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Urban Animals—Domestic, Stray, and Wild: Notes from a Bear Repopulation Project in the Alps

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Abstract

This piece explores “domesticity” as a social territory defined by its relationship with the conceptual and ecological space of “the wild,” and asks whether these spaces stand in opposition to each other or more subtle relations of co-implication are at play. As we look into the domestic and the wild, a conceptual map of notions emerges, including the public, the common, the civilized, and the barbarian. The paper suggests the domestic and the wild constitute two semiotic-ecological domains constantly stretching into each other without any stable or even clear boundary line, and it elaborates on a series of corollaries for studying non-human animals in urban contexts. As an illustrative case study, we follow the story of Daniza, a wild brown bear introduced in the Brenta Natural Park on the Italian Alps in the 2000s. Declared a “dangerous animal,” Daniza was accidentally, and controversially, killed by the public authorities in 2014.

Keywords

bears – domesticity – domestication – urban wildness – alpine ecology – territorial governance – animal advocacy

Introduction

In this paper, we report from a bear repopulation project in the Alps in order to examine the complexities of classifications and entanglements between

non-human and human animals. We seek to show how the logical classifications into which animals are allocated (typically, domestic, stray, and wild) are constantly challenged by the messiness of life. Thus, we are interested in probing these category constructions of the Western canon and their contradictions.

The paper is structured as follows: in the first section, we set the epistemological framework where we aim to discuss urban animals and their relation to domesticity; in the second section, we locate the spaces of the domestic and the wild in the context of the urban domain, recalling the main features of contemporary urbanized space. This enables us, in the third section, to analyze the complex relations between domesticity, domestication, and civilization. All the notions discussed in the first three sections can subsequently be seen at play in the central case study on the bear Daniza (section four). Precisely by reconstructing how Daniza's story is told by the different parties involved, and how these parties engage in it, in the fifth section, we unpack the figure of "the barbarian," which we conceptualize as a crucial blind spot in the whole diagram of the prolongations of the domestic. In conclusion, we return to the major points and recapitulate our argument.

Animal Governance, Domestication, and Classification

In a Foucaultian framework, *governance* is to be understood as sort of meta-conduct—or, a conduct of conducts. Indeed, Foucault's whole oeuvre is an exploration of how governance can be attained by either internal or external means (Foucault, 2004). Internal means are essentially *disciplinary* tools, whereby an attempt is made to apprehend "from within" the body of the subject to be governed. Dressage, training, and education are among such means. All these practices share the fact of beginning as "command" and being prolonged as voluntary "collaboration." However, while discipline proceeds by internal means, *biopolitical* instruments only act on populations from the outside. In biopolitics, the body itself is conceptualized as an open site of passage of forces across a social multiplicity. Biopolitics completely disregards any psychological aspect of the power relation since its point of application is not the individual but impersonal events that flow across social groups.

Inside this general domain of governance, the difference between humans and nonhuman animals, while not wholly negligible, is nonetheless thoroughly relative—a matter of degrees rather than of nature. From a biopolitical point of view, the asymmetry between humans and animals is even less relevant (Wolfe, 2012; Braverman, 2016). Both humans and nonhuman animals form natural *populations* that must be managed in aggregated terms by considering

their own specific biological requirements in relation to their environment as well as to a shared space where interspecific populations circulate and meet. Consequently, we can say that, partly, we *discipline* animals as individuals through dressage, as in the case of companion animals being trained not to pee on our carpet; partly, we *govern* them biopolitically as populations, as in the case of pests to be confined, curtailed, or exterminated.

As a form of a governance-by-the-milieu, biopolitical control is perfectly and thoroughly urban insofar as it does not apply to single individuals but to crowds (populations). By contrast, domestication lies on the side of taming, training, dressage, education, and discipline. All these techniques capture living forms and their intrinsic psychological attitudes (in this sense, Foucault spoke of “social orthopedy”). For example, Anderson (1997) proposes to understand domestication as “a process of drawing animals into a nexus of human concern where humans and animals become mutually accustomed to conditions and terms laid out by humans; where that which is culturally defined as nature’s ‘wildness’ is brought in and nurtured in some guises, exploited in other guises, mythologized and aestheticized in still other forms of this complex cultural practice” (p. 464).

Nonhuman animals exist, as Haraway (2003) has put it, in an “obligatory, constitutive, historical, protean relationship with human beings” (p. 12). Such relations are typically plural, as they evolve and vary across time and space. Because relations are best captured and mirrored in socially established classifications, typical animal classifications encapsulate human-animal interaction patterns: “pets,” livestock, pests, wildlife, game, etc. (Braverman, 2013). Intuitively, one senses that similar classes are ordered on a continuum of domestication, arranging species from the most domestic to the wildest. Classification goes hand in hand with individualization and results in placing animals across moral hierarchies, which are dependent on their particular position in a given space, time, and culture (Douglas, 1966).

