

國立臺灣大學文學院外國語文學系
博士論文



Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
College of Liberal Arts
National Taiwan University
Doctoral Dissertation

我的惡/善：

對彌爾頓筆下革命英雄的善惡漸變演繹之詮釋

Evil by my Good:

The Shifting Moral Interpretations of
Milton's Revolutionary Hero

德瑞克墨菲

Derek Murphy

指導教授：唐格理 博士

Advisor: Kirill Ole Thompson Ph.D.

中華民國 105 年 7 月

July 2016

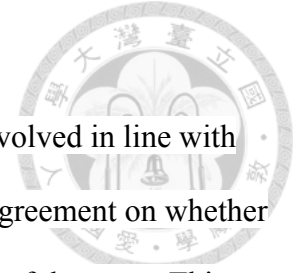


摘要

彌爾頓的史詩巨著《失樂園》（*Paradise Lost*）並沒有落入文學理論的俗套，而是引發了一場持續三百多年的爭論，即：彌爾頓筆下的撒旦到底是不是故事中的英雄人物，不論是出於偶然還是主觀意願。這部史詩的背景是《聖經》伊甸園的故事，其核心主題與這個故事一樣，都是關於“誘惑”。在《失樂園》中，撒旦對亞當和夏娃的惡意誘惑似乎證明瞭他的邪惡，但同時，我們也會對他在這一冒險行動中所展示出的英雄情懷產生認同感。許多西方的批評家認為這正是《失樂園》的魅力所在，他們的觀點是彌爾頓筆下的撒旦應該是被唾棄的人物。而另一方面，有些人則認為這種傳統的解讀是中世紀的落後思想，即：人們應當服從權威和已繼承的智慧，並嚴格地控制自己的想法和熱情。而且他們認為這種解讀完全違背了當代社會所宣導的自由寬容和浮士德價值觀。這篇論文首先將探討對《失樂園》的傳統解讀，以及它所引發的反應。我會闡述彌爾頓的作品所體現的西方文化中的道德反轉：從一開始把“撒旦”奉為政治革命的象徵性人物，到後來批判為人性墮落的典型。分析了文學理論和大眾在“政治認同”角度對撒旦這個人物的評價的變化之後，我將對“後現代思想”和“存在主義”著作與《失樂園》進行比較性閱讀，例如《撒旦的現實意義》（對自由的強烈渴望帶來焦慮，並需要行動）。撒旦的認同危機可以分為三個主要階段：在被異化的危機中形成了主觀意識、對權貴話語權的反抗，以及最終沒能免除對自己的定罪。這篇論文的目的是展示現代思想家們對“邪惡”定義的普遍否定，而這種否定是與人類的自由和創造力的源頭相矛盾的（這種否定會導致自由和創造邊的消亡）。此外，我還將闡述：對所謂“邪惡現象”的沉默是怎樣導致和延續社會不公，以及少數族裔的邊緣化。

關鍵字：彌爾頓、失樂園、浮士德、傅柯、現代主義、撒旦崇拜

Abstract



Paradise Lost is a unique text in that responses to Milton's epic have not evolved in line with trends in literary theory, and instead rehash the three hundred year old disagreement on whether Milton's Satan is, in any sense, either by accident or deliberation, the hero of the story. This dialogue, like the biblical story of the Garden of Eden on which the epic is based, centers on the theme of temptation: in *Paradise Lost* Satan's deliberate and malicious destruction of Adam and Eve seems to guarantee his guilt, yet it is hard not to sympathize with the heroic passion of Satan's daring odyssey. Many modern critics read this as exactly the genius of *Paradise Lost*, that it is a seductive text, and that Milton's Satan must be resisted. On the other hand, it's easy to argue that this orthodox reading is medieval—a duty towards obedience to inherited wisdom and the strict containment of your own passionate tendencies; and that this reading is also completely at odds with the liberal, Faustian values of contemporary society. In this thesis, after exploring the orthodox response to *Paradise Lost* (and the reaction it generates), I'll demonstrate how Milton's writings are symptomatic of an ethical inversion in Western culture, which first caused Satan to be celebrated (as a symbol for revolutionary politics) and later condemned (as humanity confronted the depths of its unrestrained depravity). After tracing how responses to the character of Satan have evolved in literature and entertainment in line with political sympathies, my original contribution to knowledge will be a comparative reading of *Paradise Lost* through the lens of postmodern thought and existentialism as Satan's over-proximity with the Real (the abyss of freedom creates anxiety which demands action). Satan's crisis of identity can be divided into three major shifts: the development of subjectivity through a crisis of alienation; his resistance to a totalizing power discourse that defines his being; and his ultimate failure to exempt himself from the systemic order that relied on his transgression. The aim of this thesis will be to show

how universally modern thinkers agree on the concept of evil as a negation of what is, in favor of anything else but this—a negation that is paradoxically the source of all human liberty and creativity (which nevertheless leads to death); and also to demonstrate how the silencing of so-called satanic elements allows and perpetuates social injustice and the marginalization of minority voices.

Keywords: Milton, Paradise Lost, Faust, Foucault, modernism, satanism



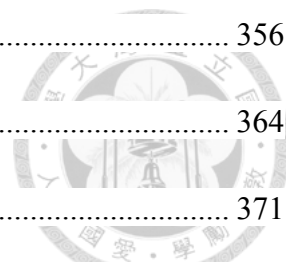
Table of Contents

Introduction.....	10
Background Context	12
Problem and significance.....	44
Why it matters.....	47
Methodology	51
Chapter Outline.....	53
Chapter 1: Debate	60
1.1 Introduction.....	60
1.2 Early Responses	61
1.3 Revolutionary Milton.....	76
1.4 The Orthodox Milton	82
1.5 Contemporary Resistance	89
1.6 Conclusion	93
Chapter 2: Biography	97
2.1 Introduction.....	97
2.2 Background.....	99
2.3 Birth & Early Years	110
2.4 5 th November (1626).....	112

2.5 Comus (1634).....	115
2.6 Divorce Tracts (1643).....	120
2.7 Areopagitica (1644)	122
2.8 Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649)	124
2.9 De Doctrina Christiana	127
2.10 Paradise Lost (1667)	129
2.11 Does it matter?	130
2.12 Conclusion	138
Chapter 3: Give Me Liberty	143
3.1 Introduction.....	143
3.2 Background.....	144
3.3 Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781).....	154
3.4 Goethe's Faust (1810).....	160
3.5 Melville's Moby Dick (1851).....	180
3.6 Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil (1886)	187
3.7 Conclusion	200
Chapter 4: The Witch Hunts	202
4.1 Introduction.....	202
4.2 Background.....	203
4.3 World War I	214
4.4 World War II.....	229
4.5 The Church of Satan	252
4.6 New Age Spiritualism.....	265

4.7 Post 9/11	272
4.8 Where we are now	274
4.9 Conclusion	284
Chapter 5: Theory	286
5.1 Introduction.....	286
5.2 Satan’s “sins”	287
5.2.1 Selfish: puts his own desires first.....	289
5.2.2 Foolish: fights against omnipotence	289
5.2.3 Hubris or narcissism	290
5.2.4 Rhetoric or lies.....	292
5.2.5 Seeks Revenge	293
5.2.6 Ambition. Tries to overthrow God.....	294
5.3 What is “evil”?.....	296
5.4 Satan’s Evolution	302
Levinas’s Other	306
1. Inciting Incident (mirror stage).....	315
2. Satan’s experience of radical exteriority.....	318
3. Terroristic violence	338
4. Evil as pure negation of what is.....	345
5. Satan as vanishing mediator.....	352
5.5 The Seduction of Satan (by God).....	356

1. Satan as spurned lover	356
2. God as seduction.....	364
5.6 Conclusion	371
Final Summary.....	380
Synthesis and limitations	382
Works Cited	385



Evil by my Good



The shifting moral interpretations of Milton's revolutionary hero

*So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear, Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold, By thee, and
more than half perhaps will reign... (PL 5.108-112)*



Introduction

Milton's writing demonstrates an evolving response towards political revolution and terrorism; his first major poem demonizes Guy Fawkes's infamous Gunpowder Plot, but one of his last works (*Samson Agonistes*) shows a sympathetic hero destroying a temple to slaughter his enemies in a way that, in a post 9/11 world, cannot help but be met with skepticism. *Paradise Lost* lies between these two works, and may represent Milton's struggle to understand his fallen place in society after his hopes for political reform were dashed with the return of the monarchy. Milton's major themes—which center on rebellion and resistance versus obedience and conformity—are especially relevant today. These same themes are major issues in critical theory and postmodern thought; much of which uses Miltonic language in a way that is not entirely incidental, since the history of Western philosophy is in large part a rational attempt to distance itself from religious discourse. This attempt, like Satan's quest for liberty, never quite succeeds.

Despite the fact that Milton's Satan was seen as a positive symbol for human individualization and Promethean courage by liberal-minded artists, philosophers and writers for several centuries, the orthodox responses to *Paradise Lost* of the 20th century mostly aimed to silence his voice and reject any notion of his heroic qualities. This is especially problematic given the fact that Satan's liberal politics and ideology, his Faustian confidence in will and power, and his self-righteous pursuit of his own agenda have been absorbed by Western culture as heroic values. The figure of Guy Fawkes, a revolutionary terrorist who has become

reappropriated into a symbol for political dissent, is a fitting parallel in this regard. For decades, critical responses to *Paradise Lost* stagnated into a hegemonic power discourse which resisted alternative readings (despite postmodernity's explicit struggle against exactly this issue). While contemporary responses to *Paradise Lost* have finally begun to move beyond the conservative agenda, few studies return to the unsolved, and crucial, debate over the inherent moral values in Satan's act of transgression. This thesis, therefore, will offer an alternative reading of Milton's Satan that can only properly be grasped in context of the historical evolution of literary representations of the Devil.

Milton's Satan, whether or not it was the author's deliberate intention, became the literal face of progressive, liberal tendencies which, when suppressed, sometimes used revolutionary violence to transcend conservative restrictions; these liberal tendencies have since become contemporary moral values, and as such, nearly all Western heroes mirror Satan's insurgent position in *Paradise Lost*. This identification between heroes and traditionally "evil" characters is becoming more and more self-aware, as contemporary entertainment reclaims villains by flipping the narrative and allowing them to share the injustices that led to their misdeeds. Noting the rise of revolutionary enthusiasm and the trend of recasting villains as tragic heroes in just the past decade, it's possible to claim that Milton's Satan is the unrecognized founder of contemporary ethical sympathies regarding the right to disobedience and dissent.

Whether or not Satan is the "hero" of *Paradise Lost* has been the central controversy in Milton studies, however this issue faces the unique danger of being misappropriated or obfuscated by clever interpretations with subjective, even subconscious, predispositions. Given these two claims—that Milton's Satan is relevant to contemporary literature, social values, and political revolutions, and shares qualities with contemporary heroes resulting from direct literary

influence; and that there exists a very real resistance to recognizing this relevance—my thesis is not only well justified but uniquely timely.

I've found it particularly surprising that, despite contemporary incredulity about whether Satan can be shown to have heroic qualities, there is an enormous wealth of material and sources to support my claims. The Romantic infatuation with Milton's Satan is well known, but the massive influence this single literary character had on later literary and political movements and popular literature is rarely admitted. While the conservative, orthodox reading of *Paradise Lost* has become mainstream, no studies have been done on the political environment that led to its success despite contemporaries calling it "intellectually dishonest". It is also important to point out that while Milton scholars will resist the idea that the C.S. Lewis or Stanley Fish continue to dominate critical discussion, the majority of common readers guides—the kind most students assigned during their first contact with Milton's epic—take for granted that Satan is evil and must be resisted. In this thesis, when I refer to the "orthodox" or "conservative" reading of *Paradise Lost*, it is this reading that I am describing: the one that continues to form the basis of a pedagogical system committed to resisting Satan's rhetoric by ridiculing or refusing him as categorically untrustworthy.

Background Context

In 1605 a group of provincial English Catholics attempted to blow up the House of Lords during the State Opening of England's Parliament, thereby assassinating King James I and restoring a Catholic monarch to the throne. The daring plot was revealed to the authorities in an anonymous letter, and during a search of the House of Lords at midnight on the fourth of November, 36 barrels of gunpowder were discovered, along with one of the members of the group—Guy

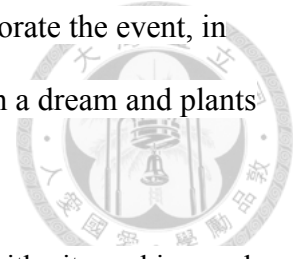
Fawkes. At their trial on 27 January 1606, eight of the survivors, including Fawkes, were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. Fawkes was questioned and tortured, but jumped from the gallows, breaking his own neck to escape the final punishment.

Parliament decreed “an annual and constant memory of that day” to be “solemnly transmitted to all posterity [...] how bad men can be to destroy, and how good God hath been to deliver” (qtd. in Tournu 360). Fawkes became “the face” of the Gunpowder Plot, with his effigies traditionally burned on a bonfire, commonly accompanied by a fireworks display on November 5th.

To the Protestant English public, Guy Fawkes was a Catholic terrorist sent by Satan himself. And yet the unprecedented amount of damage a small group could do stirred the public imagination, and inspired a flurry of literary works. According to Robert Appelbaum,

There were journalistic accounts, memoirs, sermons, fictionalizations, allegorizations, lyric poems, political and philosophical meditations. The so-called *King's Book* (1605), which documents proceedings and statements responding to the plot, including the confessions of Guy Fawkes and Thomas Winter and the speech of James VI and I to Parliament, provided what was intended to be an official account. [...] Then there are the fictionalizations, narrative poems, dramas, prose works which either tell similar or parallel tales about political violence or else embroider the real story with allegory and imaginary incidents. Both *Macbeth* (first performed in 1606) and Jonson's *Catiline* (1611) have the plot in mind, though they deal with it only indirectly, but there are many other plays at whose core lies an allusion to a plot to destroy a nation by sabotage and assassination in the name of religion. (463)

In 1626, at only 17, John Milton wrote *In Quintum Novembris* to commemorate the event, in which Satan, disguised as St. Francis, approaches one of the conspirators in a dream and plants the idea; but is thwarted by God, who lovingly protects England:



But meanwhile the heavenly father looked down from above with pity on his people, and thwarted the Papists' cruel attempt. They are seized and taken off to severe punishments. Sacred incense is burned and grateful honours paid to God. All the joyous crossroads smoke with genial fumes; the young people dance in crowds, for in all the year there is no day more celebrated than the fifth of November. (Dartmouth)

Although gifted in poetry, Milton made a name for himself as a supporter of divorce based on incompatibility, beginning with *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643). Milton made the controversial claim that men (and women) should be free to leave an unhappy marriage. The topic was most likely sparked when his newly wedded wife, Mary Powell, deserted him soon after the wedding. After having difficulty getting his books properly licensed, he wrote the *Areopagitica* in 1644, which argued for “the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.” It remains one of the most complete arguments for freedom of speech and press ever written. “Let her [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing.”

This was a period of intense national turmoil, as armies led by Parliament and King Charles I battled and England's eventual fate as a Protestant country was constantly threatened. Finally, Cromwell's New Model Army arrested Charles I and, after a swift trial, beheaded him on January 30th, 1649. Less than 2 weeks later, Milton published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* to defend the new government's actions. “It is lawful,” Milton writes, “and hath been held so in all ages, for any who have the power, to call to account a Tyrant or wicked King,

and, after due conviction, to depose and put him to death.” Milton’s loyalty and support earned him a role as defender of the new republic, with a paid post.



When Cromwell’s death in 1658 caused the English Republic to collapse into feuding military and political factions, Milton stubbornly clung to the beliefs that had originally inspired him to write for the Commonwealth—even as it became clear that the tides were shifting and the monarchy would soon be restored:

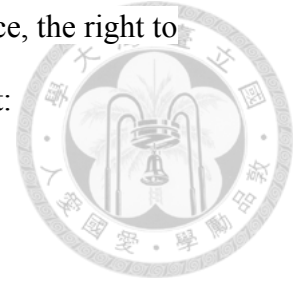
Milton responded to events as they happened, writing with an awe-inspiring urgency, desperation and courage. As Parliament was being recalled, he penned *The Readie & Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, ready for publication just as the new Parliament convened. (Beer 225)

As the republic disintegrated, Milton wrote several proposals to retain a non-monarchical government against the wishes of parliament, soldiers and the people, but was against the popular tide, which was welcoming back King Charles II.

Upon the Restoration in May 1660, Milton went into hiding for his life, while a warrant was issued for his arrest and his writings burnt. He was arrested and imprisoned late in 1660, but released again in December after only two months of imprisonment. Nevertheless, he refused to change his ways and remained Republican, unwilling to work for the new government.

Instead, he turned back to poetry, where he could voice his opinions allegorically without directly criticizing the new King. In 1667 he published *Paradise Lost*, whose central character (Satan) is a failed revolutionary hero trying to unseat an unjust tyrant who passes leadership onto his untested son rather than the most deserving, or someone the people elected (Milton’s core beliefs were against hereditary rule, and for election or meritocracy).

Satan's "errors" include assuming the right of freedom of conscience, the right to overthrow tyranny, and the right to question the stipulations of government:



Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of heaven possessed before
By none, and if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason then or right assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals, if in power and splendour less,
In freedom equal? or can introduce
Law and edict on us, who without law
Err not, much less for this to be our lord,
And look for adoration to the
Of those imperial titles which assert
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve? (5.780-802)

On the surface, *Paradise Lost* seems to mirror the key political problem of Milton's life: the right of a people to rebel against their government. But while his prose and political writings defend that right, *Paradise Lost* (if we assume Satan to be the villain and failed revolutionary, associated with the evil terrorist Guy Fawkes) seems to deny it. Perhaps therein lies the necessity of the biblical theme: everyone knows how this story ends: God is omnipotent and omniscient, Satan has no chance at victory, therefore even if a veiled allegory to the current political situation, the material is not incendiary as it shows a failed, rather than a successful, revolution. And yet, the

greatest lines are given to Satan, who throughout seems to have the most persuasive arguments, that are nevertheless crushed by brute force and manipulation.

To further complicate things, Milton's next major poem, *Samson Agonistes* (1671) shows Samson as a brooding, suffering figure—similar to the Satan of *Paradise Lost* (with biographic elements of Milton thrown in, such as blindness) who himself destroys a temple, crushing the ruling classes of his enemies. As David Quint points out, “What is less apparent is that Samson's destruction of the temple is another re-enactment of the Gunpowder Plot, carried out this time *upon* rather than by the Catholic or crypto-Catholic foes of English Protestantism” (266). For this reason, *Samson Agonistes* has become criticized as pro-terrorism, most notably by a piece by John Carey (TLS, 6 September 2002) which compared Samson to a terrorist bomber moved by religious conviction to destroy the lives of others.

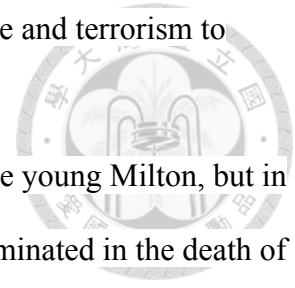
According to Quint, a Catholic temple actually did fall down in London, in 1623 on the 26th of October, which according to the Catholics own new Gregorian Calendar, was *November 5th*. This resulted in “the typology that made Samson, in his last heroic feat, an antietical version of Guy Fawkes” (266).

The hand of Providence did not fail to be detected: God had brought down their own house upon those who had tried to bring down the House of Parliament. Samuel Clarke, in England's Remembrances published in 1657 and reprinted again in 1671, the same year as *Samson Agonistes*, included the Fatal Vespers in his narrative of the realm's two great deliverances from the Catholic peril: the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. (266)

A summary of Milton's depictions of tragic heroes could then, go like this:

1. Guy Fawkes is a failed terrorist (villain)
2. Satan is a failed terrorist (half sympathetic)

3. Samson is a full-fledged revolutionary hero who uses violence and terrorism to destroy his enemies (successful hero)



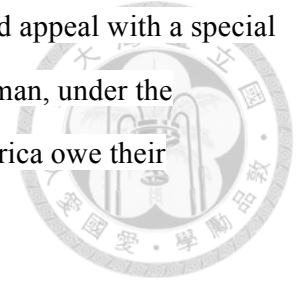
The intended but thwarted attempt at regicide was almost unthinkable to the young Milton, but in his own lifetime he would write to *defend* the righteous revolution that culminated in the death of King Charles I. After defending the new Republic with passion for many years (even while watching Cromwell become a tyrant in his own way), Charles II resumed the monarchy, and Milton himself became a villain—one of the “king-killers.”

To illustrate the confusion of the times, we could point out another probable influence on Milton’s writing, Sir Walter Raleigh. A favorite of Queen Elizabeth’s, Raleigh captured public imagination with his quests to the New World, and his naval capacity in saving England from the much larger Spanish Armada. After Elizabeth died, he was accused of participating in a plot to assassinate James I and, after years of imprisonment, followed by a period of freedom for a new voyage to discover *El Dorado*, was finally put to death on 29 October 1618. One of the judges at his trial later said: “The justice of England has never been so degraded and injured as by the condemnation of the honourable Sir Walter Raleigh” (qtd. in Crawford v. Washington).

