceeding, and therefore both more and less than “things.” “At any moment,” Jane Bennett writes, “what is at work . . . is an animal-vegetable-mineral sonority cluster.”³⁴ Such hybridity is taking place whether we are speaking about cells, bacteria, the “human” genome, water, air, a cloned sheep, or a “collapsed” wave func-

tion: Each of them is composed of a mutating band of others. If, with Karen Barad, we add discursivity into the mix,³⁵ then our multiple-universe becomes an untotizable and shape-shifting product of narrative-theoretical-material assemblages that are neither reducible to, nor constitutive of, “oneness.” And this provisionally unified but constantly evolving multiplicity is what the “pantheism” at hand would call divine. Such a pantheism therefore stands in direct opposition to those more common pantheisms, whose fundamental assertion is “that everything . . . constitutes a *unity* and that this all-inclusive unity is divine.”³⁶ Depending on one’s starting point, “pantheism” divinizes either a messy multiplicity or a smoothed-out whole, and this particular expedition is foraging for the godly mess.

To be sure, nearly everyone who encounters such a tension between the many and the one will try to assert their *identity*, a project that begins in earnest with Plotinus and carries on at least through Hegel. Spinoza himself maintained both that there was only one substance (*Deus sive Natura*) and that this substance had an infinite number of attributes.³⁷ As Arthur Lovejoy demonstrates, however, this dual assertion landed Spinoza right back in “the peculiar paradox of neo-Platonism,” which is to say the affirmation of “a being which should include the *esse* of all things without possessing the attributes of those things.”³⁸ In other words, Spinoza’s God-Nature for Lovejoy contains the abstract “being” of everything, but not the concrete *stuff* of everything:³⁹ The One Substance contains some ethereal version of “me,” but not Polish-Italianness, recalcitrant hair, or a deep love of Gershwin. At the end of the day, then, Lovejoy insists that the pantheist will have to come down on one side or the other and assert the primacy of oneness or the primacy of multiplicity, for “if one says that God is both an absolutely simple Monad and a complex Whole of Things, the mind is certain sooner or later to cry out: *Which*, when all is said and done, am I to think of God? For honestly and vividly think of him in both ways, I cannot.”⁴⁰ Now, an “I” who hopes to side with Lovejoy’s “complexity of things” might want to abandon his language of “wholeness”—as well as the language of “himness”—but the distinction between the monad and the complex is helpful. And as we have already glimpsed, this difference may boil down to an irreducible etymological duplicity in “pan-theism” itself: At the end of the day, does the *pan* signify a unified “one,” or a multiple “all things,” each of which is “itself” multiple?

These two different meanings of “pan” map onto the distinction William James makes in *A Pluralistic Universe* between “monistic” pantheism on the one hand and “pluralistic” pantheism on the other.⁴¹ For the monist, James tells us, the world is one “tremendous unity,” in which “everything is present to *everything* else in one vast instantaneous co-implicated completeness.”⁴² For the pluralist, by contrast, the things of the world are “in some respects

connected, [and] in other respects independent, so that they are not members of one all-inclusive individual fact.”⁴³ Of course, James is a pragmatist, so as William Connolly reminds us, he knows he cannot say which of these visions is ultimately “true,” or if it even makes sense to speak that way.⁴⁴ But James sides with pluralism for a host of ethical, political, and psychological reasons: If we affirm an inherent plurality rather than a primordial unity, then “evil” calls for a practical response rather than a speculative explanation; differences of opinion are signs of health rather than pathology; and our everyday experiences amount to “intimacy” with the universe itself.⁴⁵ This is perhaps James’s most novel critique of the monist tradition: Presumably, the pantheist locates the divine in and as the world in order to gain intimacy with it. But if the world-as-divine bears none of the characteristics of the only world we ever experience (its desires and mistakes, its passions and pains, its earthworms and Gershwin), then the monist places himself even farther than the ordinary theist from God.⁴⁶ So James opts for pluralism, which makes of the universe what he calls a *multiverse*: a loosely coherent chain of complex connections that’s never quite all-in-all.⁴⁷

Disappointingly, however, James’s vision of divinity does not match his vision of cosmology, even though the two ought to be coextensive. Even though James begins by affirming pantheism as “the only [opinion] quite worthy of arresting our attention,” he ends by splitting “world” and “God” into a rich, multiversal plurality on the one hand and a single, disembodied, anthropomorphic, male divinity on the other—a limited force that works alongside other limited agents in the pluralistic universe.⁴⁸ To be sure, there are plenty of reasons to affirm such a minimal theology—including concerns for theodicy, relationality, and creaturely freedom—the issue is simply that this diminished humanoid divinity does not match the complex, entangled vibrancy of the material world with which James’s fully pluralist pantheism would ostensibly identify “God.” Where, then, might we find a pantheism that takes refuge neither in the individual nor in the human nor in a spirituality divorced from the material? How might we set forth a *pan* that measures up to the hybridity, complexity, and multiform vegetal-mineral-animality of the multiverse?