However, the individuation of nonhuman animals is a complex process, constituted by degrees, which does not quite match classification in a linear way. At one extreme, we find animals with a name and a face, while at the other, we find crowd-animals, such as swarms and packs. This distinction does not correspond neatly to the distinction between domestic and wild animals. The sheer size of the animal, for instance, might affect it. Indeed, animals who are approximately the size of humans (such as wolves and bears) possess a potential for a higher degree of individuation vis-à-vis animals who are definitely smaller (such as rats and pigeons).

Individuality also results from affective investments. For instance, pets are domestic animals with a high degree of individuation (Fido, Felix, etc.), while

farmers usually deal with “crowd animals” such as, prototypically, sheep, with notable variations, of course, across the spectrum that goes from industrial to nomadic farming. Individuation, moreover, is a historically determined process. For instance, in industrial agriculture, animals have been perfectly de-individualized into a homogenous multitude, a key rhetorical device to allow for their daily massacre to go unnoticed. To contrast this, animal welfare movements have developed an increasingly individualistic notion of animal suffering (Bock & Buller, 2013; Buller, 2013). The welfare movement strategy seeks to foster animal protection vis-à-vis a law which, given its congenital inability in coping with animal crowds (Holmberg, 2015), appears able to provide only statistical and average limits with “acceptable” levels (of violence, pain, etc.) that blatantly fail to protect the animals (Buller, 2013).

The ways in which animals are positioned between the domestic and the wild, and their degree of de/individuation, are dependent on notions of economic functionality, company, leisure, aesthetics, ecology, security, and so on, and play a determinant role in the way they are treated, especially in controversial circumstances. Anthropology has abundantly shown that all categorization work is non-linear and tricky, given that classificatory criteria tend unavoidably to multiply and become internally contradictory. Legal and socio-cultural categorizations seek to establish animal classifications that may stabilize our social relations to them, yet animals—and our encounters with them—tend to unsettle fixed categorizations.

For example, Holmberg (2015) explains how legal regulations of animals, being strictly individualistic and proprietary, cannot cope with collective entities, such as a cat colony, or with domestic animals who are unowned: “animals such as cats are required by law to be owned, and if they are not, they are not allowed to exist” (p. 63). As a way to overcome the strictures of such obsolete definitions, Michaels (2004) thus employs the words “animobilities” and “mobilegalities” to stress the propensity of animals to circulate and flow—to go *astray*—both in space as well as across categorizations. While a Kantian jargon grounds animals into the “schemas” which are supposed to define their nature, an alternative approach informed by Spinoza does not sort animals into taxa or classes but appraises them in relation to the affects which they develop. Since affects are forms of relationship (between human as well as non-human animals), such an approach leads to the classification of animals along fluid relational and unstable trajectories (scattered discontinuities), making the image of a smooth continuum of domestication problematic. That is why in human-animal encounters, the logic of classification is constantly put to the test and often found wanting.

Locating the Domestic and the Wild in the Urban

The word “savage” derives from the Latin *silva*, namely the woodland. In the Latin archetype, the savage lives dispersed in the woods, as opposed to the *urbs* and the *ager*, respectively the city, where settlement is concentrated, and the plough, where smaller yet settled rural communities (hamlets, etc.) are located. The relation is depicted as one of exteriority. Indeed, the term *fores* (from which “forest”) means “outside” and also indicates the door of the house. Already inscribed in this etymology is the existence of a threshold between domesticity and its outside: *civitas* and *silva*, house and forest, stand as each other’s polar opposite. The role of the *ager*, the agricultural field, as a mediator between the city and the woodland, must be retrieved in the origin of civilization as, precisely, *cultivation*. And it is in making private property from the land that capitalist civilization first appears.

In the liberal tradition, the entanglement of civilization, cultivation, and property was strikingly formulated by Locke, who argued that those who cultivate/civilize the land and make it productive should be granted the right to property over those undeserving “common” hands inhabiting the *terrae nullius* of the New World (1690, §V). In modern times, the notion of urbanization, as coined by Cerdá (1867), was designed to overcome the model of the *civitas*, centered on the opposition between the domestic space of the *oikos* and the political space of the *polis*. Cerdá was in favour of the model of the *urbs*, envisaged as an a-political space in which the domestic paradigm (*oikonomia*, i.e., the administration of the house) would be expanded to every level of urban management. A radical “domesticization of the city” (Adams, 2014, p. 22) would supposedly ensue.

In fact, both the *domus* and the *urbs* grapple with precisely the same problem of control. Traditionally, such a problem has a name: *the wild*. The wild is, by definition, the domain that escapes control and puts civility to the test. More precisely, the wild comes into existence *at the same time as* domesticity and civility, with the beginning of sedentary culture, the cultivation of land, and the domestication of livestock. As such, it is the result of two contradictory movements—for civilization at the same time *produces* as well as *tames* wilderness. *Prima facie*, civility presents itself as *opposed to* wilderness. Civility, in other words, generates its own self-restraint emphasizing its own boundaries of immunity cast against the uncivil. This means that civilization ultimately *requires* wilderness since, integrally understood, it cannot help but constantly relate to its own outside: civility means civility towards wilderness. At the same time, paradoxically, civility can never be truly performed in relation to the wilderness.