As Margaret Irwin writes in the introduction to *That great Lucifer: A Portrait of Sir Walter Raleigh*, “He it was who devised the plan that brought about the destruction of the Armada, who sailed into Cadiz harbor to grapple with Philip of Spain’s war fleet and who, before he laid his head on the block, called to the headsman to let him feel the edge of the axe” (iv). Raleigh would also become a figure of inspiration for American writers, including Thoreau.

We have only to study the career of this sturdy Devonshire worthy to come under the spell of his enduring charm and real manliness; to admire the unswerving loyalty with which he ever served his country; and to feel, with Robert Louis Stevenson, that “God has made nobler heroes, but He never made a finer gentleman than Walter

Raleigh.” To every patriotic American this heroic figure should appeal with a special enthusiasm, since, as Charles Kingsley has said, “To this one man, under the Providence of Almighty God, the whole United States of America owe their existence.” (Metcalf xiii)



Raleigh illustrates an example of a man who is both hated (by the Spanish as a vicious pirate, and later by Royalists as an insurgent) and celebrated as hero, depending on the vantage point. This is perhaps the first time in history times were shifting so quickly that he could be both.

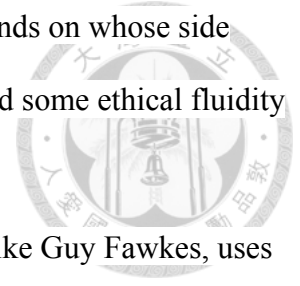
Likewise, Guy Fawkes continued to inspire Milton’s writing, albeit in a confusing role—a terrorist who can be seen as demonic or heroic depending on motive and circumstance.

From the beginning to the end of his poetic career, Milton’s imagination was haunted by a historical event, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and by the literature that described that event [...] reshaping and redistributing its language and conceits in order to suggest the continuity between the Gunpowder Plot and what he saw as another crypto-Catholic conspiracy against England, the Restoration of Charles II. In doing so, he created a private typology that lent a shape both to his career and to the political history of his times. (Quint 261)

This “private typology” might be why Milton’s works have been radically interpreted. Milton’s Satan was called heroic by Romantics and Modernists; then demonized by literary critics of the 20th century, culminating in conservative readings that warn against a straight reading of the text.

It is illuminating to read Milton’s work in its biographical context. On top of the political texts, which are fairly straightforward and almost certainly record Milton’s true feelings on a variety of subjects, we have an early text on Guy Fawkes as a Satan-inspired Catholic deviant and terrorist, and later the heroic and noble (and yet suffering) Samson, who seems to fulfill Fawkes’ intentions but through the power of God, in righteous vengeance. Terrorism, regicide,

mass murder and violent revolution are not bad in themselves, it only depends on whose side you're on, and possibly the motivations of the act. At the very least, we find some ethical fluidity and sympathy between characters.



In the middle, we get Milton's masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*. Satan, like Guy Fawkes, uses terrorism as a desperate attempt to injure a more powerful enemy, and fails (or rather, he *succeeds* but learns in the process he is being manipulated into bringing about God's plan for him). Something in the attempt is both tragic and noble. It is no wonder the morality of Milton's epic has frustrated critics. It is especially difficult to discuss the literary characterization of Satan, because many readers (in the USA mostly) believe an actual devil to exist. Consequently, sympathy with Milton's Satan reeks of blasphemy. Conservative critics have been careful to maintain that, regardless of our reader responses, any possible reading of Satan as a hero must be accidental:

Milton's God is out of balance because Satan is so magnificently flawed in presentation, and to account for the failure of God as a dramatic character the reader is compelled to enter upon the most famous and vexing of critical problems concerning *Paradise Lost*, the satanic controversy itself. Is Satan in some sense heroic, or is he merely a fool? (Bloom 7)

Rather than dismiss readings of Christ's rebuke which deviate from an orthodox Christology, might we not grant that Milton's text is unclear? This is at odds with what most readers recognize as Milton's prodigious control over his material, but perhaps the epiphany on the pinnacle of the temple is meant to be puzzling. Perhaps Milton's praxis is in the service of a theory which aims to point out certain expressive and cognitive limits. (H. MacCallum, qtd. in McMurray 7)

But these “confused” readings of *Paradise Lost* only emerge from the assumption that Milton cannot have intended Satan to be the hero, when actually, as Neil Forsyth affirms, it is entirely possible:



Milton’s greatness as a poet consists partly in an ability to articulate two opposing messages at the same time. The Romantics thought that, in Blake’s famous words, he was ‘a true Poet’ and ‘of the devil’s party without knowing it’. Is ‘Lycidas’ then an early instance of Milton’s supposed sympathy for Satan in *Paradise Lost*? Is Milton giving away his unconscious preferences even while he insistently states the opposite? He may, I would argue, have just done that in *Comus*, the masque written for performance in 1634 and published now in 1637. The masque praises chastity and virginity. Yet the finest poetry is given to *Comus* the rogue. Of course, in a drama, we expect both sides of the story to be articulated. But the bad guy, the one who attacks the young girl’s chastity, gets most of the good lines. (*Milton: A Biography* 55)

When I read *Paradise Lost* for the first time during a graduate course in literature, I was surprised to find Satan eloquently defending libertine ideals I also valued; standing up against an omnipotent tyrant like Prometheus; and using poetic language that echoed the valor of revolutionary heroism.

When I mentioned casually that Milton’s Satan had all the qualities of an epic hero, I was quickly corrected. Apparently, not only was that assertion flatly untrue, but it was also *exactly* the mistake that Milton purposely and cleverly lured me into. By presenting Satan with heroic qualities, the unsuspecting reader will let their guard down and be convinced by Satan’s rhetoric, proving just how crafty the devil really is.

I pointed out that Milton himself was a revolutionary; that he tried to overthrow the king and wrote political essays supporting regicide and the people’s right to self-govern; that he

believed in rule by merit and was against rule-by birth on principle; and that Satan's speeches in *Paradise Lost* mirror Milton's own political views.

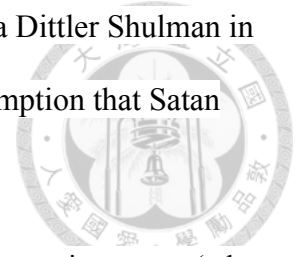
Milton had created a marvelously shifty text, my professor replied, full of reader harassment and complication, and although on the surface Satan appears sympathetic, that's just one of his many tricks. You can't trust him, you can't trust yourself, and you can't trust the text.

It was obviously very complicated, and as I was just a graduate student I couldn't be expected to understand, but take his word for it: the most reputable scholars in Milton studies agreed that we needed to be careful – that viewing Satan as the hero was a rookie mistake. I had been fooled, he told me. We were at an impasse. Decades of literary theory had spoken, and I was the novice.

But questions remained: dilemmas churned up in the reading of *Paradise Lost* that were never resolved. Did Satan truly have free will in the face of God's omniscience? Is God the hero of *Paradise Lost* because he's morally superior, or simply because history is written by victors? Or is *Paradise Lost* a subversive text, hinting at a hidden, secret history—the untold story of humanity's greatest tempter (and ally)—which continues to be marginalized, buried, taboo?

As I read deeper, I discovered that the interpretation and discussion of *Paradise Lost* has for decades faced a peculiar form of censorship that is unique in literary theory, and based entirely on political and religious grounds rather than evidence or rational argument. To me, this uniquely skeptical atmosphere concerning the literary character of Satan in *Paradise Lost* had no place in academic pursuit, and yet I came up against it again and again. Through name-calling and dismissal, all investigations into Satan's motivations were automatically rejected.

Even relatively benign comments, such as the following from Lydia Dittler Shulman in *Paradise Lost and the Rise of the American Republic*, begins with the assumption that Satan must be resisted:



The artistic decision to make Satan an eloquent and at times persuasive orator (whose deceptive rhetoric continues, to this day, to beguile the susceptible reader) was motivated, one suspects, by Milton’s direct experience of corrupt politicians and gullible followers during his twenty years of public service. (12)

I was even more startled to learn the profound influence Milton’s *Paradise Lost* has had on the last three centuries, not only in literature, but in politics and culture: his defense of liberal ideals, while controversial at the time, have become the backbone of western civilization’s most deeply cherished notions about the right to personal autonomy. For this reason, Milton’s Satan was viewed as a hero for centuries—not just by common readers but by literary elites, philosophers, artists and poets (some the history’s greatest minds; hardly susceptible readers). The revolutionary spirit sparked by Milton’s Satan had a massive influence on the political revolutions of Europe and America, the philosophical and political thinking of America’s founding fathers, and the Enlightenment thinkers that preceded them.

Not long after after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, freethinkers who found themselves at odds with traditional religious values began openly aligning themselves with the politics and majestic enthusiasm of Milton’s Satan. The Duke of Wharton established the first gathering of gentlemanly decadence that became known as “Hellfire Clubs” in 1718. Walter Raleigh had started something similar, which was referred to in 1592 as the “School of Atheism” (Blackett-Ord 43). A Dublin Hellfire Club was founded in 1735 by Richard Parsons, the First Earl of Rosse, meeting regularly at the Eagle Tavern on Cork Hill near Dublin Castle (Joyce 123). Sir

Francis Dashwood's "Monks of Medmenham" pagan revelry club of around 1750 was and is still informally referred to as a Hellfire club (Ashe 111).

Scottish poet Robert Burns, staunch supporter of the French Revolution, wrote of his "favorite hero, Milton's Satan," and of his virtues: the "dauntless magnanimity; the intrepid, unyielding independence; the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship" (qtd. in Low 200). In 1790, Jacques Pierre Rissot, one of the Girondin leaders and a key figure in the French Revolution, honoured Milton as a founding father of the French republic.

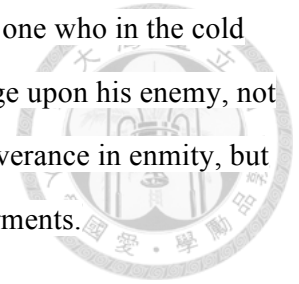
William Godwin asked in his *Political Justice* of 1793, "why did Satan rebel against his maker? It was, as he himself informs us, because he saw no sufficient reason for that extreme inequality of rank and power which the creator assumed" (Leonard 411). Godwin's daughter Mary—wife to Percy Blysshe, permeated her novel *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus* (1818) with references to *Paradise Lost*. The nameless monster says to his creator: "I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss from which I alone am irrevocably excluded" (78).

The eccentric, iconoclastic poet William Blake noted famously in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "the reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when he wrote of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (182).

In the 1821 *A Defense of Poetry*, Percy Blysshe Shelly embraced the positive depiction of Satan even further:

Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost*. It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has

conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments.



Robert Southey's criticism, in *A Vision of Judgment* (1821), of the group of writers headed by Byron and Shelley as "characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety" was well received: although meant as moral condemnation, Byron took delight in the description of him as the author of "monstrous combinations of horrors and mockery, lewdness and impiety" (Bone 172). Byron took up the theme of a "Satanic" school and developed the "Byronic hero" who would, like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, be a tragic figure who is admirable even when wrong. According to R. Merciless in the foreword to Henry M. Tichenor's 1917 *Sorceries and Scandals of Satan*:

This Satanic symbolism, born in Milton's pen at the end of the seventeenth century and raised by the rakes of London in the eighteenth century now grew to full form in the nineteenth century, when Baudelaire and even earlier French poets dared to publish works which overtly praised and honored Satan and proclaimed him the hero of those who love freedom, reason and happiness. Priests and politicians were scandalized and horrified by such works. Revolutionaries, however, were inspired.

(23)

In 1846, an anonymous poet wrote, "To thee, Satan, fair fallen angel, To whom fell the perilous honor Of struggling against an unjust rule, I offer myself wholly and forever, My mind, my senses, my heart, my love, And my dark verses in their corrupted beauty" (qtd. in Bloom 181). This was symptomatic of a newly creative culture being forged from resistance to traditional

values, against the restrictions of a community defined by limited rules of artistic production and value.

Baudelaire was put in the dock in 1857 for his volume of poems, *Les Fleurs du mal* (which included *The Litanies Of Satan*). According to Peter Gay, “With an indignant show of wounded propriety, the imperial government charged him with blasphemy and obscenity” (35).

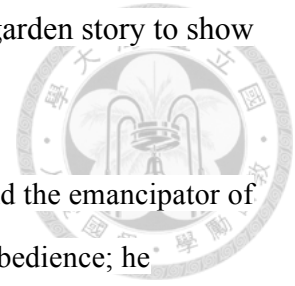
In 1858, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon employed Satan as a personified symbol of liberty—who by his initial resistance opened a path for dissonance and true freedom.

Come, Satan, come, slandered by priests and kings! Let me embrace you, let me clutch you to my breast! I have known you for a long time, and long have you known me. Your works, oh blessed one of my heart, are not always beautiful or good; but you alone give sense to the universe and prevent it from being absurd. What would justice be without you? An instinct. Reason? A routine. Man? A beast. You alone animate labor and make it fertile; you ennoble wealth, serve as an excuse for authority, put the seal on virtue. Hope still, proscribed one! I have to serve you only a pen, but it is worth millions of bulletins. (qtd. in Merciless 23)

It is interesting to compare the above passage with Rilke’s *The First Elegy*: as Satan was the first rebellion, the first “No” that made choice a possibility, so Rilke’s Orpheus introduces “the daring first music (that) pierced the barren numbness. . . The Void felt for the first time” (7). Orpheus, like Satan, is a tragic hero who “keeps going, even in his ruin” (5).

In the late 1860s, Giosue Carducci’s poem “Hymn to Satan” celebrated the Prince of Darkness as the symbolic champion of human reason and rebellion—“Hail, O Satan, O rebellion, O you avenging force of human reason!” —and was likely an anthem for republican forces of Italy overthrowing the secular influence of the Pope by force of arms (qtd. in Augias 281).

In the late 1870s anarchist Mikhail Bakunin interprets the biblical garden story to show how Satan was responsible for giving us rationality and critical thought.



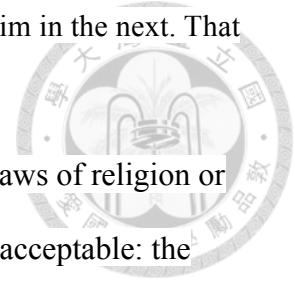
...Here steps in Satan, the eternal rebel, the first freethinker and the emancipator of worlds. He makes man ashamed of his bestial ignorance and obedience; he emancipates him, stamps upon his brow the seal of liberty and humanity, in urging him to disobey and eat of the fruit of knowledge [...] Let us disregard now the fabulous portion of this myth and consider its true meaning, which is very clear. Man has emancipated himself; he has separated himself from animality and constituted himself a man; he has begun his distinctively human history and development by an act of disobedience and science—that is, by rebellion and by thought. (10)

It is no accident that Satan is associated with science; for centuries Satan had been tempting various versions of the “mad scientist” motif stemming from Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* (which may include Manfred, Faust, Captain Ahab and Dr. Frankenstein). The difference was, rather than warning tales of tragedy, the triumph of science ensured that these daring innovators were given the accolades they deserved—even while being accused of impiety.

This literary and philosophical tradition of linking the mythical character of Satan, the rebel angel, with the human struggle for freedom, liberty and self-determination likewise featured in George Bernard Shaw’s 1897 play “The Devil’s Disciple,” in which the main character, Dick Dudgeon, a fearless and brutally just American Revolutionary war hero, explicitly proclaims himself a Satanist:

I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and captain and friend. I saw that he was in the right, and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear. I prayed secretly to him; and he comforted me, and saved me from having my spirit broken in this house of children’s tears. I promised him my soul, and swore an

oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next. That promise and that oath made a man of me. (26)



The portrayal of Dick, a self-proclaimed apostate who follows neither the laws of religion or society but rather a moral code of his own, as a hero, had become publicly acceptable: the production was so popular when it was staged in New York City that it became the first Shaw play to successfully earn a profit. It ran for 64 performances at the Fifth Avenue Theater, grossing \$50,000.

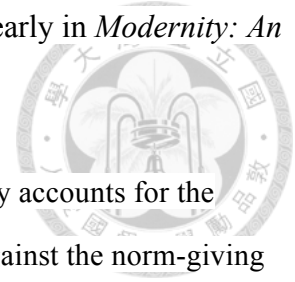
The fundamental human rights defined in the US Declaration of Independence— “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”—are so similar to Milton’s prose writing (and to many of Satan’s speeches) that Alfred Waites published a side-by-side comparison of Milton’s writing with Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence in 1903 to “impress the reader by the similarity of ideas and the sequence of thought.” Milton’s *Areopagitica*, a pamphlet defending the right to free press, had a noticeable influence on the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Nobel Prize winner Anatole France’s 1914 novel, *The Revolt of the Angels*, tells the tale of a guardian angel who educates himself by reading books in an earthly library, abandons his heavenly master, and joins a group of Lucifer’s demons plotting a renewed revolution.

The iconoclastic American social commentator H.L. Mencken likewise argued for liberty against moralistic tyrants under the banner of the devil. “I made up my mind at once that my true and natural allegiance was to the Devil’s party, and it has been my firm belief ever since that all persons who devote themselves to forcing virtue on their fellow men deserve nothing better than kicks in the pants” (37).

To a large extent the entire mood of Modernism is infused with a jubilant spirit of rebellion, deviousness and a self-conscious, deliberate deviation from the traditional moral codes

grounded in religious authority. Habermas sums up the issue even more clearly in *Modernity: An Unfinished Project*:



The anarchistic intention of exploding the continuum of history accounts for the subversive force of an aesthetic consciousness which rebels against the norm-giving achievements of tradition, which is nourished on the experience of rebellion against everything normative, which neutralizes considerations of moral goodness or practical utility, a consciousness which continually stages a dialectic of esoteric mystery and scandalous offence, narcotically fascinated by the fright produced by its acts of profanation – and yet at the same time flees from the trivialization resulting from that very profanation. (41)

Modernism represents a great seductive force, promoting the dominance of the principle of unrestrained self-realization, the demand for authentic self-experience, the subjectivism of an overstimulated sensibility, and the release of hedonistic motivations quite incompatible with the discipline required by professional life, and with the moral foundations of a purposive-rational mode of life generally. (42)

This shift makes it easy to see how, not only Satan, but with him Guy Fawkes, came to be seen as revolutionary heroes. Lewis Call, a history professor and post-anarchist writer, writes that “as commemoration of the Powder Treason morphed into the more secular Bonfire Night in the nineteenth century, the anarchistic element of the holiday became manifest. The rehabilitation of Fawkes corresponded to a growing sense of frustration at the expansion of British state power and he became an unlikely heroic symbol for the forces of anti-state-ism” (158).

Thus, both Satan and the Guy Fawkes tradition had become not only merged, but rehabilitated as tragic heroes: defiantly rebellious, willing to die for their cause, refusing to be

placated. The debate between Modernity and traditional values was often framed in speech that deliberately and self-consciously echoed Milton's Satan:

He spake: and to confirm his words, out-flew Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze Far round illumin'd hell: highly they raged Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war, Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n. (1.663-69)

In response, the church warned against dangerous Modernist trends of "extolling human progress to the skies, and with rash and sacrilegious daring" (Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, 1907); and the Futurists responded in their Manifesto of 1909: "We fling our defiance at the stars... we hurl our defiance at the stars" (Apollonio 19-24).

Going backwards, we can find the same language professed by Captain Ahab of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, first published in 1851: "I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now know that thy right worship is defiance. Of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to thee" (472). The similarity is not incidental. In a documentary note on Melville's marginalia, Robin Grey adds, "Milton's characterization of Satan in *Paradise Lost* influenced Melville's rendering of Ahab's defiant speeches against God and Nature."

The right to rebel, to defy, to refuse – these are the things that make us human, that give us freedom. The essential problem facing mankind (but especially creatives, writers and artists of that time period) was how to free themselves completely from tradition and outside influences, so that they could fully discover and be themselves (and hence create something new and worthwhile). Georg Simmel, in *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903), writes:

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming

social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life. The fight with nature which primitive man has to wage for his bodily existence attains in this modern form its latest transformation. The eighteenth century called upon man to free himself of all the historical bonds in the state and in religion, in morals and in economics. Man's nature, originally good and common to all, should develop unhampered. (409)

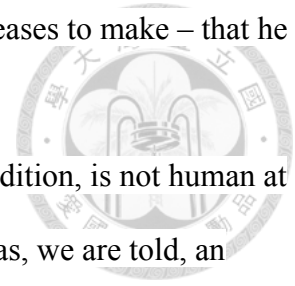
This aim of artistic independence, to create the new without being hampered, started as early as Baudelaire who in 1855 wrote "The artist stems only from himself... He stands security only for himself. . . He dies childless. He has been his own king, his own priest, his own God" (qtd. in Whitworth 191).

Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was published in 1885, and *Beyond Good and Evil* in 1886. Both books champion Promethean virtues of courage, audacity, daring, revolution and freedom, with imagery from *Paradise Lost*—"If you thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee" (146).

Towards the end of the 19th century, it was a widely held belief in liberal society that revolution was always real, necessary and good (even when violent). In fact, a person could not be fully human without casting off all influences and rediscovering their true self. According to Agamben (*The Open: Man and Animal*) "Dasein is simply an animal that has learned to become bored; it has awakened from its own captivation to its own captivation. This awakening of the living being to its own being-captivated, this anxious and resolute opening to a not-open, is the human" (70).

Similarly, Adorno writes that Kafka's heroes "become guilty not through their guilt – they have none – but because they try to get justice on their side. 'The original sin, the ancient

injustice committed by man, consists in his protest – one which he never ceases to make – that he has suffered injustice, that the original sin was done against him” (270).



But this defining characteristic of humanity, at least in Christian tradition, is not human at all; feeling God’s authority as a burden and facing the choice to disobey was, we are told, an experience that started with Satan, and was passed by him, directly and deliberately, to Adam and Eve. We wouldn’t have ever been human, in Agamben’s sense, if we hadn’t “had our eyes opened” to our own free will, and its conflict with divine rule. The essential protest against the original injustice is a feature tying literary representations of the devil together with Modernist heroes of revolution and rebellion.

George Steiner points out that Monotheism, as a “tyranny of the revealed” challenges the Modernist quest for human individuation:

But the exaction stays in force – immense, relentless. It hammers at human consciousness, demanding that it transcend itself, that it reach out into a light of understanding so pure that it is itself blinding. We turn back into grossness and, what is more important, into self-reproach. But the ideal is still there, because, in Blake’s shorthand for the tyranny of the revealed, light presses on the brain. In polytheism, says Nietzsche, lay the freedom of the human spirit, its creative multiplicity. The doctrine of a single Deity, whom men cannot play off against other gods and thus win opens spaces for their own aims, is “The most monstrous of all human errors.” (38)

Steiner concludes that the aftermath of religion was more difficult than it seemed; and that the meaninglessness of a post-religion modernity had led to barbarism and hell on earth.

In our current barbarism an extinct theology is at work, a body of transcendent reference whose slow, incomplete death has produced surrogate, parodistic forms. The epilogue to belief, the passage of religious belief into hollow convention, seems

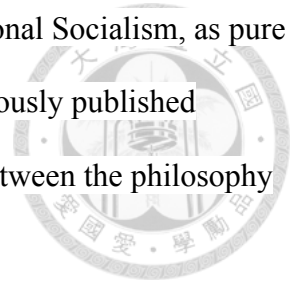
to be a more dangerous process than the philosophies anticipated. The structures of decay are toxic. Needing Hell, we have learned how to build and run it on earth. (55)

After the bitter and destructive impact of World War One, the progressive zeal, optimism and rationalistic confidence that had been present with the maddening growth of new technologies and a more connected world began to breed deep distrust, pessimism and fear.

A religious revival turned away from the liberating principles that had motivated social changes for decades and encouraged heated nationalism and blind allegiance to governmental offices. Revolution was not only discarded as a philosophical and artistic ideal; it became a criminal offense. The 1917 communist revolution in Russia, and the failed German revolution of 1918, provoked The First Red Scare (1919–1921): “a nation-wide anti-radical hysteria provoked by a mounting fear and anxiety that a Bolshevik revolution in America was imminent—a revolution that would change Church, home, marriage, civility, and the American way of Life” (Levin 29).

Legitimate labor strikes were represented by the press as “crimes against society,” “conspiracies against the government,” and “plots to establish communism.” Adding to the hysteria were the very real terrorist plots involving 36 mailed bombs to prominent members of the U.S. political and economic establishment in 1919, and the bombing of Wall Street in 1920. Suspecting communists or anarchists (but ultimately indicting no one) several states enacted “criminal syndicalism” laws outlawing advocacy of violence in effecting and securing social change, which included free speech limitations. These laws provoked aggressive police investigation of the accused persons, their jailing, and deportation for being suspected of being either communist or left-wing.

Americans saw Soviet Communism and its evil twin, German National Socialism, as pure expressions of the satanic in man. As Herbert Hoover puts it in a post-humously published biography of the *New Deal*, “The world is in the grip of a death struggle between the philosophy of Christ and that of Hegel and Marx” (299).



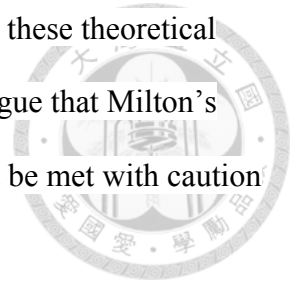
The situation deteriorated further after World War Two with the Second Red Scare (1947–1954), which received the label “McCarthyism.” Anti–communist fear was aggravated by the Chinese Communists winning the Chinese Civil War against the Western-sponsored Kuomintang in 1949. Americans were taught to seek out invisible spies all around them, breeding an environment of paranoia and finger-pointing not seen since early religious witch hunts.

The Cuban Revolution of 1953-1959 and threat of immanent nuclear war (after the world had witnessed the massive destruction at Hiroshima in 1945) brought the conflict closer to home and led us into the height of the Cold War. Revolutionaries who had been championed by an earlier USA—whose history began by declaring and fighting for its independence—now reeked of communist idealism.

To weed out hidden conspirators and distance itself from the Soviet Union, the phrase “under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance in 1954, and in 1956 “In God We Trust” was added to all US currency. Atheism was seen as anti-nationalism.

During this period, in response to the obvious inability to treasure and support such a dangerously status-quo challenging revolutionary text such as *Paradise Lost*, scholars began to screen *Paradise Lost* to make sure it didn’t inspire readers to take it “the wrong way.” Literary commentaries on Milton’s Satan focused on the inherently obvious “problem” of Satan.

Rather than allowing readers to form their own opinions of the text, these theoretical manipulations warn against falling into the trap of a “false” reading, and argue that Milton’s writing was meant as a temptation or challenge for the faithful, which must be met with caution and distrust.



Charles Williams, in his 1940 introduction to an edition of *Paradise Lost*, contended that Satan is not a hero but a fool. This stance was repeated by his friend C.S. Lewis, who wrote his 1942 preface to *Paradise Lost* with the aim of “preventing the reader from ever raising certain questions” (69). In the 1945 *Is the devil an ass?* Professor Musgrove concludes we must assume that Satan is evil.

For a while, there was controversy between the Satanist and anti-Satanist interpretations. In 1944, Elmer Edgar Stoll wrote a reply to Mr. Lewis called *Give the Devil his Due*.

How can we but be impressed (even though we do not join in it) by the almost unanimous verdict of admiration rendered by the poets and poetical critics, Romantic or not—by Burns as well as Blake, by Shelley in his enthusiastic praise as by Byron in his imitation, by Coleridge and Wordsworth, Landor, Racine, and Chateaubriand, Hazlitt, and Ruskin? (114)

And it is, in my opinion, quite impossible that for not much less than three centuries the readers of Milton should, in the mere matter of the imaginative and emotional impression of his ‘glorious fiends’, have been so prodigiously mistaken. (124)

In *Lucifer and Prometheus* 1952, Zwi Werblowsky recognized that a new turning point had been reached in which the “dashing Satanist had given way to the conventional poet who would not say anything unless seventeen people had said it before, and the pendulum has now gradually swung back to a definitively Christian, though not precisely puritan, interpretation of Milton’s poetry” (2). Werblowsky notes that there are two main responses to the question of “how Satan

strikes us”, the first purely literary and historical (Milton in context of research), the other mainly psychological (our personal reactions to the text); and that these responses are rarely separated.

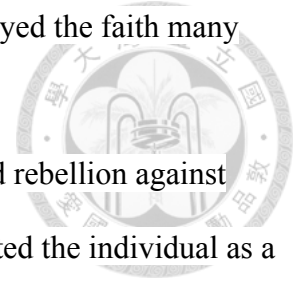
It is important to point out that these two problems are, as a rule, not properly kept apart. The ensuing confusion makes it seem that often when the Satanist-anti-Satanist war appears to rage the heaviest, the parties concerned are actually talking about different things. (4)

But as the Promethean virtues admired by Satanic sympathizers became more closely aligned with both the rhetoric of Communist revolutionaries, and later the Nazification of Nietzschean Zarathustraism, the heated political situation encouraged liberal academics to hold their tongues, and the conservative, religious interpretation of *Paradise Lost* won out.

In 1967, Stanley Fish cemented this reading of the text in *Surprised by Sin*, claiming that the poem tempts the reader in the same way that Satan tempted Adam and Eve. The reader’s job is to overcome the temptation and see Satan as the villain: “The reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays... the weakness of Adam and ... [fails] to avoid repeating his fall” (38). Fish claimed that Milton had created a program of “reader harassment”; designed to scold unwary readers who allow themselves to be tempted by the grand rhetoric of Satan into momentarily pushing aside the “imperative of Christian watchfulness” (12).

When confusion arose, commenters on *Paradise Lost* would assume that Milton didn’t know what he was doing, or that the book was simply inscrutable. This was also a time of profound social changes. Things began to fall apart when the fear tactics stopped working, and Americans began to question and refuse to obey their corrupt government. The Civil Rights Movement brought out political dissidence. Malcolm X and the Black Panthers, inspired by Communist revolutionary texts, advocated political violence. The Vietnam War saw the rise of

student protests and conscientious objection. The Watergate scandal destroyed the faith many Americans had put in their elected officials.



In the 1963-64 “Free Speech Movement” at Berkeley, an unfocused rebellion against everything and nothing, was prompted by a postmodern ideology that painted the individual as a product of circumstance and left no room for personal will or freedom of choice. In the anti-intellectualism which resulted, along with a resurgence of a “be here now” mentality, Satan was more likely to be sympathized with as a spokesperson for the immediacy of subjective experience and his struggle for liberation. Maybe this is what led literary instructors to emphasize that, even though Satan seems like a revolutionary hero, and even though other revolutionary heroes were being celebrated in popular culture, Satan alone needs to be refused.

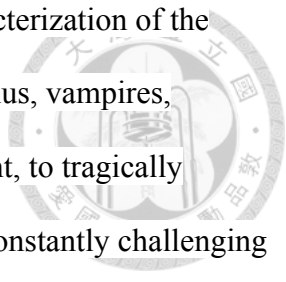
The hippie movement and increased interest in Eastern philosophy witnessed the birth of a number of new “cults” with charismatic leaders, and the dissolution of the nuclear family as young people went off to live together in communes. In 1966 Anton Szandor LaVey founded the “The Church of Satan.” Even though LaVey’s church viewed Satan as “a symbol of pride, liberty and individualism, and as an external metaphorical projection of our highest personal potential” and did not believe in Satan as a being or person, the explosive media attention shocked Christian conservatives, who began to look for a conspiracy of hidden Satanist groups, secretly worshipping the devil. The same mechanisms and paranoia that fueled the “Red Scare” of the 50s and 60s, now transitioned into the “Satanic Panic” of the 70s and 80s.

An interest in hypnosis and “recovered-memory therapy” brought out “witnesses” who believed they’d been the victims of ongoing sexual abuse at the hands of international Satanist organizations. Books like the mega bestselling *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967) by Ira Levin, which turned into a 1974 movie by the same name, warned of the dangers of secret Satanists living

among us. William Peter Blatty published *The Exorcist* in 1971 and it was made into a horror film in 1973. Steven King got his break writing *Carrie* in 1974, when people were greedily consuming Satanic paranoia and certain America was being destroyed by an international Satanist conspiracy. *Michelle Remembers*, in 1980, led to wide-spread allegations of satanic child abuse (the FBI, after hundreds of investigations, never found a single example of actual satanic violence). Misplaced fears were further aggravated by the 1980s “death metal” rock music was so frequently denounced by Christian conservatives that it began to deliberately work in Satanic themes and names.

But gradually, the characteristic ideals of the hippie movement (peace, acceptance and love) matured into a New Age spirituality that replaced more conservative social elements. We’ve evolved from the cowboy and Indian movies of the early 50s to reach *Last of the Mohicans* and *Dances with Coyotes*, reimagining historical conflict to assuage (or heighten?) our sense of cultural guilt at being founded on violence. There’s been a shift from conservative religious ethics to broader, humanist values embracing non-mainstream sexuality, individual gratification and fulfillment, and self-direction and empowerment.

Mirroring this shift in popular culture, for the past several decades literary theory has focused almost exclusively on reading between the lines, tearing down status quo readings, and championing the voices of “subaltern” minority voices, including colonized territories, gay and transgender studies, historical victims and shattered identities. The battle cry of postmodern literary theorists, based on Foucault, Derrida, Badiou, and Zizek, is to challenge authority, to resist definitions, to be fluid, to cross boundaries, to “Deterritorialize.” Universal meaning has broken down into fragmented, traumatized, unrepresented narratives—majority narratives have become merely points of view, and we are quick to defend and redefine traditional villains.



Within just the past decade, there has been a rapid shift in the characterization of the Other—from monstrous, to misunderstood; from frightening to friendly. Thus, vampires, werewolves and witches have changed from being evil creatures of the night, to tragically misunderstood victims of judgmental traditionalist organizations who are constantly challenging their right to exist. In 2012 we even had the movie *Wreck-It Ralph*, in which all the classic “evil” characters from video games were given the chance to express their feelings in a bad-guy support group. The common feeling was “They can’t change who they are, they have to accept themselves as evil.” Their affirmation goes, “I’m bad. And that’s good. I will never be good. And that’s not bad. There’s no one I’d rather be, than me.” (Naturally, the hero of the movie, Ralph, makes the transition from bad to good—demonstrating to children everywhere that good and evil are not fixed boundaries, but fluid definitions which can be altered by making good choices. His quest also mirrors the journey Satan follows in *Paradise Lost* to a surprising degree.)

These themes are often used as a platform to encourage racial tolerance, sexual liberty, and above all else, the pursuit of freedom. Our ideological alignment with revolutionaries has become even more dramatic in just the past few years: political revolutions including the Arab Spring (2011) have earned our respect and support, and burgeoning dissatisfaction with bipartisan politics, economic frustrations and the collapsing real estate market. New levels of dissatisfaction against financial corruption led to the Occupy Wall Street movement of the same year. Modern rebels like Edward Snowden or Julian Assange are controversial but admired by many.

Meanwhile the plots of various films in our entertainment machinery are converging into one story, replayed everywhere: a powerful but corrupt government and an unlikely hero who leads a revolution—a theme repeated by a dozens of major Hollywood films every year. One of

the biggest commercial successes in recent years, the *Hunger Games* trilogy, ends after the protagonist takes down one government but then assassinates the head of the new government as soon as it appears: underlining perhaps Foucault's argument that power, in any form, must be resisted. The TV shows *Revolution*, *Falling Skies*, *Defiance*, *Spartacus*, all feature armed revolution against powerful forces in defense of freedom.

The revolutionary trend has not shied away from war on the gods: recreations of classical mythology franchises in which revolutionary heroes challenge deities directly include *Clash of the Titans*, *Percy Jackson*, and the *God of War* video games. Hollywood even came very close to reproducing a *Paradise Lost* movie which was to star Bradley Cooper, but the project has fallen through several times. In 2016, however, several new TV shows have gotten dangerously close to portraying satanic heroes. *DareDevil*, *Damien*, and *Lucifer* are all based on diabolical characters, rebelling against the "evil" roles they've been cast into.

This normalizing influence of liberalism—to take traditionally "evil" characters and make them sympathetic by looking at their true motivations—has been going on for the past decade, but until this year has shied away from directly attempting to exonerate Satan, or deal directly with God and the Devil as characters, instead of through metaphor. Surprisingly, however, the trend is moving quickly towards direct theological positioning: Marvel's *Batman v Superman* (2016) uses the terms *God* and *The Devil* dozens of times, and the central conflict of the story is represented by a painting of Lucifer falling from heaven (which turns upside down at the end of the film, representing the idea of moral fluidity). In *X-men: Apocalypse* the chief villain is a superpowerful being who claims to be the god of the Old Testament. The Xmen team up together to destroy him and save humanity.

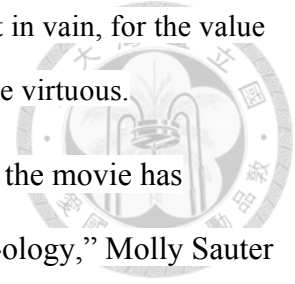
It is particularly fascinating that the “face” of revolution has become the Guy Fawkes mask (as designed for the movie *V for Vendetta*—a fictionalized account loosely based on the Guy Fawkes gunpowder plot). The stylistically similar representations of Guy Fawkes and the devil (showing the devil with an upturned moustache didn’t become popular until after Milton’s lifetime) suggest that a blurring of archetypes is taking place; like Fawkes, Satan can be viewed as revolutionary hero or the embodiment of evil, depending on our political leanings.

When artist David Lloyd was asked to create a new pulp character for *Warrior* magazine in 1982, stylized images of a friendly Satan with a clean, pointy beard and moustache were already common; these may have inspired the new comic, *V for Vendetta*, a dystopian adventure featuring an anarchist terrorist fighting against a future fascist government. V hides behind a Guy Fawkes mask, and urges revolutionary violence. In the 2006 movie, he says, “People should not be afraid of their governments. Governments should be afraid of their people.” He describes himself in terms that could apply equally to Milton’s Satan or the Legacy of Guy Fawkes:

both victim and villain by the vicissitudes of Fate. This visage, no mere veneer of vanity, is a vestige of the vox populi, now vacant, vanished. However, this valorous visitation of a by-gone vexation, stands vivified and has vowed to vanquish these venal and virulent vermin vanguarding vice and vouchsafing the violently vicious and voracious violation of volition.

With the mask, V has come to represent the voice of the people, taking up arms against its government—a once justified and glorified cause which has gone out of fashion almost completely. With the mask, V represents the social levelers Zorro and Robin Hood, ready to redistribute power and wealth. He also makes clear that vengeance is not simply a selfish and evil motivation (as is often claimed against Milton’s Satan) but a necessary and noble cause:

The only verdict is vengeance; a vendetta, held as a votive, not in vain, for the value and veracity of such shall one day vindicate the vigilant and the virtuous.



The movie represents a rise political revolution, and the mask designed for the movie has become a symbol used in actual protest. In the article, “Guy Fawkes Mask-ology,” Molly Sauter notes,

As Anonymous’s political identity has developed, the symbolism of the mask itself, adopted by anti-authoritarian protesters from OWS to the Arab Spring, seems to have reverted to more closely embody the meaning in the V for Vendetta comics and film. Rather than overtly mocking those targeted by the protesters, the mask (an anarchic folk hero with a smile and curved mustache) serves as a political identifier. The wearer is identified as anti-authoritarian, a member of an online generation that values the freedom of communication and assembly that the internet has so powerfully enabled.

Lewis Call adds, “As the centuries have passed, what Britain remembers and how it remembers have changed dramatically. . . . The real power of the mask is that you can seize hold of it for any political purpose you want. He is a symbol with four centuries of shifting significance behind him”.

The reputation of Guy Fawkes has been recuperated. Before he was originally seen as a terrorist trying to destroy England. Now he’s seen more as a freedom fighter, a fighter for individual liberty against an oppressive regime. The political meaning of that figure has transformed. (qtd. in Lush)

David Lloyd is happy with how the image is being used: “The Guy Fawkes mask has now become a common brand and a convenient placard to use in protest against tyranny—and I’m

happy with people using it, it seems quite unique, an icon of popular culture being used this way” (qtd. in Waites).

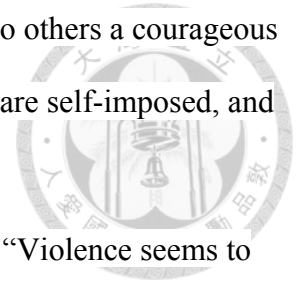
In “Trauma and Terrorism in Alan Moore’s Graphic Novels”, Andres Romero-Jodar distinguishes between violent characters who are motivated by traumatic memories and traumatic anxieties (like V, or Satan) and a second type of characters, who “aim at imposing their totalising discourses and destroying the plurality that defines our contemporary world”. Hence “the superhero, as the ultimate representative of the eternal values of a political system, can easily become a vicious terrorist” (132).

Perhaps this is the real power in the Guy Fawkes mask: it removes the culpability of the individual, allowing us to pay greater attention to the ethical considerations of the act. When is violence justified? What’s the difference between a hero and a vigilante? To defeat a villain, must one become a villain?

While our sympathies are against suicide bombers and violent terrorist action in reality, in the entertainment industry the theme of revolution, specifically of one daring rebel against a whole autocratic regime of political tyranny, with violence if necessary, is played over and over again. There is a nobility in persecution, as demonstrated by films like *47 Ronin* or *The Last Samurai*. And this is because, as theorists such as Foucault and Žižek have shown us, the only possible source of authentic freedom is outside of the totalizing doctrines of received power structures.