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP

In the spirit of materialisms old and new, it might be useful to continue our search for a multiversal *pan* in a particular nodule of space-time, with a particular *object* (or two). It is 1988 on the New Jersey coastline; I am eleven; and outside my bedroom are two lawn sheep made of wool and wood, which I had begged my mother to get me, having experienced a sudden and overpowering *need* for a “flock.” A quick Google search of newspaper articles from the late ’80s suggests that the call I had heard was less likely the voice of the Good

Shepherd than the *mysterium tremendum* of capitalism, which creates the most baffling needs in order to fulfill them, including “stuffed animals on sticks . . . the latest craze in lawn ornaments.”⁴⁹ The “craze” apparently extended all the way down to Florida, where one columnist voiced her suspicion that “lawn sheep fulfill some inner need, some secret yearning, on the part of homeowners who place them singly, in pairs, even in flocks, on their lawns.”⁵⁰ She ventured that this “inner need” might have to do with bucolic longing amid suburban cul-de-sacs, or a consumerist desire for interspecies connection without the excreta. Whatever the motivations, so many sheep dotted our landscape in such quick order that the kids in our neighborhood started “tipping” them the way they’d heard rural kids tip cows, or pulling them out of the ground and relocating them on patches of grass near the convenience store, the car wash, and their high schools. One of the members of our Lutheran church was a local police officer, who said the precinct was overrun with recovered puffs of wool on sticks, and had absolutely no idea what to do with them.

“And there were in that same region shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night” (Lk 2:8). Not me this time, but my little brother Kenan, who at the same Lutheran church was lounging along with some high schoolers three times his size on bales of hay that my mother had talked the last local farmer into donating for our annual Live Nativity. It was Advent, of course, and it was freezing, but we staged the thing outside so that passing cars might stop at the sight of our floodlit stable—a plywood shed my mom hid behind so she could push out the angels and kings on time. For years, there were no actual sheep; the audience would just see the rumpled shepherds and *imagine* they had flocks. In 1988, we rounded out the operation with my lawn sheep, the poor things thrown all of a sudden into the fullness of time.

Unfortunately, the lawn sheep had a short run onstage; just one year later, our pastor’s wife met a woman at the 7-11 who told her she kept a few farm animals in her suburban backyard and would be glad to lend them to us for the Nativity. So that year, my mother, my brother, two angels, and I crossed a four-lane highway in white albs and brown cinctures to retrieve two *real* sheep named Daisy and Baby, along with one goat with the weight of the world in his name: Mondo. Having had no experience with farm animals, it was hard for our gaggle of middle-schoolers to prevent Daisy from eating a boxwood on the way back. But it was worth the wrath of that unsuspecting homeowner to see the crowd that stopped to stare at the two live sheep and one live goat on the church lawn that year, casually tethered to the same snoozing shepherds, the smallest of whom tried to suppress a giggle as he whispered to the figure behind the stable, “Mom! Mondo’s eating my knees!”

The angel, the Mary, the Joseph, the stall—we’re so accustomed to the scene that we don’t often stop to ask, “What’s going on with the sheep?” Why

did Luke give us shepherds watching their flocks by night, rather than bakers baking their bread or cobblers cobbling their boots? One source notes that by surrounding the scene with sheep, Luke connects the newborn king to David, who tends the flocks of his father Jesse (1 Sm 16:11).⁵¹ Luke is concerned to establish Jesus in David's lineage through his father Joseph (quite a feat considering the virgin mom), and so Luke has the baby born in David's hometown of Bethlehem, with sheep to drive the point home. Another commentary connects the scene to the "bad shepherds" of Ezekiel 34, who symbolize the bad kings of Israel and whom the text contrasts with Israel's true shepherd, God.⁵² Finally, both sources suggest that Luke is playing on the Greek and Roman motif of a royal infant discovered by shepherds—calling to mind Oedipus, Paris, Romulus, and Remus.⁵³ Along this line of thought, if Greeks and Romans see sheep in the story of a strange birth, they're likely to lend a mythic significance to the baby.

Connections between Christ and the classical world were fascinating to Renaissance authors in particular, who, thanks to a hilarious string of hermeneutical bumbles to be detailed momentarily,⁵⁴ saw the shepherds of Luke as heralds of the Good Shepherd whom they greeted, and the Good Shepherd Himself as the consummate form of a much older shepherd-god.

Pan, n.: allusively. A person with responsibility for shepherds and flocks; a chief shepherd (occas. applied to Jesus Christ).⁵⁵

Half-man, half-goat, the Greek god of shepherds and goatherds originated in Arcadia, "where divine theriomorphism is well attested."⁵⁶ Herodotus tells us that the cult of Pan began to spread after the Battle of Marathon, when the goat-god appeared to Phidippides to say that if the Athenians worshipped him, he would terrify the barbarians and secure the victory of Athens.⁵⁷ A cave was quickly built atop the Acropolis—Pan is worshipped not in temples but in the wombspaces of grottoes—in which devotees would dance and sing, becoming fitfully possessed by their "noise-loving," pipe-playing deity, who liked to spring from nowhere and strike terror in the hearts of travelers.⁵⁸

panic, n.: "originally and chiefly used allusively with reference to a feeling of sudden terror, which was attributed by the ancient Greeks to the influence of the God Pan."⁵⁹