To be encountered by civilization, wilderness must have been already “processed,” that is, split into a tameable wilderness, which is incorporated within the realm of civility, and an “untameable” wilderness, which is foreclosed. Such contradictions obviously do not remain merely abstract but rather materialize into the everyday lives of the bodies that inhabit their thresholds. As a result, whenever the interaction between the civilized and the uncivilized turns into a merely strategic relation, in which questions of efficiency trump all other considerations, civility self-decrees its own irrelevance. Ultimately, whenever interaction becomes merely strategic, war-like and hunt-like scenarios open up which destroy civility itself.

In synthesis, the domestic and the wild can be explored as two semiotic-material domains constantly stretching into each other without any stable or clear boundary line. This situation can be described in terms of “prolongations.” These are sequences of notions that can stretch into one another without clear fault-lines. In other words, such sequences generate “zones of indistinction,” transitional zones where the notions inevitably blur, coexist uncomfortably, and contradict each other. Using categories that are of course culturally specific to the Western tradition, the first prolongation stretches from *the Domestic*, through *the Communal*, to *the Public*, whereas the second one goes from *the Domestic*, through *the Stray*, to *the Wild*.¹ At this crossroad, a third prolongation appears to intersect the former two—the classic triad *Civilised—Barbarians—Savages*, first outlined by Adam Ferguson (1767) in the late 18th century. Of course, we do not exclude the possibility—even, probability—that further prolongations not considered here might exist as well. A graphic approximation of the prolongations to be discussed could thus be pictured as illustrated in Figure 1.

In the following pages, we are interested in probing the dotted line that exists in the area laid out between the former two divergent prolongations as crossed by—or encroached with—the third prolongation. Animals’ intraspecific and interspecific social-spatial existence highlights issues related to first two prolongations (namely, *Domestic—Communal—Public* and *Domestic—Stray—Wild*) as well as the frictions generated at the encounter with the third prolongation (*Civilised—Barbarians—Savages*). As we shall see, the ambiguous figure

1 This second continuum also corresponds to what Candea (2010) has called “the broad spectrum that lies between complete lack of connection, on the one hand, and actual ‘intersubjectivity,’ on the other hand,” which Candea proposes to explore through the lens of mutual “habituation” or “inter-patience.” Below, we will see how Daniza’s case is precisely one where such inter-patience is put to test.

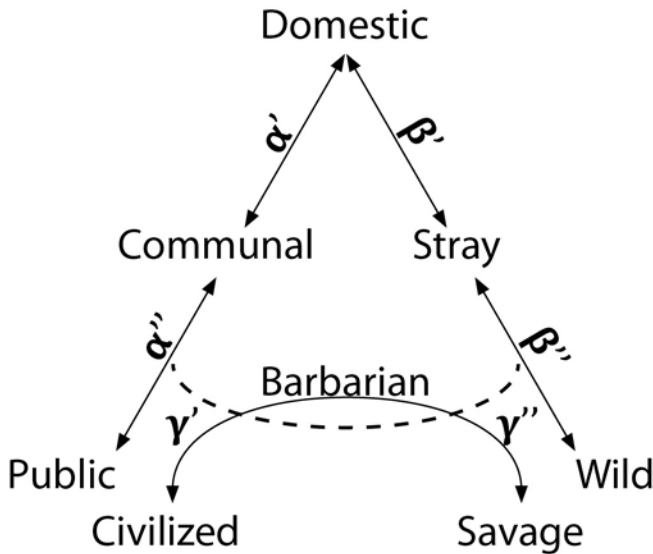


FIGURE 1 Prolongations of the domestic.

of the barbarian stands as the central embodiment of this puzzle as the re-entry of the political through the back-door of the domesticized city.

Domesticity, Domestication, and Civilization

At the end of 19th century, the American evolutionary paleontologist Nathaniel Southgate Shaler (1896) maintained that domestication was one of the most important drivers of civilization. In his view, domestication represented more than utilitarian action, as it also included “aesthetic satisfaction” and “sympathetic relations.” As Shaler (1896) noted, “The work of domestication ... represents one of the modes of action of that sympathetic motive which more than any other has been the basis of the highest development of mankind” (p. 221). In contrast to “low grade” humans, who slay animals and get profit out of them—Shaler reasoned—civilized humans should strive to build “sympathetic relations with half a score of animal species and many kinds of plants.” (p. 222)

Contemporary commentators have remarked that Shaler’s art of cultivation was exclusively human, and helped to keep nonhuman animals on a lower ground as creatures locked in instincts. Simultaneously, and unsurprisingly, Shaler’s argument was also ingrained into deep-seated racism, which viewed domestication as an “Aryan” invention (Pagden [1982], quoted in Anderson, 1997). Clearly, today the idyllic picture of a coming together of humans and nonhuman animals for the sake of the latter’s improvement beyond the

former's profit is rather compromised by the debasing conditions of the global agro-industrial system. Nonetheless, the frame of sympathy, care-taking, and moral improvement can still be found at play in contemporary ecological theories of post-human togetherness. There is a belief in the possibility of suppressing human-animal conflict, so as to achieve a peaceful coexistence with the wild, what ecologist and ethologist Valerius Geist (2008) dubbed the "wonderful ecosystem fallacy."