The purest form of heroism is perhaps the sacrifice of one’s own salvation for the good of many: assuming the mantle of evil to defeat evil. In our hyperconnected, pluralist society, when we find an instance of seemingly irrational violence, we can no longer afford to assume that such acts are “evil”—instead of a marginalized minority whose voice is being suppressed or

misunderstood. Depending on viewpoint, the same figure might represent to others a courageous hero, pushing the boundaries of the possible, revealing that our limitations are self-imposed, and that we have the ability and the right to journey past them.



In *Milton, Rights and Liberties*, Christophe Tournu reminds us that “Violence seems to be part of our lives—our destiny as human beings, because we find justice in violence. All the liberties we have won have been fought for in violence, in rapports de force—not in peace” (11).

Problem and significance

In light of these changes, the conservative reading of *Paradise Lost* no longer syncs up with contemporary ideology or values; it has more in common with the 1950s paranoia and conformity than the contemporary liberalism of 2016. We’ve been told that Satan is a temptation: that no matter what he says, no matter how rational or backed by evidence—even if his arguments convince and persuade us, we must close our ears entirely and refuse to believe him. We must distrust our own reading of the text and place faith in scholars. This is directly at odds with postmodern thought, which has mostly agreed that “evil” is merely a resistance to the established power discourse, and necessary both for the creation of change and for the developmental of authentic subjectivity. In *The Demonic: Literature and Experience*, Ewan Fernie writes:

But whereas Milbank and traditional Christian theology see evil and the demonic ‘as the privation of being itself’, contemporary thinkers, though they do not name it as evil or the demonic, typically see it in more positive terms, as the womb of possibility. This edges us into a major paradox. The demonic is evil, for sure, in its violent hostility to being. And yet, it involves a potential for creativity over against what merely is, which is something other than evil – and indeed, if we are to pay heed to contemporary philosophy and culture, may be a central component of the Good. (10)

Unsurprisingly, given the changed political climate, not all scholars are willing to continue this academic orthodoxy, and have begun resurrecting a more obvious, immediate reading of

Paradise Lost.

Neil Forsyth's *The Satanic Epic* (2004) argues "*Paradise Lost* is not an orthodox poem and it needs to be rescued from its orthodox critics" (1). Blake's aphorism about Milton being of the Devil's party, Forsyth writes, "like much Romantic criticism, is right, or at least helpful, except for the implied accusation of ignorance. Milton knew quite well what he was up to" (1).

Forsyth's book, which sparked a collection called *After Satan: Essays in Honour of Neil Forsyth*, has changed the face of contemporary Milton research, allowing serious scholars the possibility of reclaiming Satan as a hero from beneath decades of complicated deferrals and redirections that obfuscate the text.

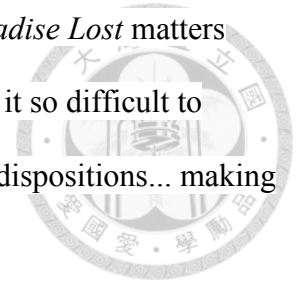
In *The Tyranny of Heaven* (2004), Michael Bryson writes "Satan seems heroic because he is heroic. If Satan is not heroic, *Paradise Lost* becomes a farce, not an epic whose literary roots lie in tragedy" (83).

A new foreword to *Paradise Lost* appears in the Oxford World's Classics edition, by Philip Pullman, whose award-winning *Dark Materials* trilogy has been called the "anti-*Paradise Lost*" but is clearly indebted to the humanistic interpretation of Milton's work, which recognizes the heroism of Satan. Included is the story of a country squire from the time of Blake whose reaction to hearing the poem read aloud mirrors Pullman's own feelings:

Suddenly he bangs the arm of his chair, and exclaims, 'By God! I know not what the outcome may be, but this [Satan's a] fine fellow, and I hope he may win!' (1)

But while this blurring of revolutionary images is nearly ubiquitous in contemporary culture, the association with the founding member of the tradition, Milton's Satan is still difficult to untangle

from conservative readings which advise strict resistance. This is why *Paradise Lost* matters perhaps more than any other text. As T. S. Eliot wrote, “of no other poet is it so difficult to consider the poetry simply as poetry, without our theological and political dispositions... making unlawful entry” (qtd. in Mohamed 92).



While in most other fields of literary criticism, progress has been swift (queer, feminist or postcolonial studies all seek out subaltern and or marginalized, minority voices) in this one specific example, dealing with Milton’s Satan, scholarship has remained abnormally conservative. This in itself should be an indication that *Paradise Lost* is not a typical text.

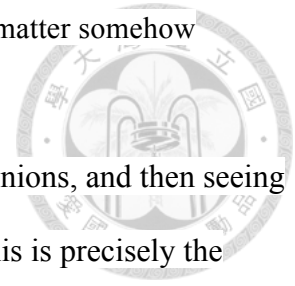
A more recent exchange that exemplifies this issue comes from a book review of Tobias Gregory’s *From Many Gods To One* by Lawrence F. Rhu.

Gregory, in a kindred way, founders in the face of interpretive freedom and the liberties some critics take in reading the figure of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Gregory cannot give them any leeway but must simply erase the notion of any possibly heroic appeal in the leader of the outcast angels:

No doubt Milton enjoyed exercising his long-developed forensic powers in the writing of Satan’s speeches, but there is no more reason to suppose that Milton sympathized with his devil (partially, unconsciously, or any other way) than there is to suppose that Shakespeare sympathized with Iago, Edmund, or Macbeth. ... Satan’s rhetorical technique is summed up by Jesus in *Paradise Regained*: “‘mixing somewhat true to vent more lies”’ (PRL. 433 [sic]). All one has to do is keep this line in mind, and Satan ceases to present a critical puzzle. He is in no way diminished thereby as a literary character. Milton’s Satan is not a hero of any sort. (196–97)

What strikes me about this passage is its unqualified insistence. It protests so relentlessly that it sounds unable to bear the slightest difference of opinion without construing it as complete opposition. Does Gregory suppose that he is settling this

matter once and for all? Does the conversation to date on this matter somehow require that of him? (E26)



There is something distasteful about seeing a literary character espouse opinions, and then seeing him condemned, scorned and silenced because of his “evil” nature—and this is precisely the problem with the character of Satan: he’s a reason-defying black hole that eschews all argument. Any defense of Satan is automatically derided and refused out of hand as a “settled” manner, which is exactly why he’s so dangerous, and so important.

This orthodox response hides *Paradise Lost*’s enormous impact on history, culture, politics and literature—and “teaches away” the natural and instinctive response that the text actually elicits. As such, contemporary readers have been disconnected from the powerful (dare I say “authentic”) response that *Paradise Lost* has always had on readers, by the heavy screen of academic whitewashing. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how we got here; how this academic skepticism towards *Paradise Lost* developed on the heels of two centuries of unabashed adoration of the devil, and how postmodernism justifies the “satanic” reading of the text that is usually rejected for being a Romantic error.

Why it matters

This same silencing—the refusal to hear and trust the words of Satan and to evaluate them logically and rationally—is being used today (and has been used over and over again in the last several centuries) by conservatives who depend on this peculiar attribute of Satan to not only silence liberal dissenters, but also to refuse basic rights to any and all groups they wish to suppress. Thus, a deeper investigation into this matter is crucial and relevant. It was “satanic” to let women vote; to free slaves. Today it’s “satanic” to let transgender persons use the

bathroom they feel comfortable with. Any controversial issue can be won *through non-rational means* by appealing to the logic-confounding legacy of Satan.

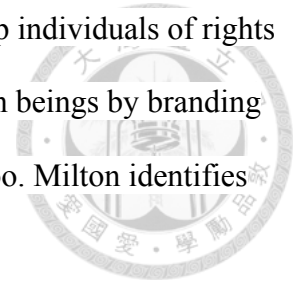
According to xxx in *The Devil's Pleasure Palace*, this trend towards inclusion in which all voices are heard and respected is itself satanic (along with Feminism), an agenda of the political Left to silence intelligent thinkers under the label of political correctness (quote).

How we read *Paradise Lost* is a political issue, with real-world practical consequences. Just as interpretations of *Paradise Lost* shift from era to era in response to political ideologies, so are we entrenched in a repeated cycle of racial abuse, social discrimination, and violence—a pattern which can only be repeated because we refuse to look Satan in the face and re-assess his right to a fair trial. While symbolic representations of revolution like pirates, Che Guevara or Guy Fawkes are readily assimilated (and productized into decal stickers for sale on eBay), Satan's founding role in the symbolism of resistance remains largely unrecognized; and this is a situation which has had a negative impact on society at large.

The worldview in which evil exists and his name is Satan is an extremist worldview that allows us to accept absolution for otherwise unimaginable violence. If Satan (as pure evil) exists, investigations for the motivating factors in incomprehensible violence are unnecessary. Any investigation into the fall of Satan could take away the label that allows tragedies to be lamented without necessitating proactive policy changes. This fundamentalist worldview has allowed governments to seize power and deny human rights. It was used during the Red Scare and the Satanic Panic, and it allowed Bush Jr. the freedom to declare war on the ill-defined "Axis of Evil" without popular approval or senate permission.

As long as there is a Satan undeserving of justice, fair treatment, charity or empathy, we can—merely by shifting the lens from democratic equality and assumed innocence, to a religious

belief that we are fighting against agents of Satan in a spiritual battle—strip individuals of rights that would otherwise protect them. It is thus possible to dehumanize human beings by branding them as “satanic” and obscuring rights under Satan’s magical cloak of taboo. Milton identifies the same issue in *De Doctrina Christiana*, against the term “heresy”:



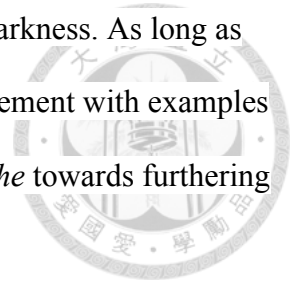
There are some irrational bigots who, by a perversion of justice, condemn anything they consider inconsistent with conventional beliefs and give it an invidious title – “heretic” or “heresy” – without consulting the evidence of the Bible upon the point. To their way of thinking, by branding anyone out of hand with this hateful name, they silence him with one word and need take no further trouble. (qtd. in Dobranski 1)

Satan is the rock that hides our fears, insecurities, prejudices and violent tendency. Satan is humanity’s closet—the dark place we stuff the things that don’t fit in our living rooms, the things we don’t want to display. He is our collective blindspot—the space that doesn’t matter, the place that can’t be talked about. It’s the label we use to deny, denigrate, strip and punish. Nietzsche warned us of this danger in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

One who fights with monsters should beware, lest he himself become thereby a monster. And if you peer long into an abyss, the abyss peers back into you.

If you look for Evil and believe in it, you accept the diabolical as natural and hence unchallengeable; and open yourself to becoming Evil yourself in the quest to defeat what you fear. Satan is the personified place-holder, the boogie monster, the conscious manipulator who is using this or that evil thing to wreak disaster and havoc on humanity. Thus “rock and roll” is satanic, as is dancing, gay marriage, and in more conservative countries, revealed skin, holding hands, educated women—but these definitions are fluid. What definition applies completely to Satan himself; what is evil by itself? What made Satan evil?

The first step in rectifying the monstrous abyss is by filling in the darkness. As long as the belief in Satan, or that “evil” exists, without needing to qualify that statement with examples of what kind of behavior actually counts as evil and why, it’s a *carte blanche* towards furthering a conservative agenda.



According to Milton, “They who seek nothing but thir own just libertie, have always right to win it and to keep it, whenever they have power, be the voices never so numerous that oppose it” (*Prose Works* 450). This revolutionary idealism applies most fittingly to Milton’s portrayal of Satan, but does Satan have the right to, in Milton’s terms, “win and keep” his own liberty? If so, was he repressed, treated unjustly, denied basic rights? If not, why not—who is responsible for his nature, which condemned him by assuming a right that was not his to seize?

This thesis will claim that Milton’s character of Satan had the right to seek his own liberty, and that his ultimately failure to find it within the context of Milton’s epic foreshadows the postmodern difficulty in creating space for authentic subjectivity. It will further argue that the orthodox campaign to silence Satan has negative effects in the real world, where “diabolical evil” functions as a trap door to exclude certain groups of people from their own rights.

In the chapters that follow I hope to demonstrate that the defense of Milton’s Satan is not a defense of *evil*: it is a defense of tolerance, moderation, justice without pre-condemnation, resistance to inhumane punishment and all forms of torture. Tracing the complex, surprising, convoluted history of the devil—who has been championed, scorned, celebrated and loathed—cannot help but open eyes and minds, perhaps in an irreplaceable way.

While arguing about whether Satan is the hero of *Paradise Lost* is fruitless (as I’ll demonstrate in the review of literature), few studies have traced the full of impact of Milton’s Satan on today’s deeply held liberalist ideologies, including civil and human rights; the freedom

of speech and press; the right to autonomy and self-government; the right of the governed to have a voice. Therefore I'll trace a line of literary influence to demonstrate how Satan's "rhetoric" has become deeply seated in our personal and national identities, and how this influence has been erased by refusing to acknowledge the source while redefining the traditional meaning of good and evil.

Methodology

The main aim of this thesis is to show how Milton's writings are symptomatic of an ethical inversion in Western culture, which first caused Satan to be celebrated (as a symbol for revolutionary politics) and later condemned (as humanity confronted the depths of its unrestrained depravity). After tracing how responses to the character of Satan have evolved in literature and entertainment in line with political sympathies, my original contribution to knowledge will be a postmodern reading of *Paradise Lost* as the story of Satan's development of subjectivity through a crisis of alienation; his resistance to a totalizing power discourse that defines his being; and his ultimate failure to exempt himself from the systemic order that relied on his transgression. The aim of this thesis will be to show how universally modern thinkers agree on the concept of evil as a negation of *what is*, in favor of *anything else but this*—a negation that is paradoxically the source of all human liberty and creativity (which nevertheless leads to death).

Although this thesis will start with a proper literary review, and rely heavily on passages from *Paradise Lost*, it will not be limited to a close reading of Milton's epic poem—instead it will focus on the reactions and interpretations themselves, and an examination of how literary criticism of the text has closely paralleled political shifts. What I hope to show is that the "rhetoric" in the speeches Milton assigns to the character of Satan is not a discourse of folly or

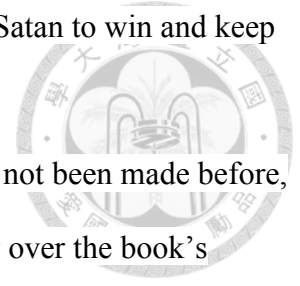
temptation to beguile readers, but in line with social progress towards humanistic values including the rights of self-governance and the “unalienable rights” that began with continental philosophy, was championed by members of the American and French revolutions, and continues to be the mainstream discourse of both modern theory and popular culture—literally coded into the fabric of Western (and thus, global) society.

In seeking to tie Milton’s character of Satan to these political developments, I’m not reaching in an unfounded direction nor merely dusting off the shelved Romantic commentary: Milton, more than almost any other historical figure (and with him, his failed revolutionary Satan of *Paradise Lost*) is intimately tied with rebellion, the arguments for free speech and the right to gather; positive and negative poles of religious terrorism (through his dual characters, Samson and Guy Fawkes) and the praxis of overthrowing a government and founding a republic.

More importantly, Milton’s Satan is directly responsible for our most cherished contemporary values—our lust of freedom, self-determination, personal growth and betterment, through directly inspiring centuries of artists, writers and philosophers, and revolutionaries including elements that were worked into the US constitution and Declaration of Independence. The fact that this is true, while also being refused and hidden, often with a result of using the name of Satan to *deny* the basic human freedoms that Satan so actively campaigned for, is not only intellectually dishonest, but also morally egregious. Hence, in this thesis I hope to mount a defense of (the literary) Satan, which can be extended into a defense of ethical and civil liberties.

This thesis is broad and wide-reaching, as it should be, because Milton’s Satan really does have a very wide, and very relevant, influence—both direct and indirect—on culture, history, literature and politics of the last several centuries. But we will never stray far from the

main question of this thesis, whether or not it is *good*, and/or *possible*, for Satan to win and keep his liberty, and by extension, what that means for us.

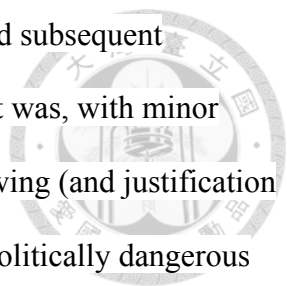


That said, there are some novel insights on *Paradise Lost* that have not been made before, which I feel can explain and solve the majority of the apparent controversy over the book's reception. My reading of *Paradise Lost*, as Being's inevitable seduction of Will, may offer a fresh way for readers to relate to the classic text that's more in line with contemporary moral sympathies. Due to the enormity of the subject, I'll restrict commentary to the following topics:

1. When revolution (or resistance to authority/power) is politically or morally justified,
2. Satan as a necessary negative that generates subjectivity and being (existence is the product of strife),
3. Satan as a symbolic de-signifier which allows moral injustice by refusing logical commentary.

Chapter Outline

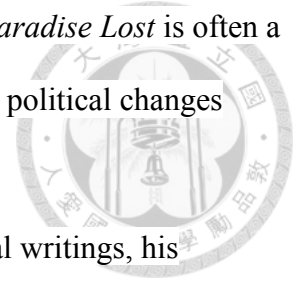
The organization of this thesis has been arranged with great care to maximize the impact of the argument: that a great ethical inversion has occurred in Western culture since the Enlightenment has caused the redefinition of values like *striving* and *ambition*. During this shift the term "satanic" was used as a positive virtue against conservative religious doctrine; later the terms "satanic" and "evil" were redefined as unmotivated, violent malice. To fully understand the weight of the moral arguments and parallels in the fourth chapter, it's paramount to first understand the history and factors behind this inversion. Each chapter is roughly chronological, tracing the evolution of the subtopics that will allow us to see the full picture.



The main problem is this: as a poem about man's fall from grace and subsequent restoration, *Paradise Lost* doesn't on the surface go against orthodoxy, so it was, with minor objections, accepted. But Milton's political tracts—his activity in overthrowing (and justification for killing) a king, his tracts on freedom of speech and press—those were politically dangerous and needed to be kept hidden and cut off from his poetry. He needed to be sanitized; a process that continues to this day. The thesis, then, is focused on the *desanitization* of Milton; first by demonstrating the process through which his true voice has been silenced; secondly by restoring his remarkable place in history, both political and literary; and thirdly by removing the key questions from the limited field of Milton scholarship (which focuses almost exclusively on close examination of the text) and instead place it in the field of more general critical theory (something that is very commonly done with most other books, but rarely done with *Paradise Lost*).

Chapter One will begin with a literature review, to demonstrate that the controversy surrounding *Paradise Lost* is neither resolved nor simple, and that the nature of this controversy is unique in the field of literary criticism for its focus on the “temptation” and “subtlety” of the text. I will demonstrate how responses to *Paradise Lost* fluctuate with the political climate of the times, and show how reaction to *Paradise Lost* inevitably boils down to the subject of Satan's culpability through close textual analysis. As such, a fresh reading that focuses less on the text and more on the contemporary ideologies that shape reception of *Paradise Lost* is warranted; it is also important to recognize that *Paradise Lost* has been uniquely treated in the history of literature as a text that's not to be trusted—and that responses to *Paradise Lost* sometimes have nothing at all to do with the text, and everything to do with a preconceived skepticism towards the literary character of Satan (a skepticism that is instilled by the orthodoxy before new readers

have a chance to form personal opinions). After proving that response to *Paradise Lost* is often a political issue, we have compelling reason to tie the text in with the radical political changes happening during Milton's lifetime.



In **Chapter Two** we will focus on Milton himself: his early political writings, his contemporaries and influences, and his personal experiences. *Paradise Lost* was written during a quickly shifting epoch of European history, when the Vatican's ethical authority had cracked, allowing space for diverse minor literatures united daringly under appeals to liberty and the right to self-govern—ideals which Milton supported, and for which he was incarcerated. Milton's bitter experience of failed revolution and wrongful imprisonment shaped his views on the right to seek freedom.

As the voice of the Cromwellian government and writer of the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* to justify the public execution of King Charles 1 in 1649, Milton had much to fear from a changing political climate that began to revert back to Monarchism. Indeed, for his propaganda writings, Milton had to go into hiding, for fear of retribution from the followers of King Charles II. In June, 1659, his defenses of regicide and criticisms of monarchy were publicly burned. In *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* published at the end of February, 1660, Milton raises a last and desperate warning against the dangers inherent in a monarchical form of government, and also stresses the importance and the right to individual liberty.

Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* after his ardent pleas to the English public against a resumed monarchy were ignored. It would have been easy for Milton, whose political writings focused on free speech, free press, and freedom of conscience, to sympathize with his character of Satan—who was also fighting a lost cause against hereditary rulership and seeking a small measure of

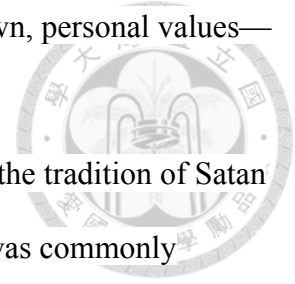
personal liberty. Since it was no longer safe for Milton to continue his public campaign for governmental reform, Satan's rhetoric can be thought of as a secret text against Milton's accusers and incarcerators (the proper way to read *Paradise Lost* in Milton's time would have been to see the king as God, justly putting down a rebellion through force: but Milton had written several times explicitly against this association, because viewing the king as God was a form of idolatry).

Three of Milton's texts, *5th of November*, *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Antagonists*, all show revolutionary terrorism, but with evolved ethical sensibility. Comparing the differences will allow us to see Milton's evolving response to the just use of force in the fight for freedom. I will also briefly trace Milton's personal background, his beliefs and early political writings, to see whether his opinions match up with Satan's musings about justice, resistance and revolution.

Chapter Three will demonstrate how Milton's Satan became a revolutionary symbol for the next two centuries, during a time when liberal ideologies faced strict repression, and scientific progress was commonly seen as hubris against God. Milton had a direct influence on the French (1789–1799) and American (1775–83) revolutions, and his political language justifying the right to rebel can be found in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

In the 18th century, Milton's Satan was associated openly with liberal values including the right to personal autonomy, the right to control one's own destiny and future, and the positive virtues (courage, knowledge, ambition) necessary to seek out our own happiness. Satan was with the educated libertines of the north who wanted to abolish slavery, rather than the religious conservatives of the south for whom the tradition was biblical sanctioned; he was with the democratic revolutions intended to give power back to the people; he was with technological

invention and scientific experimentation; and the freedom to choose our own, personal values—like who to love and what we can put in our own bodies.



Chapter Four will show that by the beginning of the 20th century, the tradition of Satan as a tragic but righteous hero punished by a tyrannous and irrational God was commonly accepted and often repeated in literature, as Modernist writers and poets adopted the revolutionary legacy left to them. Sensory enthusiasm, dissolution of traditional social classes and moral mandates led to an artistic liberty that was often openly associated with the satanic. In the early 20th century, when conservative religious elements fought diligently against the unchecked pursuit of knowledge and technological advancement, Satan was with the revolutions towards racial and sexual equality, and in support of those daring to speak out against overreaches in political power.

However, after the First World War, this unchecked optimism in Faustian (and Nietzschean) values was tempered by the realization that human beings had the capacity for extreme and systematic violence. While previously, “evil” was mostly seen as the product of misguided human ambition or desire, or negative traits like malice or jealousy, in the 20th century advanced weaponry made death impersonal, and humanity saw that it was possible for mankind to destroy itself rather than evolve towards the utopian future long expected.

The Marxist tradition of glorious, violent revolution, celebrated by Russian authors especially, led to assassination attempts and terrorist attacks, and was often conflated with the rise of worker strikes or political movements in the United States. Free market capitalists and religious ideology created a culture of fear and paranoia against the “foreign” influences of ungodly communism. After World War Two, literature became more jaded and cynical about the inherent goodness of mankind, and there was a conservative backlash against progressive

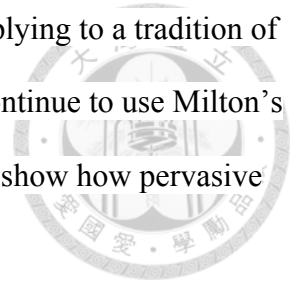
humanistic tendencies. The climate of skepticism and censorship led to a warped, repressive reading of *Paradise Lost*, which—due to the isolationism of university departments—continues to be mainstream even though the political climate has since radically changed.

In the 1970s, counter-culture activity, the rise of new forms of spirituality and increased drug use led to the idea that Satan was real; in the 1980s, thanks to sensationalistic “exposés” and a belief in repressed memories, this morphed into widespread belief in an underground Satanic conspiracy. Since then, however, xenophobia and repressive politics have given way to an inclusive, postmodern pluralism which embraces all forms of truth and seeks compassion and understanding rather than violent conquest. The values of Milton’s Satan have now been deeply assimilated into Western culture; both the right to political resistance when necessary, as well as the absolute sovereignty of the individual over his or her own personal choices (these values are guaranteed in the US Declaration of Independence as the right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”—although they are often challenged in specific cases, few today would see those as inherently *satanic*).

In **Chapter Five** we’ll finally take a closer look at *Paradise Lost* itself, and show how Milton’s unique innovation regarding the impetus for Satan’s rebellion makes it justifiable and sympathetic. I’ll show how *hubris* and other “sins” Satan is commonly criticized for are no longer seen as negative in most cases, and that Satan—uniquely in the field of literature—is being held to an outdated standard of ethical mastery.

I will also dig deeper into critical theory to first demonstrate how Satan, as a literary character, perfectly embodies the essential quest for personal autonomy that is not only justified by contemporary philosophers, but mandated—for there can be no moral action outside from a free subject. Satan’s quest for justice can easily be read as a metaphor for the self’s journey

towards self-awareness (even more so because postmodern theorists are replying to a tradition of philosophers that were heavily influenced by *Paradise Lost*, and as such continue to use Milton's poetic imagery to describe psychological functions). These reflections will show how pervasive the influence of Milton's Satan continues to be in contemporary society.



The **Conclusion** of this thesis stresses the importance and relevance of the topic and subject: far from an ivory-tower consideration, the way we understand, sympathize with and tolerate the title of “satanic” allows abuse of the title as an ethical blindspot to strip rights and liberties away from anyone who doesn't agree with our definition of what's “right” or natural human activity.



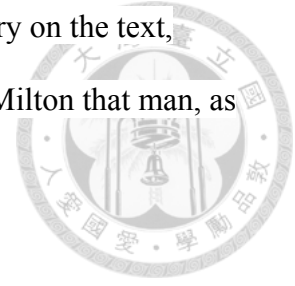
Chapter 1: Debate

1.1 Introduction

Paradise Lost has come with a warning label since it was first published, usually in the form of a prologue cautioning readers how to approach the story. These days, students are also greeted with decades of detailed academic commentary. It is impossible to see *Paradise Lost* for what it is, and consider Milton's Satan as a literary character, without first piercing the veil of orthodoxy which has been built to cage and silence his voice. This chapter focuses on the responses to Milton's epic, to show how responses to the poem have over-emphasized resistance and denied alternative readings, surrounding *Paradise Lost* with a unique discourse unmatched in the field of literature.

Through the wildly disparate collection of responses that follows, we can isolate the recurring "challenges" that *Paradise Lost* presents to readers, which have resulted in a perverse refusal to allow readers to approach the text directly, without a protective screen of academic interpretation, to ensure the book isn't perceived "the wrong way." I hope to show, in this overview of responses, how far Milton has fallen. He is rarely read, and when read, is often hated (because the experience of reading has been tainted by a project of self-denying linguistic sophistry). *Paradise Lost* has been not just reigned in, by silencing all of the tendencies in Milton's writing that make it so powerful and relevant to modern readers.

What you see in the history of responses, more than any commentary on the text, although there is much of that too, is a constant accusing and belittling of Milton that man, as well as the “foolishness” of his “ironic” character.



1.2 Early Responses

Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667. The country minister John Beale gave an early response that typifies the unfiltered experience: “Milton is a poet too full of the Devill . . . [he] put such long & horrible Blasphemyes in the Mouth of Satan, as no man that feares God can endure to Read it, or without a poisonous Impression” (qtd. in Simmonds 181).

The point of the comment, as has often been repeated by critics, is that the best speeches are given to Satan (and that this is somehow wrong or harmful, at least to anyone that “fears God.”) *Paradise Lost* further challenges in that it takes the form of a classical epic, which seems to put Satan in the role of a hero. Consequently, reading it can’t help but create—for anyone familiar with the traditional role of Satan as evil incarnate—a kind of anxiety. Despite this, Milton’s epic was recognized for the brilliance of the verse and for the loftiness of the subject matter. In seventeenth century England, education focused heavily on classical philosophy and literature, and many people were happy to receive an English epic that was as good as pagan texts, and which focused on Christian themes instead of merely human battles or journeys like the *Iliad* and *The Aeneid*.

England’s first official poet laureate John Dryden was quick to commend *Paradise Lost*, and tried to turn it into a play in 1673. In a poem added to the 1677 edition, Dryden compares Milton to Homer and Virgil, connecting England to Greece and Italy as the new bearer of the epic tradition.

Three Poets, in three distant Ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The First in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The Next in Majesty; in both the Last.
The force of Nature could no farther go:
To make a third she joined the former two. (qtd. in Boswell 85)



And yet, given the topic of *Paradise Lost*, especially in light of Milton’s reputation for scandal and heresy, it was also met with immediate skepticism. A poem by Milton’s acquaintance Andrew Marvell, published in the 1674 edition of *Paradise Lost*, both acknowledges and aims to decrease this skepticism. Marvell admits that he started out misdoubting the intent, because a poet as strong as Milton could accidentally ruin the “sacred truths,” but ends up convinced that Milton’s poem wasn’t harmful to readers’ faith. He also comments on the controversial issue of Milton’s choice to use free verse rather than rhyming his poem, as was more common. Marvell agrees, even though the form is unusual, Milton has pulled it off.

I too, transported by the mode, offend,
And, while I meant to praise thee, must commend.
Thy verse created, like thy theme, sublime,
In number, weight, and measure, needs not rhyme. (qtd. in Todd 274)

After a lifetime of political writing, however—sometimes using crude, underhanded personal attacks to make his point—Milton had made many enemies. Especially after the Restoration, when sympathy for the monarchy returned and Milton was remembered for his role in justifying the execution of King Charles, many were reluctant to acknowledge Milton’s achievement. In 1687, William Winstanley wrote

John Milton was one whose natural parts might deservedly give him a place amongst the principle of our English Poets . . . But his Fame is gone out like a Candle in Snuff, and his Memory will always stink, which might have ever lived in honourable Repute, had not he been a notorious Traytor, and most impiously and villainously bely'd that blessed Martyr King (qtd. in Kolbrener 115)

In 1689, Thomas Yalden has trouble reading the “sacred lines” which “with wonder we peruse,” alongside the “seditious prose, which provokes our rage.” Even though the poetry was good, it was impossible to overlook the politics or forgive Milton’s other writings.

But when thy impious mercenary pen
Insults the best of princes, best of men,
Our admiration turns to just disdain,
And we revoke the fond applause again.
(qtd. in Kolbrener 115)

Those who read *Paradise Lost* in light of his political treatises saw it as a text on behalf of “Civil, Religious and Domestic Liberty.” For John Toland, who wrote a *Life of Milton* in 1698, Milton was a revolutionary whose “chief design” was to “display the Effects of Liberty and Tyranny” (qtd. Kolbrener 114). Toland’s *Life* raised a clamor, according to Kolbrener because Toland’s efforts “worked against those who sought to replace the memory of a radical and politicized Milton” with the one who, in Jonathan Richarson’s would “to Calm and Purify the Mind. . . to a State of Tranquility and Happiness” (115).

And there was the problem of the poem’s classification: calling it an epic would seem to make Satan the hero; yet that conclusion was hard to avoid given the poem’s construction. John Dennis relied heavily on *Paradise Lost* in his literary theory, developed between 1701 and 1704.

His principle aim was to show that, with the aid of Christian revelation, poetry can equal and excel that of the ancients (something it would have been difficult to demonstrate without the example of *Paradise Lost*. He called it “the most lofty, but most irregular Poem, that has been produc’d by the Mind of Man,” but admitted, “the Devil is properly his Hero, because he bests the better” (qtd. in Shawcross 129).

Dennis was mostly interested in the sublime, or *delightful horror*: “Fear then, or Terror, is a Disturbance of the Mind proceeding from an Apprehension of an approaching Evil, threatening Destruction or very great trouble to us or ours. And when the Disturbance comes suddenly with surprise, let us call it terror; when gradually, Fear” (qtd. in Doran 131). Dennis also pointed out that poetry is more powerful than philosophy as a tool to “instruct and inform human reason”, since passions are strong and ungovernable, and reason feeble and weak. His argument however assumes the traditional view that the passions must be controlled and resisted; in his view *Paradise Lost* could be used for moral education.

In 1691 an anonymous letter to the Athenian Mercury (vol. 5, No. 14) asks whether Milton and Waller were not the best English poets, and which the better of the two? The implicit question is whether blank verse is better than rhyme. At the time this was still a divisive issue, so the editor responds diplomatically:

They were both excellent in their kind, and exceeded each other, and all besides. Milton was the fullest and loftiest, Waller the neatest and most correct Poet we ever had. But yet we think Milton wrote too little in Verse, and too much in Prose, to carry the name of Best from all others; and Mr. Waller, tho’ a full and noble Writer, yet comes up in our Judgements to that, – Mens diviniore atque os – Magna Sonatorum, as Horace calls it, which Milton has, and wherein we think he was never equaled. (qtd. in Leonard 9)

Others criticized Milton's use of old fashioned words. In 1694 Charles Gildon defends him on this account: "Those ancient and consequently less intelligible words, Phrases and Similes, by which he frequently and purposely affects to express his Meaning, in my Opinion do well suit with the Venerable Antiquity and Sublime Grandeur of his Subject" (qtd. in Leonard 11).

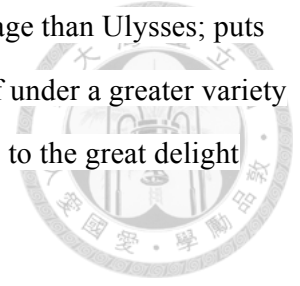
In his *History of Sin and Heresy* (1698), Charles Leslie laments that the "Truth has been greatly hurt by . . . the adventrous flight of Poets, who have dress'd Angels in Armour, and put Swords and Guns int their Hands, to form romantick Battels in the Plains of Heaven, a scene of licentious fancy" (qtd. in Shawcross 117). Leslie also points out that Milton has significantly altered the traditional understanding of the war in heaven in political terms; Satan's rebellion in *Paradise Lost* is caused by the event in which God declared his Son the Lord and King of the angels, and demanded their submission, which Leslie calls a "groundless supposition."

In 1711, Daniel Defoe (most known for *Robinson Crusoe*) remarked that *Paradise Lost* "passes with a general Reputation as the greatest, best and most sublime Work now in the English Tongue, and it would be to lessen a man's own Reputation to say any Thing less of it." It is "above all Praise, a Poem of all Sublime, . . . all Beauty, all bright" (qtd. in McCarthy 72).

The first serious criticism was done in 1712, in a series of essays by Joseph Addison, who finds the main lesson of *Paradise Lost* to be "Obedience to the Will of God makes Men happy." On the question of whether *Paradise Lost* is a "heroick poem" he compares the character of Satan with Ulysses of Homer's *Odyssey*. It is interesting to note that Ulysses is heroic because he uses guile or cunning (Milton's Satan will later be demonized for the same reason).

The part of Ulysses in Homer's *Odyssey* is very much admired by Aristotle, as perplexing that fable with very agreeable plots and intricacies; not only by the many adventures of his voyage, and the subtilty of his behavior, but by the various concealments and discoveries of his person, in several parts of the poem. But the

crafty being I have now mentioned, makes a much longer voyage than Ulysses; puts in practice many more wiles and stratagem, and hides himself under a greater variety of shapes and appearances; all of which are severally detected, to the great delight and surprise of the reader. (qtd. in Todd 15)



Addison also reminds us that Milton's Satan is not all bad, for example when he feels responsibility for condemning his followers to suffer with him. "Nor must I here omit that beautiful circumstance of his bursting out in tears, upon his survey of those innumerable Spirits whom he had involved in the same guilt and ruin with himself" (qtd. in Todd 46). While ultimately, Addison finds Jesus, not Satan, to be the hero of Milton's epic, the "sublimity" of the poem could not be achieved without the action, which is generated by Milton's Satan.

It is impossible for the imagination of man to distend itself with greater ideas, than those which he has laid together in his first, second and sixth books. The seventh, which describes the creation of the world, is likewise wonderfully sublime, though not so apt to stir up emotion in the mind of the reader, nor consequently so perfect in the epick way of writing, because it is filled with less action. (qtd. in Todd 15)

In 1727 Voltaire chastises the French for not being able to produce an epic of comparable quality, but also claims Milton plagiarized from Andreini's *Adamo*, and begins the tradition of ridiculing Milton's devils.

Methinks the true Criterion for discerning what is really ridiculous in an Epick Poem, is to examine if the same Thing would not fit exactly the Mock Heroick.... no-thing is so adapted to that ludicrous way of writing, as the Metamorphosis of the Devils... [which] heightens the ridicule of the whole Contrivance to an unexpressible Degree. (137)

Benjamin Franklin references the morning hymn in Book Five of *Paradise Lost* in his “Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion” (1728); however according to Lydia Shulman in *Paradise Lost and the Rise of the American Republic*, the largest number of quotations Jefferson copied down were Satan’s defiant early speeches proclaiming his undaunted will and plans for revenge.

“Jefferson apparently saw heroic qualities in Satan’s defiance. His Satan is a tragic hero in the classical vein, who refuses to submit to fate and boasts of controlling his own destiny” (129).

Not everyone was comfortable viewing Satan as a symbol of revolutionary heroism, however: Defoe, who wrote histories of the Devil, Apparitions and Black Magick (1726) uses *Paradise Lost* as evidence that the Devil can change his form and whisper temptations: “It is evident then, that the Devil can assume a shape whether man or beast, . . . I refer to Milton, who shows us the Devil in the Shape of a Toad crept close to Eve’s ear in her deepest slumbers and injecting lustful or loose or wandering thoughts into her chaste mind” (111). The “Black Magic” that Defoe’s works are warning against, are actually the natural philosophers and Newtonian scientists who rejected Christian doctrine and pursued, like *Faust*, other forms of knowledge.

In 1732, Richard Bentley spurred a closer reading of *Paradise Lost*, by “fixing” Milton by editing what he perceived as mistakes. As Walsh comments, “precisely because Bentley’s edition was so generally unacceptable, it concentrated minds wonderfully” (77).

As an example of Bentley’s response to Milton, we can view his comments on the following passage, where Satan is just about to embark on his journey across the Abyss.

Into this wilde Abyss,
The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixt

Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more Worlds,
Into this wild Abyss the warie fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while,
Pondering his Voyage. (2.910-19)



Bentley comments, "Here's an absurd and ridiculous Blunder, that has pass'd through all the Editions. *Satan* STOOD INTO *the Abyss*; and he did not *stand into it*, but stood on the first ground, the Brink of Hell. No doubt the Author gave it; LOOK'D *into* it, not STOOD into it." Bentley accordingly changed the passage to "LOOK'D FROM the Brink of Hell, and STOOD a while." However according to John Leonard in *Faithful Labourers*, "This robs the lines of a surprise. The repeated 'Into this wild Abyss... Into this wild Abyss' leads us to expect a verb of motion. We expect Satan to leap, or soar, or spring, but instead Milton springs a surprise with 'Stood'. The anti-climactic verb is all the more arresting for being placed to prominently at the beginning of a new line" (26-27).

Likewise, Richardsons responded to Bentley in 1734 by pointing out that Milton's original version is "very Artful! if his Stile is Somewhat Abrupt after Such Pondering it Better Paints the Image he Intended to give" (qtd. in Leonard 81).

Early commentary like this often concluded that Milton's apparent errors were in fact precisely chosen decisions that enhanced the impact of the poem. According to Shawcross, by 1732, "Milton's verse had begun its move to becoming a universal standard of excellence, an expression of authority, a pattern for imitation, and a source of poetical license" (2). However,

Shawcross also notes that, by becoming a classic, *Paradise Lost* was met with the accompanying “non-reading by the general public and lack of vitality.” Nevertheless, Milton continued to be lauded as one of England’s greatest poets, a national treasure—and even sometimes as a tragic hero himself, whose greatness was unappreciated in his own time. Dr. Dalton’s 1738 version of *Comus a Mask* begins with the following praise:

Our steadfast bard, to his own genius true,
Still bade his Muse, “fit audience find, though few.”
Scorning the judgment of a trifling age,
To choicer spirits he bequeth’d his page.
He too was scorn’d; and to Britannia’s shame,
She scarce for half an age knew Milton’s name.
But now, his fame by every trumpet blown,
We on his deathless trophies raise our own.

In 1738-39, a controversy arose concerning the possibility of Arianism in *Paradise Lost*. According to a letter in *Gentlemen’s Magazine* in March 1738, the epic “corrupted man’s religious ideas through the presentation of God and his host” (viii, 124-5).

This is a problem, because as Shawcross pointed out, many “learned their Bible at the hands of Milton” (25), and now had to distinguish between the God of men’s faith and the one in the poem. From 1741-51 there were charges of plagiarism and attempts to find sources, prompted mostly by William Lauder’s allegations that Milton had plagiarized directly from Jacopo Masenio’s *Sarcotis*, Hugo Grotius’ *Adamus Exsul* and Andrew Ramsay’s *Poemata Sacra*.