Physiologically and functionally, Pan is a monstrosously hard god to classify. Having "the horns, ears, and legs of a goat" with the torso and head of a man,⁶⁰ and being moreover a god, he is an irreducible hybridity—a collision of elements that any sane theology would keep separate. In his goat-half alone,

he is already what Sharon Coggan calls “liminal”: A goat is “not entirely tame, yet . . . not entirely wild”⁶¹—the kind of animal who might chew a kid’s knees in a Christmas pageant. Of course, Pan is not just a goat; his triune ani-man-god-ness means he is also a shepherd or goatherd, as well as the *guardian* of shepherds and goatherds—along with their charges. Even bees were said to be under Pan’s oversight, in his role as protector of flocks.⁶² Ironically, however, Pan is also known as a hunter—as the god who ensures a successful kill—and is in this vein known as Pan Lykaios, or “Wolf-Pan,” deadly enemy of flocks.⁶³ He is commonly dressed in the skin of a lynx or a fawn (wolfgoat in deercat clothing?), and his twin brother is said to be neither a goat nor a sheep nor a bee nor a wolf, but a *bear*: Arcas, ancestor of the Arcadians.⁶⁴ So Pan is what Haraway might call a “contact zone”: a cross-species concatenation of “world-making entanglements,”⁶⁵ within which he is both singular predator and flockish prey, both protector and pruner of the multitude.

In addition to protecting and hunting, Pan is also known to pursue. “Plainly a lusty god,” he is usually portrayed with an oversized phallus, looking to seduce anything that moves.⁶⁶ He is usually unsuccessful, rebuffed by forest nymphs and shepherd boys alike, and called by the name “Pan Duserous”: “lusty, but ‘Unlucky in love.’”⁶⁷ In this regard, he can be both mournful and vengeful: When the chaste nymph Syrinx refused him, ran to a riverbank, and was turned into reeds, Pan’s cries made such a haunting sound across her new-found vegetality that he cut the reeds to make them (her) into his eponymous flute, the syrinx. These rejections aside, he is said to have had a tryst with Aphrodite, a fairly long-term arrangement with the muse Eupheme, and a fling with “every one of the Maenads”; so this queer god’s interests range from boys to goddesses to women, and—lest we forget his other half—he is also known as “Mounter of the Goats.”⁶⁸

*pan, n., adj.: an abbreviation for pansexual.*⁶⁹

Topographically, Pan is just as overdetermined. “Always an outsider to the world of Mount Olympus,” Pan inhabits less sacred mountains, the “sure-footed” goat at home in all high, “rugged, rocky places.”⁷⁰ But he also shows up in the subterranean caves where he is worshipped and where he sleeps as soon as the sun rises. Pan oversees pastures, of course, but also inhabits forests, where he both strikes terror in the hearts of unsuspecting passersby *and* delights his devotees with all-night dance parties set to his nymph-flute.⁷¹ So this awesome, awful deity dwells within mountains and caves, fields and wood, vegetation and minerality—and by the way, he was said to have the power to “rescue sailors on a becalmed ship,” so there seems to be nowhere he isn’t.⁷²

*Pan, int.: international radio signal, esp. by ships and aircraft, to alert authorities that the vessel or aircraft requires assistance . . . a step below mayday.*⁷³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this multilocational misfit—this hypersexual hybrid with multiple personalities—has no clear origin story, there being “no fewer than fourteen different versions of his parentage.”⁷⁴ His father is most often said to be Hermes, messenger of the gods, whose patrilineage establishes Pan—at least for Plato—as the incarnation of “speech.”⁷⁵ Other accounts name Pan’s father as Zeus or Apollo.⁷⁶ And while his mother is usually said to be one of any number of nymphs, she is sometimes said to be the human Penelope, who in this version of the story did not wait those twenty years for Odysseus to come home; rather, she conceived Pan with one of the gods, or with one of her suitors.⁷⁷ In the more vanilla *Homeric Hymns*, Pan is the child of Hermes and the nymph Dryope, daughter of Dryops, a mortal whose sheep Hermes had tended (here again, sheep establish a royal lineage). The poet sings, “Dryope bore Hermes a dear son, marvelous to behold: / goat-footed, horned, full of noise and sweet laughter.”⁷⁸ But as nymphs, shepherd-boys, and barbarians will do for centuries, Dryope jumps up in terror and flees at the sight of the goat-baby with his “rough, full-bearded face” (line 39). Hermes, by contrast, is delighted with his child and, swaddling him “in the thick fur of mountain hare,” flies the strange thing to Olympus to show him off (line 42). The hymn tells us: “All the gods were delighted / in their hearts, but especially Bacchic Dionysos. / ‘Pan’ they named him, because he delighted them ‘all’” (lines 45–47).

Thus with the *Homeric Hymns* (7th century BCE) commences a rich and strange tradition of associating Pan (*Pán*) with “the all” (*tò pân*), the closest term the Greeks have to “universe.” Some of the bawdier sources perform this elision by saying Penelope was unfaithful to Odysseus not just with one god or suitor, but with them “all,” “and that from this intercourse was born Pan.”⁷⁹ Whatever his lineage, however, this anti-Oedipal monster-god begins in Roman times to be seen “as a universal god, or god of Nature,” “the pantheistic divinity,” “the All.”⁸⁰

As Porphyry (ca. 234–305 CE) explains, “They made Pan the symbol of the universe and gave him horns as symbol of the sun and moon and the fawn skin as emblem of the stars in heaven, or of the *variety of the universe*.”⁸¹ We should note that Porphyry attributes “variety” to his *tò pân*, whereas most other Neoplatonist and Scholastic authors will follow Plato and Aristotle in asserting its *oneness*.⁸² And so in the universalizing of the goat-god, we see a “Pan” of manifold hybridities, transgressed boundaries, and material multiplicities collide head-on with a “pan” which, depending on how you configure your universe, either means the “variety” of all things or all-things-as-one.