With the extensive urbanization of the planet and its radical modification by humans—currently captured by the notion of the Anthropocene—the divide between the urban and the wild has proved untenable both theoretically and practically. In fact, as result of the extensive urbanization of territories that has contradistinguished the 19th and 20th centuries, the wild is no longer located simply outside of civility ("out there" versus "in here"). Instead, wildness is increasingly located *in-between* civilized zones. The urban, in this sense, is not the opposite of the wild but rather incorporates the latter. In interstitial wild landscapes, an interplay of domesticity and wildness occurs (Jorgensen & Tylecote, 2007; Jorgensen & Keenan, 2012).

Interstitial urban terrains are those spaces lacking any major official function, or even those spaces more or less visibly deserting their officially designated function (Thrasher, 1963[1927]; Brighenti, 2013). At its most explicit today, and with respect to earlier efforts to frame the relation between animals and the city (e.g., Philo, 1995), the urban cannot be confined within one side of the urban/wild opposition. It should instead be understood as emerging out of the constant, semiotic, and material reformulation of their threshold. If the radical modification of the planet as a result of human activity is by now a certified fact, and if this is fundamentally tied to the global process of urbanization, it follows that all animals are to some extent directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, in the process of *being urbanized*.

In such a condition of unavoidable co-existence that emerges once we shift from a center-periphery model to a topological-interstitial one, the crucial issue of domesticity then becomes one of *distance management*. Following Elias Canetti (1978), the establishment of distances can be said to be a fundamental resource in social life at large. The notion of "critical distance" becomes pivotal whenever we encounter the idea that non-domestic animals should be kept at a distance. But, what is the *right distance* and, at which price can it be obtained?

The urban context offers countless examples of the extent to which such questions can become thorny. A typical problem of distance is offered, for instance, by *pests*. During the course of the 20th century, urban administrators and reformers relentlessly tried to rid city-dwellers of rats, flies, cockroaches,

and stray dogs. Hygiene and sanitation, veritable dogmas of modernism, led to the definition of domestic space as antithetical to the presence of pests, shaping modalities of management and interaction that incessantly revolved around the notion (and panic) of invasion and the complementary quest for immunity (Bielher, 2013).

Contemporary scholars have paid attention to the intersection of human and nonhuman animal trajectories. By collapsing distances, intersections are the moments when nonhuman animals most visibly become a problem for humans (Braverman, 2013; Ojalampi & Blomley, 2015). In particular, animals such as the bear and the wolf create anxiety due to their enhanced and largely unpredictable mobility. These animals do not simply cross the land, but also collective imaginative geographies (Philo & Wilbert, 2000, p. 11). The case of the “yard wolf” and the “problem bear” are typical examples highlighting how distance is a complex social phenomenon irreducible to mere topography. (A “yard wolf” is a wolf who “repeatedly visits human settlements and thus is designated as a threat to human security, expediting the issuance of a hunting permit,” Ojalampi & Blomley, 2015, p. 55.)

In this sense, distance is a rhythm-analytical and territoriological question that inevitably materializes at the intersection of the two urban imperatives vis-à-vis the wild (and, arguably, urban politics in general): namely, *biodiversity* and *biosecurity*. Whereas biodiversity generates the imperative of animal protection and the defense of hunting species that could face extinction, biosecurity generates the imperative to hunt and kill every wild animal who has come “too close.” Between these two extremes, the life of wild nonhuman animals in their encounter with human animals remains open to a range of possible scenarios.²

These examples show to what extent the relationship between animals and the city, i.e., the very process of the urbanization of animals, offers an almost paradigmatic locus to explore the functioning and the limits of the dispositif of domestication. Another notable aspect emerges from this preliminary reconnaissance, namely, the fact that distance management is inherently *technical*

2 Discussing in particular the case of the wolf—whose relation to humans shares major resemblances with the bear—Buller (2008) has observed the wild animal tends to be debated in the dichotomous terms of either biodiversity (the wild animal as treasure to welcome and protect) or biosecurity (the wild animal as threat to be eliminated). In this respect, Tønnessen (2010) argued for a third way, a sort of neutralist position according to which wild animal governance should “neither favor nor work against the wolf” and rather make itself redundant. On this account, the long-term goal of wildlife management could only be realized once “people will no longer assume a human monopoly on land use and on prey species” (p. 5).

and *moral* at once. Here, we may begin to see why and how the frictional coexistence of the first two prolongations opens up a gap in which the third prolongation appears. By asserting its presence in this ill-defined categorical space, the figure of the barbarian enables us to explain the legal and political configuration upon which the first two prolongations implicitly rest.