The controversy died down in 1951 when John Douglas posted a vindication of Milton showing that Lauder's work was full of deceptions and forgeries.



In 1746 Charles Batteux elaborated the argument that Satan was the true hero of Milton's epic in *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe*.

If it is a question of what creates admiration, astounds one's sensibility, and exalts it, the obstacles confronting a hero must be extraordinarily difficult to surmount; they require a more than natural strength, and still the hero triumphs over them. Thus will the denouement of the epic essentially be successful and joyous. This is the outstanding quality that brings one to admiration; if it fail, it will have been more deserving of pity than of admiration . . . In short, Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* triumphs over the first man. For it is he who is assuredly the hero. If he were not, and the hero was Adam, the ending would have been tragic and in no way epic: and if it were tragic, all the supernatural machinery that was used in the poem would have been useless devices, since the marvelous has no relationship with pity, and it is not created in order to excite pity. It is therefore the devil whom we are presented with to admire in *Paradise Lost*. The view is curious; but it is necessary to judge it like a painter's conception, that is, but the execution rather than by the essential point of the subject. Moreover, if it does not bring about admiration, it begets less astonishment. (qtd. in Tournu 433)

I leave this quote in full because it foreshadows what will later happen in Milton criticism: according to Batteux, if Satan is not the hero, then all the rest of the poem, the "supernatural machinery" would be useless devices; the poem makes you feel admiration, not pity, towards Satan, and why would this happen unless Satan were meant to be heroic? Later critics will conclude that every passage that generates admiration is a trap Milton is using to illustrate the treacherous deceit of Satan.

Batteux's book wouldn't appear in English until 1761—which may be why in 1749, Bishop Thomas Newton, can proclaim, “In *Paradise Lost* we shall find nothing . . . that is not perfectly agreeable to Scripture. The learned Dr. Trap, who was as likely to cry out upon heresy as any man, asserts that the poem is orthodox in every part of it, or otherwise he would not have been at the pains of translating it” (qtd. in Bryson 19). At the same time, Newton's defense of Milton itself reveals Milton's personal resistance to organized religion, claiming that while Milton was “indeed a dissenter from the Church of England . . . and in the latter part of his life was not a professed member of any particular sect of Christians. . . nor used any religious rite in his family. . . it is certain [that he] was to the last an enthusiast rather than an infidel” (qtd. in Bryson 24).

Alexander Pope disliked Milton's God, who he saw as a father-figured turned “School-divine.” More recent commenters point out that God speaks with “stark, forthright simplicity” and that his speech is “plain, clear, unequivocal, dignified, and authoritative” (Flannagan 91).

God's solemn and simple speeches are stifling compared to Satan's bold and daring discourses, which stir the imagination. John Keats, marvels at the description of the angels rallying in response to Satan's speech in Book One: “The light and shade—the sort of black brightness. . . the thousand Melancholies and Magnificenses of this Page—leaves no room for any thing to be said thereon, but: “so it is—” (qtd. in Lau 19).

In 1749 Chesterfield maintained, like Dryden, that “the Devil is in truth the Hero of Milton's Poem; his plan, which he lays, pursues, and at last executes, being the subject of the poem” (qtd. in Abrams 351). In 1750, the anonymous author of *A Journey through the Head of a Modern Poet*, imagines meeting Milton in Hell (where he suffers in Agony, doomed for his politics), where he admits “The Devil really was my Hero” (qtd. in Tornu 433).

In 1740-55, the German translation caused a controversy in Zurich between Johann Christoph Gottsched, and Herm Johann Jacob Bodmer in Zurich, over whether German poets needed to follow strict rules, pointing to Milton as an example of English poets who broke away from tradition and wrote free verse. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson reacted to Addison's praise of Milton with his own biased and heavily politicized biography and critical remarks on *Paradise Lost*. According to Flannagan,

Johnson seems to take Milton the regicide personally, as if Milton were still threatening to the existence of the British Monarchy. From his Tory perspective, Johnson thought Milton's political career destructive of monarchy and domestic stability in England. Johnson certainly did not like Milton the man, but Johnson's brilliant phrasing made sure that each of his negative remarks would become the beginning of subsequent critical debates . . . Johnson's brilliant phrasing in his often angry summaries cannot be ignored by later critics, nor can his accusations against Milton the man, the poet, or the dramatist. (qtd. in Duran 48)

However, Johnson's remarks didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Milton's fans. According to Henry Fielding's *Covent-Garden Journal*, "The truest Brilliants often lie overlooked and neglected on the Booksellers Shelves, while the most impudent Counterfeits are received, admired, and encouraged." After narrowly escaping from the "Jaws of Oblivion," Milton was regarded as "shining for ever with those great Lights of Antiquity in whose Constellation he is now admitted" (qtd. in Shawcross 13).

Milton's reputation as one of England's greatest poets led to him to be seen as an authority in all matters. Shawcross notes, "To supply illustration of their contentions or to offer example, authors often cite Milton's ideas and language, and usually in terms of their authoritativeness. If one finds example in Milton, then it must be correct!" (17)

In Edmund Burke's 1757 *A philosophical enquiry into our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, sublime poetry is about the vital and creative feelings of the reader, rather than any intention or argument of the author (qtd. in Shears 35). Commenting on *Paradise Lost*, Burke notes that because of the crowded images and confusion of the poem "the mind is hurried out by itself . . . we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated." (119)

Shears points out that Burke's reading, by focusing on the pleasure of reading rather than the moral purpose of poetry, invokes specifically Promethean and Satanic grandeur: "we know by experience, that for the enjoyment of pleasure, no great efforts of power are at all necessary; nay we know, that such efforts would go a great way towards destroying our satisfaction: for pleasure must be stolen, and not forced upon us; pleasure follows the will" (36). This immediate pleasure of reading poetry is exactly what orthodox critics will later resist.

Other would-be poets reacted to *Paradise Lost* with anxiety, created by the *greatness* of Milton's accomplishments. The poem is so *good* that some poets could only chase after Milton's glory:

Thither oft his glory greeting,
From Waller's myrtle shades retreating
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
In vain:- Such bliss to one alone
Of all the sons of Soul was known;
And Heaven and Fancy, kindred Powers,

Have no o'erturn'd the inspiring bowers
Or curtain'd close such scene from every future view.

(Collins Poems 1765)



Wherever Milton got his muse from, the inspiration was now gone, the curtain shut. Milton began to be described as a Faustian hero himself, who, like Prometheus, snuck into heaven to steal inspiration from the gods directly. According to Thomas Gray in 1768, Milton's blindness was a punishment for daring to peer into the secrets of the universe.

Nor second he that rode sublime
Upon the seraph wings of ecstasy;
The secrets of the abyss to spy,
He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time:
The living throne, the sapphire blax,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Clos'd his eyes in endless night.

(qtd. in Todd xiv)

In Reverend Thomas Warton's 1802 *Pleasures of Melancholy*, Milton's "Muse of fire High soar'd to steal from Heaven a Seraph's lyre" (qtd. in Todd xvi). By 1810, Milton's daring hand does his own stealing, in open rebellion against a host of guardian angels, in Hayley's *Essay on epick poetry*:

Apart, and on a sacred hill retir'd,



Beyond all mortal inspiration fir'd
The mighty Milton fits: An host around
Of listening Angels guard the holy ground;
Amaz'd they see a human form aspire
To grasp with daring hand a Seraph's lyre,
Inly irradiate with celestial beams,
Attempt those high, those soul-subduing themes
(qtd. in Todd, xvii)

It was also recognized that the tragedy in *Paradise Lost* was a reflection of Milton's own suffering, as he went unrecognized in his own lifetime. *Paradise Lost* came to be seen as a defiant text, as a speaking back to his peers, who had turned their backs on him. This is despite the poem's apparent theme of obedience and humility.

Alas, not thine the foretaste of thy praise;
A dull oblivion wrapt they mighty lays.
A while thy glory sunk, in dread repose;
Then, with fresh vigour, like a giant rose,
And strode sublime, and pass'd, with generous rage,
The feeble minions of a puny age.
(William Preston, qtd. todd, xix)

Despite the controversies however, by the end of the eighteenth century Milton had been mostly appropriated into the orthodoxy by separating *Paradise Lost* from Milton's own biography and

revolutionary politics. Milton's Satan was condemned for his pride, a sin he shared with Milton. According to Dr. Johnson's *Life of Milton* 1779, "Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and sullen desire of independence, in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority.. he hated all whom he was required to obey... he felt not so much the love of liberty as the repugnance to authority" (qtd. in Werblowsky 38).

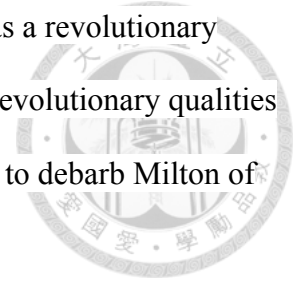
From the eighteenth-century's respectable and orthodox *Paradise Lost* emerges the epic of the nineteenth century, canonized for a middle-class reading public to be read, after Church, with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pilgrim's Progress* as "Sunday-books." It was finally the achievement of the eighteenth century to separate *Paradise Lost*, which Dr. Johnson called the "book of universal knowledge" exciting "reverence" and confirming "piety," from the life and energies of its "acrimonious and surly republican" author. (qtd. in Kolbrener 200)

1.3 Revolutionary Milton

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the spread of republican values and the recent revolutions in America (1765-83) and France (1789-99), opened up space to reclaim Milton from orthodoxy by appreciating Satan's subversive qualities. The Romantics in particular objected to *Paradise Lost* as a "mere token of cultural and religious orthodoxy, domesticated as a distinctly theological work." (qtd. in Kolbrener 200).

According Flannagan, "sophisticated poets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw Milton from a more international perspective. . . They read his life and works in light of the French Revolution. Milton was redefined as a revolutionary, a heroic Republican resisting the authority of an unjust and degenerate monarchy" (qtd. in Duran 122).

I would argue that Flannagan's claim that Milton was "redefined" as a revolutionary demonstrates the continuing orthodox resistance from acknowledging the revolutionary qualities in *Paradise Lost*, which is seen as a Romantic error by those who continue to debarb Milton of his seditious qualities.



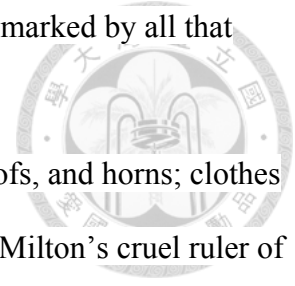
As a response to the Enlightenment's obsession with pure reason, the Romantics felt poetry came from raw emotion, and wanted to explore themselves and their own experiences in a more direct manner. As such, and in alignment with a growing rejection of religious truths, Romantic poets resisted the orthodox reading and celebrated Satan's virtuous qualities.

Already in 1787, Robert Burns remarks, "Give me a spirit like my favorite hero, Milton's Satan" and talked of "dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence; the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great Personage, Satan" (qtd. in Abrams 251).

William Godin asked in his *Political Justice* of 1793, "Why did Satan rebel against his maker? It was, he himself informs us, because he saw no sufficient reason for that extreme inequality of rank and power which the creator assumed" (qtd. in Leonard 166). Godwin's daughter Mary received a copy of *Paradise Lost* from Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1815; her response to Milton, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1817) is heavy with its influence.

In *A Defense of Poetry*, Shelley claims Milton's poem "contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that system which, by a strange and natural antithesis, it has been a chief and popular support." In *On the Devil and Devils* Shelley's central argument is that the Christian God is wicked. Satan has some excuse for his crimes, while God has none. "Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremist anguish on an enemy—these things are evil; and, although venial in a slave are not to be forgiven in a tyrant;

although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeated in one subdued are marked by all that dishonors his conquest in the victor.”



Unlike Dante or Tasso’s Devil, “Milton divested him of a sting, hoofs, and horns; clothes him with the sublime grandeur of a graceful but tremendous spirit.” It was Milton’s cruel ruler of heaven that made the devil’s own “benevolent and amiable disposition” the instrument of his revenge, turning Satan’s “good into evil” and inspiring him “with such impulses, as ... irresistibly determined him to act what he most abhorred . . . for ever tortured with compassion and affection for those whom he betrays and ruins.” According to Shelley, “To have alleged no superiority of moral virtue in his God over his Devil . . . was the most decisive proof of Milton’s genius” (qtd. in Wistrich 534-536).

In Blake’s reading, the defeat of Satan in *Paradise Lost* signifies the “lamentable and pestilence-breeding victory of repressive reason over man’s passion and desire, that ‘Energy’ which ‘is Eternal Delight’” (Abrams 251). Blake claims the reason *Paradise Lost* generates sympathy with Satan’s passion over God’s reason, is because Milton was a “true Poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.”

Coleridge notes, “the intense selfishness, the alcohol of egotism, which would rather reign in hell than service in heaven,” and argues Milton sought to “place this lust of self in opposition to denial of self or duty, and to show what exertions it would make, and what pains endure to accomplish its end” . . . but he also managed to invest his character with “a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and a ruined splendor, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity” (qtd. in Steadman 258).

The Romantic response to *Paradise Lost* marks the ongoing debate between reason and passion: traditionally, the emotions and passions were seen as selfish desires which needed to be

repressed and refused by the force of reason. In contrast to the Christian virtues of self-denial and abstinence, the Romantics eagerly sought out new forms of pleasurable experience. And this is not just a Romantic fallacy or outdated reading: while the Faustian tendency to boldly seek out personal desires continues to be frowned upon by most organized religions, it has nevertheless become the fully justified and nearly universal ambition of contemporary culture.

For William Hazlitt, Satan seemed “the most heroic subject that was ever chosen for a poem; and the execution is as perfect as the design is lofty. . . His ambition was the greatest; but his fortitude was as great as his sufferings. His strength of mind was matchless as his strength of body. He was not the Principle of malignity, or of the abstract love of evil – but the abstract love of power, of pride, of self-will personified, to which last principle all other good and evil, and even his own, are subordinate” (qtd. in Steadman 258).

The Achilles of Homer is not more distinct; the Titans were not more vast; Prometheus chained to his rock was not a more terrific example of suffering and of crime. Wherever the figure of Satan is introduced, whether he walks or flies, “rising aloft incumbent on the dusky air” [1.226], it is illustrated with the most striking and appropriate images: so that we see it always before us, gigantic irregular, portentous, uneasy, and disturbed— but dazzling in its faded splendour, the clouded ruins of a god.

However, Hazlitt also notes the “problem” of Milton, that some might think he carried his liberality too far, and “injured the cause he professed to espouse by making [Satan] the chief person in his poem.” Hazlitt believes, due to his faith in religion and love for rebellion, “each of these motives had its full share in determining the choice of his subject (qtd. in Wittreich 384).

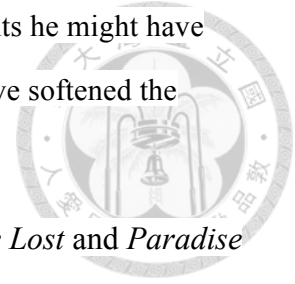
Milton's Satan was reimagined, thanks to Lord Byron, as a particular type of literary character that came to be known as the Byronic hero. According to historian and critic Lord Macaulay, "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection" (qtd. in Christiansen 201). To defend his own characters, like Manfred or Cain, against the charge of blasphemy, Byron asks "Are these people more impious than Milton's Satan? or the Prometheus of Aeschylus?" (qtd. in Teskey 289).

In 1825 the orthodox reading of *Paradise Lost* took a blow with the publication of *De Doctrina Christiana*, which clearly marks Milton as an Arian (denial of the equality and co-eternity of the Son with the Father). Although this is a notable feature in *Paradise Lost*, Milton could be excused for making an artistic choice necessary for the plot of his epic; but was now revealed as a firm believer in heresy.

Willmot, in *Lives of the Sacred Poets* (1838), notes the difficulty in both praising the poet, and recognizing that "the nervous energy of his intellect is never more fully developed than in the daring attitudes of defiance," and that Milton was openly critical of both church and king: "Every word seems to be inspired by the heart of the writer; and those tremendous declamations, which Cicero called the thunderbolts of Demosthenes, were never hurled with more terrific impetuosity than the anathemas of Milton against the king and the episcopacy" (80). Although Willmot recognized that God can be found anywhere, he nevertheless warns against using Milton as an excuse against church attendance.

Let none, therefore, plead the example of Milton in extenuation of their neglect, for with all the purity of his heart, and all the dignity of his character, his conduct awakes regret, as well as triumph. The pride of reason, which constituted so marked a feature in his character, would alone have deterred him from submitting to sit at the feet of

humbler men; yet from the lips of the weakest of God's servants he might have gathered precepts of meekness and forgiveness, that would have softened the asperities of his disposition. (62)



Lord David Cecil writes that, as an exposition of Christian belief, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are failures. Milton “was a philosopher rather than a devotee. His imagination was lucid and concrete, unlit by heavenly gleams . . . nor was his moral sensibility a Christian one. The stoic virtues, fortitude, temperance, above all, moral independency, were what he valued. He did not live by faith, scorned hope, and was indisposed to charity, while pride, so far from being the vice which Christianity considers it, was to Milton the mark of a superior nature” (qtd. in Werblowsky 39).

Bagehot comments in 1859 that the conflict between Milton's morality and his true sympathy is a great defect. As Professor Grierson will comment a century later, “If *Paradise Lost* (and even *Paradise Regained*) seems to many people to-day imperfectly Christian in spirit, it is not because of any explicitly heretical doctrine . . . but because Milton's scale of values is not that of the orthodox and sincere Christian, Evangelical or Catholic (qtd. in Grierson 99-100).

The Romantic (or “satanic”) reading which recognized Satan as the hero of *Paradise Lost* triumphed by the end of the nineteenth century over the orthodox, religious reading.

According to Victorian critic Walter Raleigh, Satan “unavoidably reminds us of Prometheus, and his very situation as the fearless antagonist of Omnipotence makes him either a fool or a hero.” Raleigh continues, “Milton is far indeed from permitting us to think him a fool. The nobility and greatness of his bearing are brought home to us in some half-dozen of the finest poetic passages in the world” (qtd. in Werblowsky 47).

In the 1882 introduction to *Paradise Lost*, David Masson writes “Satan. . . as all critics have perceived, and in a wider sense than most of them have perceived, is the real hero of the

poem” (qtd. in Bryson 20). In 1925, Denis Saurat’s *Milton, Man and Thinker* claims Milton as “emotionally of the Devil’s party” whether deliberately or not, and that there is “no lack of sympathy on intellectual subjects between Satan and Milton” (qtd. in Bryson 21).

As such, *Paradise Lost* became a difficult and dangerous text to religious readers. It would soon be the target of a massive campaign to reclaim it for orthodoxy.

1.4 The Orthodox Milton

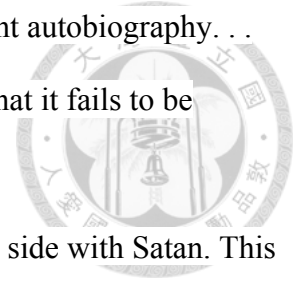
According to Steadman, “The first large-scale offensive against the Satanist position began shortly after the first gunfire of the Second World War.” Charles Williams challenged the tendency to confuse Satan’s views with those of the poet himself, and emphasized (negatively) the devil’s egotism, his “self loving spirit” and the inaccuracy of his boasts, claiming “Hell is always inaccurate” (261).

In the 1942 preface to *Paradise Lost*, (which he claims was written with the aim of “preventing the reader from ever raising certain questions”) theologian C.S. Lewis responds to Raleigh’s claim that Satan must either be a hero or a fool, by making him comedic and ridiculous. Evil is not founded on reason, but on an absurd and baseless send of injured merit.

He thought himself impaired because Messiah had been pronounced Head of Angels. These are the “wrongs” which Shelley described as “beyond measure.” . . . No one had in fact done anything to Satan; he was not hungry, nor over-tasked, nor removed from his place, nor shunned, nor hated—he only thought himself impaired. (92)

According to Lewis, Satan “lies about every subject he mentions” and it was difficult to “distinguish his conscious lies from the blindness which he has almost willingly imposed on himself” (93). For Lewis, to side with Satan is “to give one’s vote not only for a world of misery,

but also for a world of lies and propaganda, of wishful thinking, of incessant autobiography. . . . Some, to the very end, will think this a fine thing to say; others will think that it fails to be roaring farce only because it spells agony” (100).

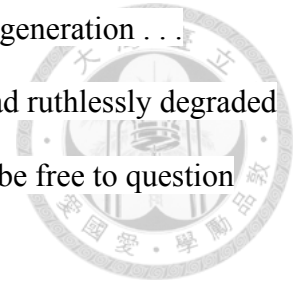


In other words, only egoistic, foolhardy, self-deceiving readers will side with Satan. This accusation was met with resistance. Helen Gardner responded diplomatically, citing the devils “enormous pain and eternal loss,” and that, though Satan was “in no sense the hero of the epic as a whole,” he remained, nonetheless, “A figure of heroic magnitude and heroic energy.” Gardner also points out that, in the reality of his damnation and in his monomaniacal self-concern he resembled the tragic heroes of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage (qtd. in Steadman 262).