Christian apologetic sources go on to conflate *and* toggle between these two *pans*, depending on which strategy serves them best. Most notably, Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–340) devotes two sections of his *Preparatio Evangelica* to a strange story in Plutarch that announces “the death of Pan.” Opening on a boat piloted by an Egyptian man named Thamus, the story recalls the passengers’ hearing a voice from the shore of Paxi calling, “Thamus, Thamus, Thamus; the Great Pan is dead!” Astonished that the voice would know his name, the captain agrees to pass the news onto the next island they reach—news whose delivery elicits “a loud lamentation, not of one but of many, mingled with amazement.”⁸³ Once the ship returns to Rome, the captain files a report with Emperor Tiberius, who commissions an investigation, which concludes that the deceased in question was, in fact, “Pan the son of Hermes and Penelope.”⁸⁴

For a century now, many classicists have argued that the whole story was based on a misunderstanding that went over Plutarch’s head.⁸⁵ Eusebius, however, takes the tale as a historical report of the death of Pan, who stands metonymically for “all” the pagan gods. Noting that the account takes place during the reign of Tiberius, Eusebius reminds his reader that these were the days of Christ’s “sojourn among men,” during which he “[rid] human life from demons of every kind.”⁸⁶ For Eusebius then, the death of Pan is coincident with the life of Christ, who rids the world of “‘All’ the Greek gods, that is . . . all the evil demons.”⁸⁷ And so the Lamb of God overcomes the goat-god, who goes on to become not just one evil spirit among many in the Christian imagination, but the demon of demons himself. Singling him out for his unbridled sexuality, Christian mythology parleys the “horns, hooves, shaggy fur, and oversized phallus” of Pan into the paradigmatic “image of Satan.”⁸⁸

Strikingly, however, the author who is most noted for his portrait of Satan *also* wrangles Pan into a forerunner of Christ. Calling us back to those pastures outside Bethlehem, John Milton imagines,

The shepherds on the lawn
 Or ere the point of dawn
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row
 Full little thought they then
 That the mighty Pan
 Was kindly come to live with them below.⁸⁹

A half-human shepherd god of “all,” Christ becomes for Milton the *true* Pan.

Ironically, François Rabelais had given voice to this similarity a century earlier through his “absurd” character Pantagruel, who interprets Plutarch’s

“death of Pan” as an account of the crucifixion.⁹⁰ So named by his father, who imagined him “thirsting after *the all*,”⁹¹ Panta-gruel defends his bizarre conflation with extraordinary rhetorical flourish. The death of Pan can be interpreted as the death of Christ, he explains, “for in Greek [Christ] can rightly be called *Pan*, seeing that he is our All, all that we are, all that we live, all that we have, all that we hope, is in him, of him, by him.”⁹² The hapless scholar goes on to remind us that both Pan and Christ are shepherds, and that at the moment of the crucifixion, “plaints, sighs, tumultuous cries and lamentations [rang] throughout the entire machine of the Universe: Heaven, earth, sea, and Hell.”⁹³ This, then, was the source of the cries off those Grecian shores. Reversing the Eusebian interpretation, Pantagrue presents the “death of Pan” *not* as the death of the pagan gods exorcised by Christ, but as the death of the exorcist himself: “For that Most-good, Most-great Pan, our Only Servator, died in Jerusalem during the reign in Rome of Tiberius Caesar.”⁹⁴

As classicist Wilfred Schoff illustrates, and to his great consternation, this exegetical absurdity becomes “noble verse” when Milton misses the joke and imports the whole set of associations into his Nativity Ode.⁹⁵ From there, the conflation of Christ, Pan, and all-ness becomes commonplace: Edmund Spenser reminds us that “The great Pan is Christ, the very God of all shepherds,” whose death coincides with “the death of Pan”;⁹⁶ Ben Johnson writes that “PAN is our All, by him we breathe, we live, / We move, we are”;⁹⁷ and Elizabeth Barrett Browning tunes into that moment “When One in Sion / Hung for love’s sake on the cross” to hear forests, fields, mountains, and seas cry out in agonized uniformity that “Pan, Pan, is dead.”⁹⁸

MULTIPANTHEOLOGY

The historian Robin Lane Fox tells us that of all the pagan gods whom Christianity excised, “no presence has been more haunting than Pan’s.”⁹⁹ This ought not to be surprising; after all, Pan has never been a great respecter of boundaries. If any deity were to cross a maze of ontospatiotemporal divides to trouble our sleep, it would likely be this polyamorous polymorph. Listening closely, we can pick up strains of him, alluring and terrifying not only the poets but humans of all sorts—especially when their exceptionalism seems threatened. Whether or not the humans in question acknowledge his presence, Pan has shown up in debates over zoological nomenclature,¹⁰⁰ in eco-activist struggles,¹⁰¹ and, I submit, in panicked dismissals of pantheism—among Christians above all. But why are Christians so exercised about pantheism? And why do they have to keep warding it off?