The Unlucky Case of Bear Daniza

In this section, we focus on the case of the problem bear Daniza, who became a controversial press hero in 2014. Daniza was introduced into the woods of Trentino, Northern Italy, under the *Life Ursus* re-wilding program, together with nine other bears between 1999 and 2002. Daniza herself was released in the area of the Natural Park Parco Naturale Adamello-Brenta in 2000 as a young adult female (about 4 years old) weighing about 100 kilograms. The project began with a high level of consensus among the locals, about 70% according to an early survey (Ufficio Faunistico del Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta, 2010). Its objective, grounded in a classic wildlife conservationist position, was to constitute a “healthy population of bears in the Alps, able to survive without human help” (Dupré, Genovesi, & Pedrotti, 1998, p. 1). As such, the initiative was intended to increase biodiversity, in response to the 19th-century extinction of bears in the region (hence the term “re-introduction”) (Castelli, 1935).

Biosecurity was essentially implemented through surveillance: constant radio-collar monitoring of first-generation bears was likewise implemented, along with a series of preventive and protective protocols aimed at avoiding human-animal conflict (PNAB, 1998). An emergency team of specialists was also put in place to deal with “problem bears,” by either ordinary or emergency procedures. Such was the initial plan. However, with the increase of the bear population in the following years (up to about 50 individuals by 2015), a number of “accidents” and unforeseen encounters between humans and bears have occurred. Each of these human-animal encounters produced a high media impact locally, nationally, and even internationally.

Daniza began her “trouble-making” career by appearing uninvited at a restaurant in Riva del Garda in 2000. At the early stages of the *Life Ursus* program, such minor incidents did not seem to affect the public acceptance of bears. The Natural Park agency and the local government made all efforts to claim that bears were under control—these animals represent a major tourist asset in the context of natural heritage tourism (see also Buller, 2004; 2008). Besides bears, administrators and tourists, other *dramatis personae* of this story included other nonhuman animals (especially livestock and domestic animals); experts in zoology, veterinary science, and ecology; journalists; animal advocacy activists; hunters; local residents, and the general public. The drama reached



FIGURE 2 Daniza, a loving mother and a wild beast.

its peak in the 2014. On August 18, 2014, Daniza—by now an 18-year-old mother with two 8-month-old cubs—attacked and wounded a local man who was picking mushrooms in the woods. The attack was apparently an overprotective reaction to feeling her cubs were endangered by the man who kept peeping on them while hidden behind a tree.

The case dramatically split public opinion, igniting internet pro-animal campaigns, on the one hand, and capture plans by the authorities, on the other (Davies, 2014). In the city of Trento, the administrative capital, protesters took the square waving banners that read “Don’t kill mother bear.” An online local poll organized by a local newspaper put the anti-capture front at 90%. A petition against capture received 70,000 signatures. At the same time, the bear was described in the media as both a skilful escapee and a dangerous animal. A whole characteriology of Daniza was sketched, highlighting both her maternal protectiveness and her advanced age, supposedly making her embittered towards humans.

On the September 10th, Daniza was eventually captured and immobilized with a narcotic bullet. However, the injected anaesthetic dose was too high and the animal died of heart failure (Montini, 2014). The echo was momentous. The local government and the Natural Park were harshly criticized by animal advocates, while journalists expressed skepticism about the official version of the capture. In a wave of “commotion and rage,” between September and October, a number of protests with over a thousand people at a time were organized

by animalists of both leftist and rightist political persuasions, including one on September 28 where banners read “Daniza has been assassinated,” “I’m for Daniza,” and “Justice for Daniza.” A call to boycott the whole Trentino province was also launched, and boycott stickers continued to be pasted even months later and at distant locations, such as the Expo2015 in Milan. Finally, in April 2015, the veterinarian who supervised the capture operations was fined 2,000€ for faulty killing of a wild animal (Adnkronos, 2015; Badaloni, 2015).

It should be noted how both experts and the public authority alike framed the case through a “problematic individual exemplar” narrative (Ufficio Faunistico del Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta, 2010, p. 158), which enabled them to defend the repopulation project as a whole. What was “problematic” in Daniza, just as for Bruno before her (Wikipedia contributors, 2018), was her apparent loss of diffidence towards humans, which increasingly brought her closer to human establishment and territories. As stated by a report, it is considered problematic when “an animal ... assumes a less circumspect and elusive behavior with respect to the typical standard of the species and becomes gradually more visible and closer to the human” (Ufficio Faunistico del Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta, 2010, p. 163, *our translation*). According to the official “Problem Bears Protocol,” habituation to human presence is thus the principal sign of a problematic nature, to be graded from A to C. The protocol establishes that bears who show signs of habituation or lose their “natural diffidence vis-à-vis humans” are to be captured, radio-collared, or, if deemed dangerous, killed (Ministero dell’Ambiente, Decree no. 5886, 28/04/98, *Protocollo Orsi Problematici [Problem Bears Protocol]*).