For A.J.A. Waldock, Milton’s own “inexperience in the assessment of narrative problems” was primarily responsible for the striking inconsistencies in his Satanic image. “Milton’s allegations *clash* with his demonstrations,” he argues, “and in any work of imaginative literature . . . it is the demonstration . . . that has the higher validity” (qtd. in Steadman 263). In other words, when Milton’s comments as narrator clash with the reality of the text, we must reject his comments. Waldock also acknowledges that the changes in Satan’s character “did not generate themselves from within: they (were) imposed from without. Satan . . . does not degenerate, he is degraded” (83). The problem with Milton’s Satan, he concludes, is that Milton let him get out of hand unintentionally (qtd. in McMahon 70–71).

William Empson disagrees, claiming that Milton’s Satan is “consistent, plausible and ethically superior to Milton’s God. “Satan’s revolt against an omnipotent creator was not *per se* absurd; for in the devil’s own eyes the divine adversary was *not* almighty. Satan doubted not only that God had created the angels, but that He could in fact create *anything*. From the very beginning of the poem the devil sincerely believes that he has disproved God’s omnipotence”

(Steadman 263). For Empson, Satan's "moral absurdity and progressive degeneration . . . redounded less to Satan's dishonor than to the discredit of the deity who had ruthlessly degraded him. . . To worship a wicked God is morally bad for a man, so he ought to be free to question whether his God is wicked" (Steadman 265).



Steadman glosses these two responses, "For Waldock, the epic was a failure because it was not a good novel. For Empson, it was a success because it lacked a good God." (263) The conservative reading was once again gaining the upper hand. Douglas Bush sees in Satan the "spirit of Hitler" and sees his first speech as "a dramatic revelation of nothing but egoistic pride and passion, of complete spiritual blindness" (qtd. in Steadman 263).

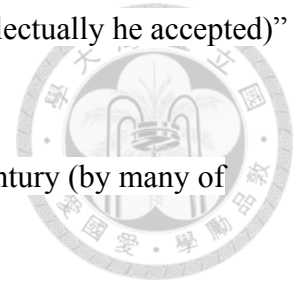
Williams claims Satan's description of his revolt against the Almighty is clear evidence of the essential "inaccuracy" of Hell: Satan claims "that he and his followers 'shook his throne'; it is only afterwards that we discover this is entirely untrue. Milton knew as well as we do that Omnipotence cannot be shaken; therefore the drama lies not in that foolish effort but in the terror of the obstinacy that provoked it, and in the result, not in the fight but in the fall" (qtd. in Thorpe 258).

In *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*, Charles Martindale writes that

Aeneas is a true leader who conceals his private emotions in the interest of his public duties; Satan by contrast speaks out of mere bravado, and his concealment serves his own evil desires, not the true interests of those he has misled. (4)

Christopher Hill, in *Milton and the English Revolution*, reads *Paradise Lost* as Milton's quarrel with himself: the republican Milton, a free and rational individual, revolting against the Christian Milton who accepted God's power. "On this reading, Milton expressed through Satan (of whom

he disapproved) the dissatisfaction that he felt with the Father (whom intellectually he accepted)” (366–67).



The Romantic reading, which was boldly proclaimed in the past century (by many of history’s greatest writers), was now seen as a mistake:

Unfortunately William Godwin, William Blake, Mary Shelley, and her husband advanced the reading of Satan as hero first posited by John Dryden. While such a reading is perhaps an outcome of political/social issues of the time, the power of Satan’s speeches, and the attraction that evil so regularly seems to provoke, it provides a faulty and incomplete view. (Duran 34)

When S. Musgrove asked in 1945, “Is the devil an ass?” the implication was *yes*. According to Musgrove, Milton’s readers would have immediately feared and distrusted the character of Satan. In GUR. Hamilton’s *Hero or fool?* the implication was *fool*. “Milton does not need to prove that Satan is evil; he expects readers to know it and to believe it from the start” (qtd. in Leonard 448)

C.S. Lewis had earlier pointed out that “a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers—including even his power to revolt. . . The same rebellion which means misery for the feelings and corruption of the will, means Nonsense for the intellect” (97). For Hamilton, who viewed evolution as “an unlovely and terribly pessimistic belief,”

Satan’s hypothesis is obviously agreeable to his pride, for it enables him, like any evolutionist who dispenses with a person God, to regard himself as superior to the source of his creation. (23)

Even Carl Jung, in the preface of *Lucifer and Prometheus*, sees sympathizing with Satan as a “danger”:

It thus happens that Prometheus, the sinner and culture-hero, can be detected in the Satan of *Paradise Lost*. Milton's Satan has absorbed so many Promethean qualities that we are in danger of admiring him and sympathizing with him. Satan is in trespass and thus sinful; but at the same time he represents our (Greek and unregenerate) aspiration toward new and higher levels of existence, our human battle against heavy and indifferent odds. (xix)

Merritt Y. Hughes, in "Satan and the 'Myth' of the Tyrant" (1965) argues that the weakness of the Satanic portrait was "its power to fool readers into its own delusion of power and make them say that Milton's Satan is a noble anticipation of the Nietzschean superman" (qtd. Steadman 266).

Stanley Fish writes in *Surprised by Sin* (1967) that "epic heroism, of which Satan is a noteworthy instance, is the antithesis of Christian heroism, and a large part of the poem is devoted to distinguishing between the two and showing the superiority of the latter . . . The devil's false heroism draws from the reader a response that is immediately challenged by the epic voice, who at the same time challenges the concept of heroism in which the response is rooted" (48-49). Consequently, the reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays "the weakness of Adam" (38).

Fish confirms his views in the 2001 *How Milton Works*, claiming the readers who would make Milton a Romantic liberal stem from "a systematic misreading of it, a misreading performed *in* the poetry by Comus and Satan, a misreading of the poetry as old as Blake and Shelley" (14). Going further, Fish claims that readers who disagree with him "falsify [their] experience of the poem" (qtd. in Forsyth 23).

John M. Steadman gives a good summary of the critical responses to *Paradise Lost* in 1976, by claiming that, even though Satan was seen as a hero for three centuries, that idea had now been firmly stamped out.



The case for the devil seems so generally discredited that its affective and persuasive force is likewise undermined—when readers are so conscious of Satan’s absurdities that they forget his cunning and power, so alert to the fallacies underlying his pretensions that these lose their aesthetic value as probable (or *apparently* probable) illusions. . . . For roughly three centuries, readers have demanded justice for Satan; and the validity of his title as hero has been the oldest, and possibly the most persistent, of many controversies over *Paradise Lost*. (255)

Milton criticism for the next several decades would follow the Fishean reading, that Satan’s grand rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* tempts readers into sympathizing with Satan; therefore the poem demands an active process of *resisting* all of the emotional impact of the poetry, and turning it into a purely academic exercise.

According to John S. Diekhoff, admirers of Satan are literary heretics; Satan is a bad angel and Milton knew it (31). “Evil is his good, to do ill his sole delight, not because by some paradox of thought evil is to him really good, but because it is contrary to the will of his enemy” (33).

Barbara Lewalski (according to Forsyth in *The Satanic Epic*) argued that Milton’s intention in using an epic model is “neither to debase the epic genre nor to exalt Satan as hero, but rather to show the human face of evil and its perversion of the good (71).

Achilles’ actions are those of a man driven by grief and rage into desperate, aberrant behavior, whereas Satan reaches the logical end-point of his debased heroic course in

this display of exultant self-congratulation, Achilles' triumph inspires tragic terror. Satan inspires reprehension. (Lewalksi 62)



For John Shawcross, Satan is “a vacuous braggart.” The devil’s glorious speeches exhibit the “false high style of the dissembler and buffoon” (*With Mortal Voice* 104).

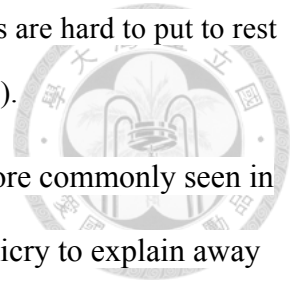
David Quint’s 2014 *Inside Paradise Lost* is an excellent example of the subtle propaganda campaign against Milton’s Satan; close-reading of individual passages is combined with editorial comments meant to put Satan in his place and remind us not to sympathize with him. Anything that looks at all like heroism is to be ridiculed as a “diabolical impersonation.”

As they clash their shields in Book 1, they may look like Roman soldiers roused to battle, but they equally look ridiculous: like so many swashbuckling braggarts sounding defiance against a deity whom they, in fact, dare not fight. . . These diabolic impersonations of Ulysses suggest how aspects of his heroism can be perverted toward evil; together they constitute a kind of anatomy of the ancient hero and a compendium of his career. . . . Satan’s ensuing voyage is a version of the wanderings of Ulysses, and part of the point— and joke—of Milton’s imitation is that what looks like the opening of the Iliad in *Paradise Lost* turns out to open an Odyssey (37-39).

Like earlier commenters, Quint claims that Milton’s words are “at war with themselves” and that his devils got away from him. *Paradise Lost* (according to Quint) was meant as a warning, but the power of Milton’s poetry charms readers to their own destruction.

The power of Milton’s poetry may nevertheless exceed its admonitory, demystifying purpose. In the peasant onlooker’s heart, joy and fear redound together, but the joy of the fairy elves’ charming music may outweigh the salutary fear that this music can

lead to lunacy or demonic possession. Once raised, these devils are hard to put to rest or to return to airy nothing: back to the words on the page” (34).



It should alarm us to find contemporary literary criticism that uses logic more commonly seen in 1st century Christian apologetics, who used the argument of diabolical mimicry to explain away similarities between Christian worship and earlier pagan practices.

1.5 Contemporary Resistance

Although critics in general avoid discussing outright religion, it is hard not to see the controversy over *Paradise Lost* as religiously motivated. As Fowler points out, “it is hard to imagine any sense in which fighting against God is not a religious experience” (qtd. in Forsyth 85). Steadman admits that all the positive values associated with Milton’s Satan are morally neutral—they can be seen as good in other characters. Satan is *evil* compared to Prometheus because he is rebelling against God, rather than Zeus. But remove the associated moral biases, and the language they use is remarkably similar.

Prometheus Bound, Aeschylus

And dost thou think that I

In fear of these new gods will cower and quake?

Far, far am I from that. (41)

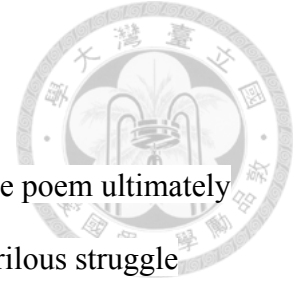
So let him hurl his sulphurous flames from heaven,

With white-winged snow and subterranean thunder

Make Chaos and confusion of the world!

Not thus will he constrain my tongue to tell

By whose hand he from tyranny shall fall. (43)



Richard DuRocher insists that Satan is “the hero of an epic tradition that the poem ultimately disavows,” and sees the poem as offering a kind of “heroic and at times perilous struggle between poetic fiction and Christian truth” (119, 218).

But as Werblowsky pointed out in response to C.S. Lewis in 1952, any reading where Satan is *not* the hero of *Paradise Lost* takes a deliberate and active process of obfuscation:

The Satanist reaction is the only possible one... any attempt at minimizing or denigrating the figure of Satan is bound to be a failure, notwithstanding all the subtle and clever arguments and clever dialectics employed to this end. This method and its failure are exhibited almost to perfection in Mr. C.S. Lewis’s, in many respects admirable, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, and to a lesser degree in Professor Mulgrove’s article ‘Is the Devil an Ass.’ Satan has been made the object of all Mr. Lewis’ hair-splitting logic, persuasive charm and subtle irony, but unfortunately none of his poetic feeling and artistic receptivity, of which he has given so much proof on other occasions. Cleverness is a virtue of very doubtful value. Far from solving any real problems, whether in theology, philosophy, and art (including poetry), it more often tends to obscure truth, leading at its best to intellectual inauthenticity, at its worst to downright dishonesty. (5)

Likewise, many critics are exasperated by the complicated techniques necessary to reach Fish’s reading of *Paradise Lost*.

In one of the least convincing parts of his remarkable book, Fish needs to argue against the obvious meaning of the word in order to undermine the advanced and sympathetic position that Milton seems to accord Satan. That is part of the Fish method, presenting the apparent meaning of a phrase as delusionary and then

spending several clearly argued pages showing why the words cannot mean what they purport to mean. (Forsyth 13)



R.V. Young writes, in *Stanley Fish: The Critic as Sophist*:

Because his general understanding of human nature and of the human condition is false, Fish fails in the specific task of a university scholar, which requires that learning be placed in the service of truth. And this, finally, is the critical issue in the contemporary university of which Stanley Fish is a typical representative: sophistry renders truth itself equivocal and deprives scholarly learning of its reason for being. His brash disdain of principle and his embrace of sophistry reveal the hollowness hidden at the heart of the current academic enterprise. (244)

Terry Eagleton describes Fish's "discreditable epistemology" as "sinister". The philosopher Martha Nussbaum calls Fish's work "rhetorical manipulation" (220-229). David Hirsch sees Fish as left to "wander in his own Elysian fields, hopelessly alienated from art, from truth, and from humanity" (68).

John Rumrich, in *Milton Unbound*, challenged the Fish-informed consensus, on the grounds that its way of treating Milton's readers as victims of a text full of satanic pitfalls is pedagogically disastrous. In *Milton and Heresy*, Rumrich and Stephen B. Dobranski write

It is distinctly paradoxical that John Milton – who opposed infant baptism, supported regicide, defended divorce and approved of polygamy - should be heard as a voice of orthodoxy. Yet modern scholarship has often understated or explained away his heretical opinions. (1)

Peter Herman in *Destablizing Milton* (2005) resists "the paradigm that has largely governed Milton studies until very recently," (7); Robert M. Adams worried whether his own ideas could

have any authority “against the Christian humanist morality that has held the strong right-center position in Miltonic criticism for so long” (qtd. in Forsyth 75).

For William Kerrigan, “The overall effect of [Fish’s] reading is to promulgate a tyrannical notion of aesthetic unity at the expense of introduction, without overt recognition, a new and unheard-of flaw in the poem: the alarming idea that its mythopoesis is not generative but repetitive, that its similes, metaphors, and symbols tell us nothing about Christianity that the dogmatizing and sermonizing passages of the poem have not told us already” (99).

In other words, we must reject *everything* from *Paradise Lost* and learn or experience *nothing*; other than confirmation of an orthodox response of skepticism and denial. As Bryson writes in *The Atheist Milton* (2013),

Milton must, I was taught, be read a certain way, and that way requires you, the reader, to reject the evidence of your senses, reject your emotional reactions to the power, beauty, rage, and sadness of Milton’s greatest works, and teach yourself to see as you are being assured that Milton saw—through the eyes of a monolithic, even impervious faith.” (4)

In *Tyranny in Heaven* (2004), Bryson writes, “to argue against Fish’s cleverly autocratic scheme has been interpreted for too long as somehow to demonstrate both the validity of the scheme *and* one’s own ‘fallen’ status. The time has come to say ‘enough’ (25). *Paradise Lost* is not an orthodox poem and it needs to be rescued from orthodox critics” (14).

Even critics who are sympathetic to a satanic reading of *Paradise Lost* bear traces of orthodoxy. Forsyth’s *The Satanic Epic* refers to the “seduction” of Satan: “Satan seduces the reader in several ways. . . The text invites the reader to experience that seduction, at times in company with Eve (who falls), most often in company with the narrator (who resists). In spite of

the narrator, or because of him, Satan's presence as the dominating character makes the text itself, at most of the key moments, inveigling, unreliable, seductive, fascinating" (7).

This stressing of "seduction" already puts us on edge, and warns us to read carefully. It assumes the text is unreliable or shifty; that Satan is a liar and a tempter, who uses empty rhetoric to achieve his aims; that he intends to assert his will over ours—in short it reaffirms all the tenets of orthodoxy that Forsyth's book aims to refuse.

But what is it about *Paradise Lost* is so seductive? And why should we assume that *resisting* is the ethically superior move? And why should *ethics* have anything to do with our reading of *Paradise Lost* anyway? Why can't we just love or hate the characters on their own merits or faults, in line with our personal inclinations?

1.6 Conclusion

In other areas of literary theory, criticism of famous texts generally shifts with *en vogue* theorists. *Paradise Lost* is the exception, and the debate seems to be stuck on whether or not Satan is the hero of the story: whether we should allow ourselves to be stirred by his passion, or laugh at his foolish pretensions. Unfortunately, this seems to be a religious debate, which explains the deliberate and fierce resistance towards the character of Satan, that seems to transgress normal literary criticism and verge into theology.

Milton *studies* have often threatened to turn into Milton *ministries*; as the distinction between poetic character and the reader's (or critic's) idea of the divine is erased, the difference between literary study and religion devotion becomes disconcertingly hard to detect. (Forsyth 23)

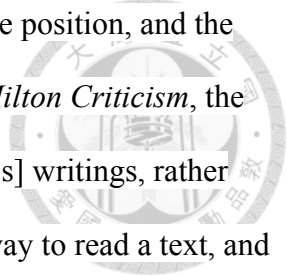
As Robert Adams remarked, "The Christian humanist majority... has [long] held the strong right-center position in Miltonic criticism... against... many antagonists" (qtd. in Rumrich 68).

Dobranski writes, “once Fish had refuted the romantic vision of Milton as a heroic rebel, religious and critical orthodoxies dovetailed. Scholars who identified and pondered Milton’s religio-political heterodoxy left themselves open to charges of critical heresy from the newly consolidated school of thought” (2). Rumrich called *Surprised by Sin* “a methodological radical update to Lewis’s reading of *Paradise Lost* as a literary monument to mainstream Christianity” (4).

While some contemporary Milton scholarship—such as the “New Milton Criticism” coined by Peter C. Herman in his 2005 article, “Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Found: The New Milton Criticism,”—is ready to move past the strict, unilateral interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, it is a mistake to believe this shift is behind us. Herman’s article resists what he called the “dominant paradigm” of Milton studies, denying both that the poem coheres or that the critic’s task is to make the poem cohere, and concludes by stating,

If C. S. Lewis wrote A Preface to ‘Paradise Lost’ with the intension of preventing ‘the reader from ever raising certain questions,’ the New Milton Criticism encourages all questions, regardless of where the answer will take the reader. (19)

The claims of Herman and the New Milton Criticism were denied by Fish in a keynote address to the Ninth International Milton Symposium in 2008, and continue to be challenged by orthodox voices like David V. Urban. After Herman published a response to Urban in the *Milton Quarterly* in 2011, Urban followed with “The Acolyte’s Rejoinder, C.S. Lewis and the New Milton Criticism, Yet Once More,” in which he argues “a clear line must be drawn between legitimately analyzing tensions within an author’s texts and misrepresenting sources in an effort to further one’s argument” (178).



The central conflict between what I call the orthodox or conservative position, and the “new” Milton criticism, is laid out by Herman in the 2012 book *The New Milton Criticism*, the aim of which is to “encourage scholars to embrace uncertainties in [Milton’s] writings, rather than attempt to explain them away.” For the “new” critics, there isn’t one way to read a text, and we shouldn’t begin by assuming that Milton’s epic has only one fixed conclusion and purpose. For the “orthodox” critics, any new readings threaten and challenge decades of painstaking work (by Fish and others) that is based on the idea that Milton’s text is intentionally seductive and shifty. On the surface, the issue is whether critics are allowed and able to seek out new ways of reading the text, other than the mainstream one that dominated Milton studies for half a century; but the other issue, less obviously stated but central to the controversy, is whether Satan can be considered as heroic, or whether his actions are justified, or any other response to Satan that doesn’t begin by negating a massive portion of *Paradise Lost* by silencing and refusing its main character.

The problem of *Paradise Lost*, is that it is too good—so good it might be bad. The fascination with *Paradise Lost* is keenly felt by all readers, who agree on some sort of “seduction,” but can’t agree on where this seduction comes from. Milton’s legacy is in asking all the right questions; questions which would change the fate of nations over the next few centuries: how far should we persist after justice? Is retribution justified? Should dominant forces be obeyed, or resisted? Are there limits to human knowledge?

In order to offer fresh insights on *Paradise Lost*, we first have to move beyond the simplistic argument of whether Milton’s Satan is a hero, villain or fool—and also stop assuming that his voice is untrustworthy, or that his guilt and punishment are (automatically) justified. In order to do that, in the next chapter we’ll discover what Milton himself thought about the issues

raised in *Paradise Lost*, which will make it easier to where his own sympathies lie (either deliberate or accidental).