On the one hand, Christians can claim total safety from pantheism, taking refuge in their lifeless earth, their human privilege, and their genetic heterolineage—all held in place by an extracosmic Father. On the other hand,

Christians also have *Christ*: in his human form an anti-Oedipal half-breed¹⁰² who shows up amid sheep and goats, and in his divine form the principle of creation itself—the word through which the world is worlded. Considering the cosmogonic function of the logos, and assured of an infinite cosmos, Giordano Bruno concludes in the late sixteenth century that the cosmos *is* the word of God; that creation is the incarnation, which is to say the whole universe is God-in-the-universe.¹⁰³ Pan-carnation.¹⁰⁴ It is perhaps because the move is so easy to make for a Christian that it is so perennially attractive—or maybe it's the other way around: Pantheism is attractive because Christianity always teeters on the verge of it. But either way, as James reminds us, “Orthodox theology has had to wage a steady fight . . . against the various forms of pantheistic heresy” only because people are so steadily drawn to those forms.¹⁰⁵ In the case of Bruno, at least, his pantheist attraction was so threatening that “orthodox theology” burned it along with him on an Ash Wednesday in the middle of Rome at the turn of the seventeenth century.

At this late hour, I should make it clear: I am not calling for a post-Christian retrieval of the cult of Pan. Aside from believing such a return to be impossible, I find it undesirable; however protocyborgian and speciesqueer, an ithyphallic goat-man is not a god into whom I'd suggest we pile our theo-erotic energies. Neither am I advocating a (re-)turn to any number of other pantheisms; rather I am simply trying to figure out what such a thing would mean in the first place and why it has traditionally been so difficult to consider it as a coherent position. In particular, I have tried to uncover some of the sources of the aggressive and automatic dismissals of pantheism, sources that reliably amount to crossed boundaries, mixed-up categories, and monstrous combinations that usually have something to do with sex and gender. For this reason, it seems to me that the pantheism that truly threatens the Western symbolic would not be the “all is one” variety; after all, the “one” is just the “two” being honest with itself. The most threatening, and therefore most promising, pantheism would rather be the mixed-up, chimeric variety, whose *theos* is neither self-identical nor absolute, but a mobile and multiply located concatenation of pan-species intra-carnation. And one particularly salient, but evanescent, node of such intracarnational pantheism happens to be Pan himself, who crosses divisions of topography, species, function, ontology, time, space, culture, and decency not in order to make them “all one,” but rather to present us with strange new sites of divinity. In such a *multipantheology*—this provisional name promiscuously mingling its many and one, its Latin and Greek—divinity would be not static but evolving: discovered, sustained, killed off, resurrected, and multiplied between and among temporary clusters of relation. As it did in those queerly intraspecies assemblages of Arcadia and Nazareth, divinity thus construed would show up in unforeseen crossings and alliances, frightening

and delighting us with glimpses of the other worlds and gods that might yet emerge within the world—or God—we're in.

NOTES

My profound thanks to Winfield Goodwin, Lori Gruen, and Catherine Keller for their help in researching, writing, and editing this chapter.

1. Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections*, trans. Richard H. Popin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 291.
2. Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 160; Myra J. Hird, "Naturally Queer," *Feminist Theory* 5 (2004): 85–89; "Animal Transsex," *Australian Feminist Studies* 21, no. 49 (2006): 41; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 58–60; Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012), 159–88; Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 161–68.
3. Perhaps no one gives clearer expression to the childishness of what the nineteenth century would call "animism" than Edward Tylor, who writes that "he who recollects when there was still personality to him in posts and sticks, chairs, and toys, may well understand how the infant philosophy of mankind could extend the notion of vitality to what modern science recognizes as lifeless things." Although Tylor finds much of "animism" to be charming, he is particularly repelled by the absurdity of what Derrida would call divinanimality: "To the modern educated world, few phenomena of the lower civilization seem more pitiable than the spectacle of a man worshipping a beast" (Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, vol. 2 [New York: Harper and Row, 1958], 62, 315). For a rich set of explorations of varied concatenations of divinity and animality, see Stephen H. Moore and Laurel Kearns, eds., *Divinanimality: Animal Theory, Creaturely Theology*, Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquia (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).
4. Although I don't know of anyone who has conducted a lengthy study of philosophical name-calling, there is one particularly illustrative paragraph-fragment in Schopenhauer: "If you are confronted with an assertion, there is a short way of getting rid of it . . . by putting it into some odious category. . . . You can say, for instance, 'That is Manichaeism,' or 'It is Arianism,' or 'Pelagianism,' or 'Idealism,' or 'Spinozism,' or 'Pantheism,' . . . and so on. In making an objection of this kind, you take it for granted (1) that the assertion in question is identical with, or is at least contained in, the category cited—that is to say, you cry out, 'Oh, I have learned that before'; and (2) that the system referred to has been entirely refuted, and does not contain a word of truth" (Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: A Collection of Philosophical Essays*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders [New York: Cosimo, 2007], 34).
5. Philip Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 389. In his study of gnostic and pantheist revivals among twentieth-century Jewish theologians in particular, Benjamin Lazier notes the wide "ref-

erential promiscuity” of the term as a polemical catchall (Benjamin Lazier, *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012], 73). Similarly, Michael Levine laments the lack “at any time” of a systematic study of pantheism, saying that the term tends to be deployed merely “as a term of ‘theological abuse’”—or what I have coded “name-calling” (Michael P. Levine, *Pantheism: A Non-Theistic Concept of Deity* [New York: Routledge, 1994], ix, 17n2). Both Lazier and Levine operate with monistic definitions of pantheism—that is to say, their “pan”’s amount to all-inclusive wholes. By contrast, this study is on the trail of what James would call a “pluralistic” pantheism, what I prefer to call a pantheism of multiplicity.