Officially, the issue remained framed as a one of biosecurity, according to which the “dangerous beast” should be captured and, if necessary, killed (a suggestion initially circulated among the experts and quickly rescinded in the face of the polemics it sparked). Just as in the case of Australian dingoes studied by Peace (2002), the “persistent crossing of significant boundaries between animals and people resulted in their being considered distinctly disposable, in contrast to their previously protected status” (p. 15). Indeed, the idea to shoot down the animal received support from the rural and small village populations, largely pro-hunting people who felt menaced by bears and saw accidental encounters as confirmation of their dangerous nature, further validated by the fact that sheep were being killed by them.

Not only herdsmen and peasants, but rural inhabitants in general criticize the protectionist discourse: it is too easy—they claim—for people living in cities to talk about protection while never feeling in danger (e.g., Buller, 2004,

p. 139). The anti-urban rhetoric of the inhabitants of villages and hamlets, usually dismissed as merely conservative, is interesting for us: their justification discourse does not make reference to the public dimension but to the communal one. The feeling for a community under siege by the bear provided the dominant frame of reference for local inhabitants. We should not forget that, as mentioned in our short categorical-etymological reconstruction, rural spaces have always been crucial spaces of articulation between the urban and the wild. By contrast, animal advocacy movements stemming from urban culture tend to sympathetically portray wild animals as victims to be protected rather than enemies to be exterminated (Coleman, 2004).

Daniza was not “just another bear,” but she was an animal with a high degree of individualization, as most explicitly shown by her having a human name (her cubs, by contrast, were identified only through technical codes). Like Moby Dick, her *res gestae* gave her the right to a name. As hinted above, pest swarms, stray dogs, and wildlife alike are usually anonymous. It is typically by means of an exceptional circumstance, often tied to the breaking of normative frameworks, that wild animals are rescued from anonymity. Individuation by name has important consequences, enacting a sort of *imaginative domestication* of the animal. This allowed Daniza’s behavior to be increasingly described and explained through a domestic, even familial, lens.

The narrative of the problematic individual exemplar was thus countered by assuming her behavior was normal and even acceptable: Daniza acted as a caring mother, perfectly justified in protecting her cubs. Such anthropomorphic empathizing carried an implicit clause: “Wouldn’t you do the same?” In short, what the requirement of domesticity alludes to is a form of inclusion of the animal within a dimension of *commonality*. Although the fact that there is a commonality in humans and nonhuman animals is a bottom line in ecology, this is far-reaching achievement in the realm of morality, destabilizing the very boundaries of the common and repositioning the bear Daniza within an increasingly uncertain status.

In the process of becoming a public figure, Daniza was projected onto a moral register of action. Whereas all other bears were supposed to just follow their natural instincts, Daniza’s actions were at times referred to like she was an old buddy whose bad temper is well-known and must somehow be accommodated. Framed as closer to a stray than a wild animal, Daniza appeared to have lost her primitive, wild innocence. Yet, her plunge into the dimension of the stray animal didn’t simply carry the merely negative nuance of the transgressor, as was the case for the aforementioned dingoes, in which it quickly

set the stage for the popular acceptance of their culling (Peace, 2002). Daniza appears to occupy an even more ambiguous zone of indistinction: the figure of the barbarian appears here.

Which Sort of Wild?

Daniza illustrates how, before being combated, wilderness is measured, nurtured, supported, protected, and improved—in short, domesticated. To begin with, all the technologies that made possible the bear reintroduction project were highly urban, including zoological and ethological expertise, radio collars and distant monitoring, specific signage systems in the woods, electric fences, helicopter control flights, information leaflets massively distributed to the population and tourists, public meetings with experts organized for the local population, and so on. A supposedly wild species such as the bear appears to be taken care of rather more than most of the supposedly domesticated ones (Buller, 2004).

For instance, in Canada the presence of the cougar increased steadily due to the post-industrial economy transition, with reforestation of previously clear-cut areas. As former industrial areas become reforested, deer are attracted by low shrubs typical of clear-cut areas, moving out of reforested areas into residential landscapes; they are followed by the cougar (Collard, 2012). In fact, the very ecology where wild species live can be said to be largely human-created. Increasingly dependent on conservationist management and legal protection, as well as on human-related food availability (e.g., sheep, cattle), the wildness of wolves, cougars, and bears necessarily relies on such a preliminary form of domestication.

Domesticated wilderness might be the oxymoron of our times, whereby undomesticated wilderness is simply doomed to extinction, exposed to the destructive outward reach of urbanization. So, on the one hand, the possibility of civility *towards* wilderness occurs in the form of a withdrawal of civility that states its outer boundaries—*hic sunt leones*. Yet, on the other hand, wildness is not only negatively produced by civility, but it is also positively *protected* by it. The distinction between *domus* and *silva*, constantly reasserted at a rhetorical level, is deconstructed internally by a process which we may define as *hollow domestication*. In this process, the species are not directly selected, bred, and trained, but they are indirectly *allowed to be* through a series of technical and legal measures.