6. I have taken these terms, respectively, from Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; and William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).
7. Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 267. Similarly, Douglas Hedley notes that pantheism is often “a mere term of abuse” (Douglas Hedley, “Pantheism, Trinitarian Theism and the Idea of Unity: Reflections on the Christian Concept of God,” *Religious Studies* 32, no. 1 [1996]: 75). See the nearly identical language in Levine, *Pantheism: A Non-Theistic Concept of Deity*, 93.
8. Ninian Smart, “God’s Body,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 37 (1981–82): 51.
9. The term was coined in 1705 by John Toland, whose *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) was burned in Dublin for its unregenerate deism. In 1720, Toland went on to publish a book that, in the words of Paul Harrison, “dreamed of a network of Pantheist gentleman’s clubs,” which Toland called “Socratic-societies” (Paul Harrison, *Elements of Pantheism: Religious Reverence of Nature and the Universe* [Coral Springs, Florida: Llumina Press, 2004], 29). After a brief declaration of hatred for plurality (“the Multitude . . . is a Proof of what is worst,” the *Pantheisticon* declares, “All things in the world are One, and One in all things. What is all in all things is God, and God is eternal, has not been created, and will never die” (John Toland, *Pantheisticon: or, The Form of Celebrating the Socratic-Society* [1720] [Charleston, S.C.: Nabu Press, 2010], 3, 15). Later in the work, Toland imagines this declaration as the opening invocation for the elitist meetings of his Socratic societies (Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 70). Toland’s radical monism is the position most often associated with pantheism, and the one I am looking to unsettle here.
10. Bayle, *Dictionary*, 296–97, emphasis added.
11. Peter Melville Logan, *Victorian Fetishism: Intellectuals and Primitives*, *Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 9. For a process-inspired, pan-en-theistic retrieval of this notion, see Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
12. Cited in Logan, *Victorian Fetishism*, 9–10.
13. Cited in Roger Scruton, *Spinoza: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10.
14. See n. 15, below.

15. In 1225, Pope Honorius III condemned Eriugena's proto-pantheism as "pullulating with worms of heretical perversity," and dismissed the whole position as "Irish porridge" (Alasdair MacIntyre, "Pantheism," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. Donald M. Borchert [Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2006]). In these short words alone, we can detect a mess of fears of crossed boundaries concerning sex (perversity), species (worms, who are of course the "lowest" of animals), race (the Irish ridiculed by the noble Roman), and food, whose preparation is traditionally the purview of women. On Almaric, see Harrison, *Elements of Pantheism*, 26. On Bruno, see Ingrid D. Rowland, *Giordano Bruno: Philosopher/Heretic* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008). On Porete, see M. G. Sargent, "The Annihilation of Marguerite Porete," *Viator* 28 (1997): 253–79. On Edwards, see William Mander, "Pantheism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/pantheism/>, Winter 2012). On Eckhart, see Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn, eds., *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1981), 5–61.
16. "Panic," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). See also Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 267.
17. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 267. See also Grace Jantzen, "Feminism and Pantheism," *Monist* 80, no. 2 (1997): 266–85.
18. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 267.
19. Just a few examples of such feminist theologians include Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (New York: Beacon, 1990); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*.
20. For the distinction between the tree and the rhizome, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–25.
21. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 10.
22. *Ibid.*, 269.
23. It is remarkably difficult to demonstrate the presence of an absence, but I am struck in particular by the single, unelaborated reference to "feminist pantheism" in Pamela Anderson's review of the book (Pamela Sue Anderson, "Jantzen, Grace, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*," *Theology and Sexuality* 13 (September 1, 2000): 121–25; the absence of any reference to pantheism in Anderson's epistolary response to the same text (Pamela Sue Anderson and Grace Jantzen, "Correspondence with Grace Jantzen," *Feminist Theology* 9, no. 25 [2000]: 112–19); and the absence of any reference to pantheism in an academic obituary for Jantzen that focuses mainly on *Becoming Divine* ("Jantzen, Grace Marion (1948–2006)," *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 1 [2006]: 121–23). Even Laurel Schneider's excellent review of the book, which reads Jantzen's constructive project quite closely and critically, does not mention pantheism: Laurel Schneider, "Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70, no. 3 (2002): 644–47.

24. Gunton in Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 273.
25. Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics (New York: Routledge, 2004), 122.
26. Jantzen makes this point in *Becoming Divine*, 273.
27. Jantzen, "Feminism and Pantheism," 272.
28. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9.
29. Jantzen, "Feminism and Pantheism," 281.
30. William Lane Craig, "Pantheists in Spite of Themselves," in *For Faith and Clarity: Philosophical Contributions to Christian Theology*, ed. James K. Beilby (Ada, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 142–43.
31. *Ibid.*, 144.
32. Stephen Webb, *American Providence: A Nation with a Mission* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 129–30.
33. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Mariner Books, 2008), 40.
34. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23.
35. "Discursive practices are ongoing agential intra-actions of the world" (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 173).
36. MacIntyre, "Pantheism," 98, emphasis added.
37. "Proposition XI: God or a substance consisting of infinite attributes . . . necessarily exists"; "Proposition XIV: Except God no substance can exist or be conceived" (Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. G. H. R. Parkinson [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 9, 12).
38. Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," in *The Summum Bonum*, ed. Evander Bradley McGilvary (Berkeley, Calif.: University Press, 1904), 152.
39. As Lovejoy points out, such concrete "stuff," which is to say Spinoza's attributes and modes, are "differences, not in the substance itself, but in relation to the finite intelligence which contemplates it"; in effect, "stuff" is ultimately illusory (*ibid.*, 143). Lovejoy concedes that Spinoza does not want to reduce phenomena to illusions, but with the vast majority of Spinoza's readers, concludes that he cannot secure the relation between the singularity of substance and the multiplicity of attributes, and ends up prioritizing the former at the expense of the latter (*ibid.*). Cf. Clayton, *Problem of God in Modern Thought*, 398.
40. Lovejoy, "Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," 165.
41. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 31. See also the discussion of monism versus pluralism in James in Mary-Jane Rubenstein, *Worlds without End: The Many Lives of the Multiverse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 4–5, 227.
42. James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 37, 322.
43. *Ibid.*, 55.
44. See William Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 80.
45. See James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 117, 33.

46. "As absolute," James explains, "or *sub specie eternitatis*, or *quatenus infinitus est*, the world repels our sympathy because it has no history" (James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 47). To paraphrase Martin Heidegger, no one would "play music and dance" before Spinoza's single substance—or its infinite modes (Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002], 72).
47. James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 325. For a treatment of the evolution of this term in James's work, see Rubenstein, *Worlds without End*, 3–5, 85, 189–90.
48. James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 30, III; see Connolly, *Pluralism*, 85.
49. Steve Lopez, "Ornaments? Go Figure," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 18, 1988.
50. Diane White, "Lawn Sheep Threatening Plastic Birds," *Ocala Star-Banner*, September 11, 1989.
51. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ed., *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX*, vol. 28, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 395. For finding this source and the one that follows, I am indebted to my colleague Ron Cameron.
52. François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. Christine M. Thomas (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 86.
53. See *ibid.*, 87; Fitzmyer, *Gospel according to Luke I–IX*, 395.
54. See Wilfred H. Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," *Open Court* 26, no. 9 (1912): 513–32.
55. "Pan," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online).
56. "Pan," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
57. See Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 517.
58. "Hymn to Pan," in *The Homeric Hymns: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes*, ed. Diane J. Rayor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), line 2.
59. "Pan," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online). Robin Lane Fox tells us that "in the early fourth century, Iamblichus still referred to 'those seized by Pan' as a distinguishable class among people who had made contact with the gods" (Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987], 131).
60. "Pan," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online).
61. Sharon Lynn Coggan, "Pandaemonia: A Study of Eusebius' Recasting of Plutarch's Story of the 'Death of Great Pan'" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1992), 87.
62. "Pan," in *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*, ed. Harry Thurston Peck (New York: Cooper Square, 1963).
63. "Pan," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. See also Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 86.
64. Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 95, 86–87.
65. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, Posthumanities (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 4.
66. W. R. Irwin, "The Survival of Pan," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 76, no. 3 (1961): 161.
67. Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 88.
68. *Ibid.*
69. "Pan, 3," in *Urban Dictionary*: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=pan>.

70. Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 88, 85.
71. "Pan," in Peck, *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*.
72. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 130.
73. "Pan," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online).
74. "Pan," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed.
75. "It is reasonable . . . that Pan is the double-natured son of Hermes [since] . . . speech makes all things [*pán*] known and always makes them circulate and move about and is twofold, true and false. . . . The true part is smooth and divine and dwells aloft among the gods, but falsehood dwells below among common men, is rough like the tragic goat. . . . The Pan, who declares and always moves all, is rightly called goat-herd, being the double-natured son of Hermes, smooth in his upper parts, rough and goat-like in his lower parts. And Pan, if he is the son of Hermes, is either speech or the brother of speech" (Plato, "Cratylus," in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997], 408b–d).
76. "Pan," in Benjamin Hederich, *Gründliches mythologisches Lexikon* (<http://woerterbuchnetz.de/Hederich/>, 1770).
77. While Penelope is usually hailed as the epitome of marital virtue, some Arcadian legends have it otherwise. See the entries "Pan" and "Penelopé" in Peck, *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*, as well as "Penelope" in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed.
78. Plutarch, "The Obsolescence of Oracles," in *Moralia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 419e.
79. "Pan," in Peck, *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*.
80. "Pan," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (online); Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 517; "Pan," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed.
81. See Porphyry, *On Images*, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford (<http://classics.mit.edu/Porphyry/images.html>), fragment 9.
82. See Rubenstein, *Worlds without End*, chap. 1.
83. Plutarch, *On the Obsolescence of the Oracles*, in Coggan, "Pandaemonia," ii.
84. *Ibid.*, i.
85. In a nutshell, the Romans on the ship misheard the Greeks on the island. The latter were celebrating the annual death of their agricultural deity, Tammuz, and cried out ritualistically, "Tammuz, Tammuz, Tammuz, the very great is dead (ΠΑΝΜΕΓΑΟΣ ΤΕΘΝΗΚΕ)." Mistaking the god's name for his own, the captain Thamus and his passengers believed the news was just, "ΠΑΝΜΕΓΑΟΣ ΤΕΘΝΗΚΕ," which their nonnative Greek parleyed into ΠΑΝ Ο ΜΕΓΑΟΣ ΤΕΘΝΚΕ ("Pan the great is dead"). See Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 521.
86. Eusebius in Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 1. As Coggan demonstrates, it was Eusebius who shifted the meaning of the Greek *daimon* from "divine being" to "evil spirit" (see Coggan, "Pandaemonia," 2–3).
87. *Ibid.*, ii. According to Robin Lane Fox, this "Pan pun was premature, for his was the one reported death of Tiberius's reign which nobody believed. Cults of Pan continued in the very heart and identity of cities, the 'Pan hill' in the middle of Alexandria