Hollow domestication does not aim to civilize wilderness; and it is no longer opposed to the domestic but made internal to it. As Tønnessen (2010) wittily put it, shouldn't we say that a wolf remains wild only as long as he/she does not know that he/she is being thoroughly managed? Pushing this idea further, we

should then ask: Aren't re-wilding programs functioning exactly like zoos—or at least, some variants of the same genre?

Why, then, retain the notion of wildness at all? The officially neutral, conservationist-ecological rationality cannot hide the fact that the wild animal draws attention and undeniable appeal to the natural park. At the same time, animalists, environmentalists, and ecologists tend to see the wild animal presence in an unconditionally positive light: they position the animal at the top of a supposedly natural hierarchy, insofar as the creature is seen as the harbinger of *true* nature. The wild appears exciting and thrilling in the eyes of both animal supporters and detractors. Ultimately, as we anticipated at the outset of this piece, a dose of wildness represents a way to re-enliven the domestic, insofar as the wild resonates with an overtone of freedom, independence, and frankness. This is why, in the evolution of the public debate and during the dramatic hours that preceded Daniza's capture and death, administrators and animal advocates alike tended to fall into an unrealistic and highly simplified understanding of the wild.

The implicit assumption was that the wild animal could be decoupled from the creature's "resistant" quality, through either hi-tech management or warm-hearted, wonderful-ecological mentality. Measured by a distance management concern, the animal was deemed dangerous each time she crossed the thresholds of domesticity, coming too close to our domestic space; at the same time, it was the animal's prolonged proximity that made her appear as an individual now fully included in the urban domain. This fact alimanted the legal and moral narrative put forth by animal advocacy associations reclaiming, after her death, "Justice for Daniza, an innocent animal" (Badaloni, 2014). Of course, the law usually punishes any "unnecessary or cruel" killing of animals (e.g., article 544bis of the Italian Penal Code).

But, does the concept of *innocence*—as well as its correlative *guilt*—make sense when applied to wild animals? If by "guilty" we mean that the animal has technically caused damages to human properties and humans alike, it is clear that such a guilt cannot be tied to any legalistic understanding of the animal being aware of what she is prevented from doing or allowed to do. If, however, by guilty we mean that the animal was showing "aggressiveness" towards humans (before Daniza, the bear Bruno was repeatedly characterized as someone who "enjoyed killing"), it becomes clear that the inscription of the wild animal into the register of domesticity has the consequence of creating, and subsequently assessing, her morality.

The personalization of the animal and a "characteriological" appreciation of her deeds were particularly visible in the issue of provocation. Was the wild animal provoked by humans, or, on the contrary, was the animal provoking them?

Speculations about provocations were implicitly grounded on various forms of legal territorialization. Local inhabitants perceived the mere approaching of the animal to their properties as provocation and threat. On the contrary, urban dwellers employed a de-spatialized understanding of human-animal interaction in wild areas according to which a provocation could only occur with reference to specific gestures or actions (e.g., someone talking too loud or trying to scare the animal). For their part, animal advocates argued on the contrary that the very presence of humans in a specific environment could constitute a veritable provocation for the animal.³

In different ways, these groups were equally framing the bear, her space, her movement, and behavior within social, legal, and moral categories with respect to which the animal spacing remains excessive. If physically capturing Daniza proved to be a daunting task, what remained impossible was to entrap her within a concept of “wild” projected from the perspective of the civilized, whatever the morally positive or negative nuance that was attached to it.

The Barbarian Animal

In the late 18th century, Adam Ferguson (1767) fixed a tripartite image of social life, whereby the civilized were opposed not only to the savages, but also to the barbarians. Savages, we could say in extreme synthesis, are natural animals, whereas barbarians are political animals—except that, as we are now painfully aware, the line between politics and nature proves impossible to draw. If the civilized stand in opposition to the savage, thanks to their mutually exclusive constitutions, the barbarian erupts—and keeps erupting—in *the middle* of the civilized zone. Hence, the question: what would constitute a *barbarian* animal as such, as opposed to a “merely” *savage* one? As already highlighted in

3 See in this sense the case of two recent aggressions by bear KJ2 against two joggers, in which the key issue is that of provocation: has the bear been provoked, as the animalists contend, or not, as the local government experts argue (the official capture and relocation order is precisely motivated by evoking the “absence of provocation” on the part of the joggers). Provocation is a complex issue. Animalists claim that going in the forest with a dog is itself an act of provocation. http://www.repubblica.it/ambiente/2015/06/10/news/trento_uomo_aggredito_da_orso_mentre_fa_jogging-116577430/?ref=search; http://www.repubblica.it/ambiente/2015/07/15/news/la_polemica-119093674/.

A similar incompatibility between socio-legal definitions, distance management and animal spacing is also discussed by Ojalampi and Blomley (2015): when a young wolf expelled from his/her home territory seeks to draw and produce a new territory, it may intersect with human spaces; in this case, the wolf's roaming around may be easily misinterpreted by human local residents as unusual and suspect, while in fact, from the wolf perspective, it is completely “normal” (p. 57).