- or the grottoes and springs of Caesarea Panias, where the god's presence persisted on the city's third-century coinage" (Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 130).
88. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 17. See also R. Lowe Thompson, *The History of the Devil: The Horned God of the West* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929); Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); James Hillman and W. H. Roscher, *Pan and the Nightmare* (Irving, Tex.: Spring Publications, 1979); Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 517.
 89. John Milton, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," in *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and M. Fallon (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 8.85. Cf. Milton's reference to "universal Pan" in *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and M. Fallon (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 4.266.
 90. Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 526.
 91. François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. M. A. Screech (New York: Penguin, 2006), 24.
 92. *Ibid.*, 749.
 93. *Ibid.*
 94. *Ibid.*, 750.
 95. Schoff, "Tammuz, Pan and Christ," 527.
 96. Edmund Spenser, "The Shepherdes Calendar," in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram et al. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 99–100.
 97. Ben Johnson, "Pan's Anniversary; or, The Shepherd's Holiday," in *The Works of Ben Johnson*, ed. William Gifford (New York: D. Appleton, 1879), Hymn II, 763.
 98. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Dead Pan," in *Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*, ed. John Robert Glorney Bolton and Julia Bolton Holloway (New York: Penguin, 1996), lines 183–84.
 99. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 130.
 100. Because of their proximity to humans, chimpanzees were first placed in the genus *Homo*. Threatened by this categorical confusion of humanity and "ape," later taxonomists rechristened chimps with the genus name *Pan*, which "refers to the mythical Greek god of forests, flocks, and shepherds, represented with the head, chest, and arms of a man and the legs and sometimes horns and ears of a goat" (Clyde Jones et al., "Pan Troglodytes," *Mammalian Species* 529 [May 17, 1966]: 1–9). This explanation is perplexing, insofar as chimps have very little to do with goats. But they have quite a lot to do with "men," so it seems taxonomists named them after Pan because of his *half*-humanity. (I have no idea what they made of Pan's divinity with respect to chimps!) The species name is *trogloodytes* (cave-dwellers), which is strange for animals who do not live in caves, but which both connects chimps to the fabled "cavemen" that "we" used to be and intensifies the connection to Pan. As late as 1985, the International Committee on Zoological Nomenclature was considering sneaking *homo* back into the *type* name, but the deciding vote was contingent on

- the rejection of including *homo* anywhere in the official nomenclature of chimps (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, "Opinion 1368: The Generic Names *Pan* and *Panthera* [Mammalia, Carnivora]: Available as from Oken, 1816," *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* 42, no. 4 [1985]: 365–70). Here, then, we see Pan invoked to shoulder the burden of liminality—to keep humanity safely separate from its too-close kin. I am indebted to Lori Gruen for having uncovered these sources, and for talking me through this particular thicket of theohumanity.
101. The three reasons most commonly invoked for Christian opposition to the earth charter are its purported pantheism, its reference to the earth as "mother," and its support for women's reproductive rights. See Thomas Sieger Derr, "The Earth Charter and the United Nations," *Religion & Liberty* 11, no. 2 (2001), <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-11-number-2/earth-charter-and-united-nations>; Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
102. Even Haraway finds cyborgian potential in Jesus of Nazareth, noting his "odd sonship and odder kingship . . . disguises and form-changing habits" and calling him "a potential worm in the Oedipal psychoanalytics of representation" (Donna Haraway, "Ecce Homo, Ain't [Ar'n't] I a Woman, and Inappropriate/D Others: The Human in an Post-Humanist Landscape," in *The Haraway Reader* [New York: Routledge, 2004], 51).
103. Giordano Bruno, "On the Infinite Universe and Worlds," in *Giordano Bruno: His Life and Thought with Annotated Translation of His Work on the Infinite Universe and Worlds*, ed. Dorothea Singer (New York: Schuman, 1950), 97–98; Rubenstein, *Worlds without End*.
104. Catherine Keller uses this term with reference to Irigaray's "radicalization of the Christic symbol," and has herself been credited with or accused of a kind of pancarnationalism (Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* [New York: Routledge, 2003], 221; Carl S. Hughes, "'Tehomic' Christology? Tanner, Keller, and Kierkegaard on Writing Christ," *Modern Theology* 31, no. 2 [2015]: 256–83). Pancarnational or not, Keller's tehomic theology is far closer to the work of this essay than is Irigaray's sensible transcendental. I am concerned above all by Irigaray's rejection of "multiplicity," her recently reiterated insistence on the heterosexual *two*, and her confinement of divinity to humanity. "It is a question of the transcendence of an irreducible difference between two, of which the most universal paradigm lies between man and woman . . . who are naturally different . . . [whose] attraction . . . arises from instinct and becomes humanity and divinity. . . . I have stressed the necessary condition of the negative so that we are and we remain two, that is, so that the between-two does not merge into the multiplicity of community" (Luce Irigaray, *In the Beginning, She Was* [New York: Bloomsbury, 2013], 18, 21).
105. James, *Pluralistic Universe*, 28.