Figure 1, barbarianism—understood as a question, not as a state—occupies an inevitably central position in the whole scheme.

In Daniza's case, the experts of the local government kept insisting that the bear was responsible for "aggressive" behavior. If constituting some kind of danger for humans is arguably part of being a bear, and in this sense, it's a technical matter of biosecurity, one cannot fail to notice how, during the final hunting of Daniza, the notion of danger took on a strong moralistic overtone.

Just as the wild cannot be understood but in relation to its interstitial urban location, the barbarian cannot be understood but in relation to the creature's uncomfortable position in relation to civility. Not by coincidence, a spokesman of the Italian Green party stated that Daniza's death was an event that called into question "the civility of our society" (Davies, 2014, p. 1).

Re-wilding programs appear to be guided by a number of un-wild normativities attached to the animal who, if found guilty of repeated or un-provoked aggressiveness, must be captured; at the same time, the original instinctive characteristics of the animals are supposed to remain intact. The construction of wilderness implies that only "properly wild" animals will be consistent there, with those showing an insufficient degree of wildness being thus constructed as "rogues" (Healy, 2007). In this logic, the animal remains confined outside of history and society and is supposed to never habituate him/herself to human social life. For habituation—the "urbanization" of the animal, his/her capacity to recognize and routinely deal with diversity—is a sign of the animal's dangerousness due to loss of shyness, diffidence, and the keeping of distances from humans. The impossible-yet-unavoidable imperative of civility towards wildness—or, more precisely, the impossibility for civility to accommodate the internal-external figure of the barbarian—appears here explicitly in the no-win situation into which the animal is forced.

The dyad of habituation and diffidence, confidence, and shyness, forms a complex and contradictory threshold where urban animals must live. As we saw above, for those who are supposed to be wild—including bears, wolves, bears, and cougars—what must be avoided is overcoming the "natural diffidence" in relation to humans. However, as a result of urbanization, intensive farming, and so on, wild animals are forced to be in close proximity to humans, either indirectly (e.g., learning how to deal with cars, etc.) or even directly (e.g., relying on food supply in various forms). In this context, the requirement that their diffidence towards humans stays intact is contradictory. In fact, we know that untamed animals also develop through social interaction with humans (e.g., Bielher, 2013, p. 204; Alexander & Lukasik, 2016).

Daniza faced a host of contradictory social and legal expectations and requirements. To adapt, evolve, and survive in increasingly urbanized territories and anthropic environments, non-domestic animals must continually move along the continuum: the wild animal must become urbanized (i.e., less wild) while the stray animal must develop wilder capacities to hunt and defend him/herself. However, as we have seen in our case study, the social imaginary, the moral lens, as well as the legal machinery that define the pattern of interspecies encounter require a stability that rejects and removes the threshold spaces of the prolongations.

Human supporters of both sides in the Daniza's *affaire* reduced the matter to either a technical problem that could be prevented or dealt with solely through the correct tools, or an ideological construction insensitive to any realistic spatial and territorial reality. In both cases, the fundamentally heterogeneous, unpredictable, and conflictual constitution of the public domain was overlooked. In addition, in both cases, the public domain was molded on the domestic and either reduced to a matter of economical management (*oikos*, the house) or idealized into an idyllic being-together in the great family-house of beings. In Daniza's case, since the beginning, the human freedom to roam around safely in the woods (biosecurity) was intertwined with the request for wild animals to be there (biodiversity); the expectations of domesticity were projected onto wildness and the forest was conceived of as a space that should be simultaneously wild *and* safe for humans. A configuration held together by contradictions is bound to erupt sooner or later, as our case has explicitly shown.

Conclusion

A wild animal such as the brown bear reintroduced in the Alps in the early 2000s can be provocatively thought of as an "urban animal." Certainly, the bear is not a tame animal, yet, all things considered, we should say that she is still an urban animal. As we have seen, the urban does not exclude the wild but instead incorporates it. In this piece, we have noticed the paradox of the "hollow domestication" of the wild, namely the technological and moral production of the wild through a process of domestication that oversees its outside and keeps it at bay without wholly absorbing it. In our view, re-wilding programs perfectly illustrate this dynamic.

Second, we observed that, as an urban animal, Daniza appears to simultaneously occupy the registers of the domestic and the wild, or rather their zone

of indistinction. This is the space where the barbarian appears—a creature who resides transversally, rather than merely in opposition, to the dichotomy of domestic and wild. The barbarian is a blind spot that can never be officially incorporated within the two prolongations of the domestic, and yet one that keeps interrogating and re-politicizing them. A focus on the barbarian hints at the possibility of developing an alternative configuration of these key notions, one that would not eliminate the domestic for the sake of a deterritorialized fantasy but that would remove it from the vertex of the scheme, that is, from its functioning as an unquestioned, albeit implicit archetype.

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