Chapter 2: Biography



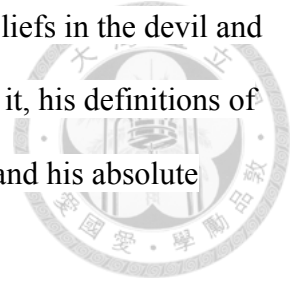
2.1 Introduction

It's not always necessary to consult the biographical details of an author to get insight on a text, however in the case of *Paradise Lost*, it's important for several reasons. Firstly, because of the strange controversy surrounding the text that hasn't seemed to progress after three hundred years of debate. Secondly, the fact that various commenters have either redefined, hidden or confused Milton's personal beliefs and opinions to agree with their interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, or dismissed them as inconsequential, should prompt us to look closer. Nicolson writes in *Reader's Milton*, "We must constantly be on guard against over-reading any author's biography or personal character into his works" (186). This is particularly strange, because you don't have to look very hard to find Milton's opinion on the major themes in *Paradise Lost* which cause controversy.

However, we must also be aware that there is not just *one* Milton: the devastating and traumatic events of his life will shape and change his core beliefs, so we need to attend carefully to what Milton believed during certain periods of his life. Milton worked on *Paradise Lost* for many years; so if things seem confusing, it may be because he began a character (Satan, for example) with one objective in mind, and finished it years later, after going through challenges that dramatically shifted his sympathies.

In the following biographical sketch, I'll skip over most generalities and focus only on the major events and the major writings. I won't wrestle out interpretations of what he might have meant; the text speaks for itself (as long as we don't actively subvert it). Most interesting

will be his personal encounters with an unjust, capricious monarchy; the beliefs in the devil and demonic possession shared by his peers; the theme of temptation (and with it, his definitions of “right” action); his outright refusal of bishops and the Church of England; and his absolute devotion to libertine values.



Writing in 1838, Robert Eldridge Aris Willmott reminds us to remember that “he lived in the midst of the battle, when the passions of men were goaded into fury, when fanaticism darkened into madness, and the voice of reason was drowned in the tumult of an arming nation” (83). Milton’s biography is intimately tied with momentous political revolutions and changes happening during his lifetime; not only was he influenced by them, but his writings gave them a voice. Milton’s own commentary—as well as actual influence—on the events of his life will illuminate his own writing and the literature that he inspired.

Most critically, was Milton’s justification for the trial and beheading of King Charles I, and the later restoration of the monarchy which Milton vigorously protested. After using up the last of his failing eyesight as the international voice in defense of England’s new republic, Milton ended up imprisoned and scorned, with his own daughters stealing his books from him to sell. To read *Paradise Lost* without taking for granted, even assuming, that it reflects his experiences and the politics he lived through is a critical error. This will be a necessarily selective history, of what I deem to be relevant factors in the understanding of *Paradise Lost* I hope to convey in this thesis. It will also show the political and religious background which gave rise to the various and disturbingly polemic interpretations of *Paradise Lost* we saw in the preceding chapter.

2.2 Background

Despite Milton's genius, he is undoubtedly a product of his times, and most of his ideas can be found in the culture, literature and politics immediately preceding him. This section will sketch some of most important issues that will be influential in Milton's own work. The central conflict Milton will explore during his lifetime, again and again, is the question of free will in the face of evil, the nature of evil, and the problem of evil (if God is both good and omnipotent, why does evil exist?)

For most of the Middle Ages, the devil was seen as the fallen angel, enemy of God, who tempts mankind into sin and then punishes them in Hell. This idea is based on a handful of biblical passages, such as 1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The problem with this idea, the problem Milton will grapple with in *Paradise Lost*, is—did the Devil fall because he was already evil? If not, where did the evil come from? For the Greeks, evil did not exist in nature, there was only the good, and distance from the good which became corrupted in matter. Origen, one of the greatest church Fathers, tried to make Christianity seem less ridiculous to the Greeks by proposing the doctrine of *apokatastasis*; that at the end of time, everything would be absorbed back into oneness with God, including the Devil. For this he was attacked by Augustine and posthumously condemned in 543.

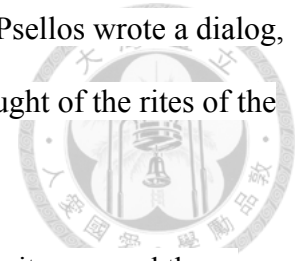
Augustine meanwhile, taught that the Devil was real, and powerful, but his dualistic conception of good and evil was heavily influenced by Manichaeism, which believed that the universe was the result of opposing forces of light and darkness. The Catholic church eventually held unto a confusing mixture of these ideas: that God is all powerful, that no evil exists in him, and yet Satan presents a very real danger to humanity by introducing evil. To the common public,

Satan was a monstrous devourer of souls, the source of all pain and suffering. “The human race is the Devil's fruit tree, his own property, from which he may pick his fruit. It is a plaything of demons” (qtd. in Russell 197). However Augustine’s ideas were also heavily influenced by Greek thought, and he also agreed that no evil could be found in God. “Evil is nothing, since God makes everything that is, and God did not make evil.”

This is the idea maintained in the scholastic tradition, which Milton would have been familiar with through his studies at Christ’s Church College at Cambridge University. At the same time, however, belief in witchcraft and devil worship were rampant. Abnormal or deviant behavior of any kind (including heresy) was believed to be the work of the devil, and elaborate fantasies were created to describe the satanic rituals that occurred during nocturnal ceremonies with the devil. These dark and violent descriptions were used by both pagans and Christians to demonize their ideological enemies. Writing at the end of the second century CE, Minucius Felix wrote about what happens during Christian ceremonies:

A child is set before the would-be novice. The novice stabs the child to death. . . . Then they hungrily drink the child’s blood, and compete with one another as they divide his limbs. Through this victim they are bound together; and the fact that they all share this knowledge of the crime pledges them all to silence. On the feast-day they foregather with all their children, sisters, mothers, people of either sex and all ages. When the company is all aglow from feasting, and impure lust has been set afire by drunkenness, they twine the bonds of unnameable passion as chance decides. And so all alike are incestuous, if not always in deed at least by complicity. . . . Precisely the secrecy of this evil religion proves that all these things, or practically all, are true. (qtd. in Stanford 59)

Eight centuries later, around 1050, the Greek philosopher Michael Psellos wrote a dialog, *On the Operation of Demons*, containing what the orthodox Christians thought of the rites of the Bogomil heretics:



They bring . . . young girls whom they have initiated into their rites . . . and throw themselves lasciviously on the girls; each one on whomever first falls into his hands, no matter whether she be his sister, his daughter, or his mother. . . . When this rite has been completed, each goes home; and after waiting nine months until the time has come for the unnatural children of such unnatural seed to be born, they come together . . . on the third day after the birth, they tear the miserable babies from their mother's arms. They cut their tender flesh all over with sharp knives and catch the stream of blood in basins. They throw the babies, still breathing and gasping, into the fire to be burned to ashes. After which they mix the ashes with the blood in the basins to make an abominable drink . . . (qtd. in Flowers Loc 2634-2640)

The Bogomils actually believed in a form of Gnosticism, which rejected outward forms of worship like churches and crosses, and instead believed in practices to clean the sinful body like fasting and purging (very similar to what Milton will later believe). My point is that these stories—of incest and blood and babies—were (and are) a fantastical projection used against any hated or feared group: in Milton's time, these claims were made against witches. "The vast storehouse of western European imagery relating to "devil worship," witchcraft, and "Satanism" is for the most part the invention of the church and witch-hunters" (Flowers Loc 2849-2850).

People *believed* in demons and magic, and so they saw evidence to confirm their beliefs everywhere. And the other part of these beliefs was that, even if forbidden, there was some kind of knowledge, or supernatural powers, which could be granted by demons, devils or spirits, usually through a blood pact or grimoire (a book of magic spells or invocations).

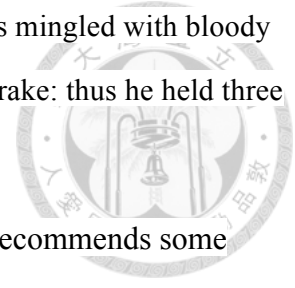
These themes are taken up in Dante's *Divine Comedy* of 1320. Lost in the dark woods, and best by dangerous beasts, seeking the "right way" but falling into a "low place" where the sun is silent, Dante is saved by the spirit of Virgil, who guides him on a supernatural journey through Hell to show him the nature of sin and punishment. Dante's sins are divided into three categories, the self-indulgent, the violent, and the malicious (75).

The *Divine Comedy* is important for several reasons: firstly, it shows salvation as a process of evolution—the soul's perfection through stages, rising through the seven layers of heaven, each symbolized by its own planet, to reach union with God. This is more similar to the Gnostic or esoteric tradition than strict Catholicism, and usually focuses on human work and effort, i.e., self-improvement. (The problem with this method, at least for the Church, is that it minimizes the importance of external forms of authority). Secondly, the ultimate goal in Dante's system is the unification with both "desire and will" with God's love, or the primal force of the universe.

But already my desire and my will
were being turned like a wheel, all at one speed,
by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars.
(Canto 33, lines 142-145, C. H. Sisson translation)

In this system, God is goodness, the body is sinful and leads us into carnal desires, so we need to avoid temptation as a way of purifying ourselves, to rise up and unite with God, thus avoiding death. Dante does show Satan, but he is silent and without personality, frozen in ice at the bottom of Hell, the deepest isolation is to suffer separation from the source of all light and life and warmth.

He wept with all six eyes, and the tears fell over his three chins mingled with bloody foam. The teeth of each mouth held a sinner, kept as by a flax rake: thus he held three of them in agony. (Canto 34, Lines 54-58)

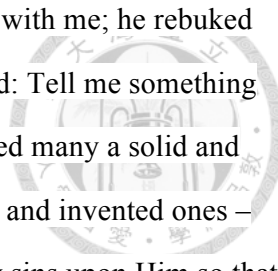


It can be argued that Dante is on the edge of the Enlightenment, and even recommends some “scientific” experiments. Two centuries later, in 1513, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, which offered political advice to rulers on how to maintain power. *The Prince* recommends manipulation and deception rather than brute force, and argues that a ruler “often forced to act in defiance of good faith, of charity, of kindness, of religion.” Rather than focus on universal ethical maxims, rulers (according to Machiavelli) must be more pragmatic: They should “know how to do evil, if that is necessary.”

Cruelty is used well (if it is permissible to talk in this way of what is evil) when it is employed once and for all, and one’s safety depends on it.

Although recognized for its practical approach to power (Milton will later quote Machiavelli to justify his arguments), overall Machiavelli’s advice was seen as “evil.” A frequent character in Elizabethan plays is “Little Nick,” a devilish character who argues that anything is permitted to retain power (for example, in Ben Johnson’s *Volpone*).

One of the biggest upheavals during the period just before Milton’s birth was the Protestant Reformation. In 1517 Martin Luther wrote the *Ninety-Five Theses* challenging church authority, instead focusing on the twin pillars of faith and scripture. Luther rejected abuses of the Church such as charging indulgences. He also argued that sin itself didn’t matter, because all of us were full of sin, and there was nothing we in ourselves could do about it. So “sin bravely” and be grateful for God’s free gift of salvation.



When I awoke last night, the Devil came and wanted to debate with me; he rebuked and reproached me, arguing that I was a sinner. To this I replied: Tell me something new, Devil! I already know that perfectly well; I have committed many a solid and real sin. Indeed there must be good honest sins – not fabricated and invented ones – for God to forgive for His beloved Son’s sake, who took all my sins upon Him so that now the sins I have committed are no longer mine but belong to Christ. This wonderful gift of God I am not prepared to deny, but want to acknowledge and confess. (qtd. in Oberman 105– 6)

In 1534 King Henry VIII engineered a formal break with the Church in Rome and established the Church of England with himself as its head; this would lead to the religious conflicts that reached a crisis during Milton’s lifetime, as England struggled to define its own religious identity. On the one hand, a universal religion was necessary, for without a shared faith in God, there was no way to demand authority based on divine principles. On the other hand, the Protestant impulse to shrug off all authority, especially in religious matters, bred controversy and rebellion. Milton’s brand of Protestantism was against all forms of religious pageantry and ritual; fixed codes of conduct; or submission to a church hierarchy.

I should mention briefly, Agrippa’s *De Occult Philosophia* published in 1533, a collection of spells and rituals, categorizing demons and how to conjure them and use them for magical purposes, and also the original Dr. Faustus, a contemporary of Luther who lived near Wittenberg (where Luther had nailed his *The Ninety-Five Theses* to a church door). Not much is known about him, but he was apparently a very learned scholar who claimed to have won his knowledge by making a pact with the devil. Based on his legend, Christopher Marlowe wrote *The Tragic History of Doctor Faustus* in 1589.

Michel de Montaigne's *Essays*, published in 1580, were also widely influential, as an attempt to examine the world through the lens of his own judgment—the only thing he can depend on implicitly. Francis Bacon will follow his example in 1620, in *Novum Organum Scientiarum*, with a notable twist. Rather than science being “forbidden knowledge” which can only be accessed in collusion with the Devil, Bacon argues that all science belongs to God, and the natural universe is meant to be explored: “God has framed the mind like a glass, capable of the image of the universe, let no one weakly imagine that man can search too far, or be too well studied in the book of God's word, and works, divinity and philosophy.”

In the face of these new tendencies (in both science and religion, truth comes from the rejection of external influences or authority, and reliance on personal experiences and intellect alone) there were many who began to doubt the existence of a personal devil at all.

Pierce Penilesse comments on this trend in his 1592 *Supplication to the Devil*,

Of the sundry opinions of the devil, thou meanest, and them that imagine him to have no existence, of which sort are they that first invented the proverb, *Homo homini daemon*, meaning thereby, that that power which we call the devil, and the ministering spirits belonging to him and to his kingdom, are tales and fables, and mere bug-bears to scare boys, and that there is no such essence at all, but only it is a term of large content, describing the rancour, grudge and bad dealing of one man toward another, as, namely, when one friend talks with another subtly, and seeks to dive into his commodity, that he may deprive him of it craftily. (qtd. in Nash 75)

But in response to this humanist approach to evil, that evil is only in human beings and not in the actual world as a personal being, Penilesse refers to the scriptural tradition. The devil he describes is the traditional one we will find in *Paradise Lost*, and notes his common features: a “malignant spirit, enemy to mankind, hater of God and all goodness” who “retaining that pride

wherewith he arrogantly affected the majesty of God, hath still his ministering angels about him whom he employs in several charges to seduce and deceive.”

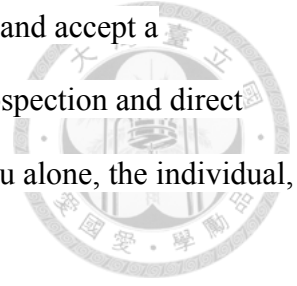
The situation was also confused by the practice of condemning and torturing witchcraft that continued in the 16th and 17th centuries, often with revolting machinery. If there was no Devil, why did witches keep confessing under torture to have colluded with him? In 1486 the *Malleus Maleficarum* outlined a strategy for finding and convicting witches; even though it was refused by the Vatican only a few years later in 1490, it continued to be influential. In 1597, King James, who is also responsible for finishing a new English translation of the Bible, wrote his own book on Witchcraft called *Daemonologie*, in which he claims

The fearefull aboundinge at this time in this countrie, of these detestable slaves of the Devil, the Witches or enchanterers, hath moved me (beloved reader) to dispatch in post, this following treatise of mine. . . to resolve the doubting. . . both that such assaults of Satan are most certainly practised, and that the instrument thereof merits most severely to be punished.

At the same time, not all evil came from the devil. The Catholics saw the spread of Protestantism as demonic, and reacted with assassination attempts. When the French King Henry III was stabbed to death in 1589, the Jesuit Juan de Mariana justified the attack in *On Kings and the Education of Kings* (1598), claiming that regicide was a justifiable means to remove tyrants from power. Protestants, meanwhile, saw Catholics as diabolical, given to lies and deceit, and willing to murder for the sake of their religion. As Jeffrey Burton Russell comments in *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*:

The religious tensions, culminating in wars, between Catholics and Protestants and among varieties of Protestants promoted the sense that the Devil was lurking everywhere. (31)

And unlike in Catholicism, where you could just repent, confess your sins, and accept a punishment or penance to be forgiven, the Protestant method of deep introspection and direct relationship with the divine now meant it was just you versus the Devil: you alone, the individual, who had the responsibility for fending him off.



The violence of these times was fuel for the revenge plays of the period, which became popular with the English translations of Seneca's tragedies. These plays revolved around bloodthirsty vengeance leading to death and slaughter. This tradition reached its apex in Shakespearean plays like *Hamlet*, who, in seeking revenge destroyed himself and everyone around him; and *Macbeth*, whose lust for power leads to the same result.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare seems to be acknowledging Francis Bacon's comment on revenge, that "the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the Law out of Office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his Enemy. But in passing it over, he is Superior: For it is a prince's part to Pardon." The brutality of Shakespeare's plays raise the question, of whether the protagonists enacting private revenge are heroes or villains (neither, I think, merely complex and unable to let go of their pain), and also question universal ethics: the three witches in *Macbeth* tempt him out of a strict moral code into a realm of ethical indeterminacy, where "fair is foul and foul is fair." As Dreyfus points out however, despite *Macbeth* destructive revenge, he's still sympathetic.

Indeed, it is not just that *Macbeth* is a sympathetic character, the very success of the play absolutely depends on our finding him so. This is because the tragedy of the play cannot get a grip on us unless we are rooting for its main character to succeed; there is no tragedy in a purely evil character getting his due. (17-18)

Elizabeth had shown toleration to Catholics under her reign until the Vatican issued a Bull in 1570 that referred to her as a “wicked heretic” and sanctioned the right of Catholics to “deprive her of her throne.” In 1588, Cardinal William Allen likened Elizabeth to Lucifer in his *Admonition to the Nobility and People of England*. It was meant to be distributed after the Spanish Armada of the same year had conquered England (the failure of which was seen as a mark of divine favor for the English, as the Spanish ships were wrecked by stormy weather and by a new class of faster and more nimble English vessels led by Sir Walter Raleigh).

When Elizabeth died in 1603, James VI, the King of Scotland, took the English throne (becoming James I) and tried to merge both countries under one government and religion. King James started his reign with recusancy fines for Catholics in England, but in 1604 a bill was introduced in Parliament which threatened to outlaw all English followers of the Catholic Church. In response, a handful of English Catholics decided to assassinate James by blowing up the Parliament. The plan was discovered, and the trespassers caught and prosecuted. One of them, Henry Garnett, had written a treatise of *Equivocation* that stated it was acceptable to lie under oath if it meant saving yourself from violence and if you had a “secret meaning reserved in your mind.” Garnett was not actually involved in the plot, but had been told about it, and instead of warning the King, sent a letter instead to the Vatican asking them to intercede and urge English Catholics against the use of violence. During his trial, he expressed his belief in the idea of Equivocation thusly:

Concerning equivocation, this is my opinion. In moral affairs, and in the common intercourse of life, when truth is required among friends, it is not lawful to use equivocation, for that would cause great mischief in human society; wherefore, in such cases, there is no place .for this remedy. But in cases of necessary defence, or

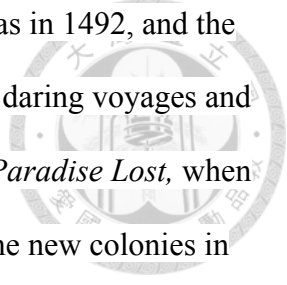
for avoiding any injury or loss, or for obtaining any considerable advantage, without danger to any other person, then equivocation is lawful. (qtd. in Jaedine)

Edward Coke (whose grandson would later be tutored by Milton) called this “open and broad lying and forswearing.” Garnett sentenced with his co-conspirators to be hanged, drawn and quartered. In 1606, King James introduced a sacramental test, and an Oath of Allegiance, requiring Catholics to abjure as a “heresy” the doctrine that “princes excommunicated by the Pope could be deposed or assassinated” (qtd. in Marshall 227).

In 1611, *The King James Bible* was published, written in part to stress the divine right of kings, which implied that only God can judge an unjust king, and that any attempt to depose, dethrone or restrict his powers runs contrary to the will of God. James had developed the idea in *Basilikon Doron*, which he wrote to his four-year old son Henry Frederick. In a speech James gave to Parliament in 1610, James expresses his view:

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth, for kings are not only God’s lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God’s throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. There be three principal [comparisons] that illustrate the state of monarchy: one taken out of the word of God, and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are also compared to fathers of families; for a king is truly *parens patriae* [parent of the country], the politic father of his people. And lastly, kings are compared to the head of this microcosm of the body of man.

James’ views on the divine right of kings caused the central conflicts that would soon lead to civil war, and the execution of his son Charles: a political act Milton would come to champion.



Finally, it's worth mentioning Columbus's discovery of the Americas in 1492, and the founding of the Plymouth colony in 1620. This was an age of discovery, of daring voyages and colonizing new worlds. Milton mentions Columbus by name in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, when he compares Adam and Eve to native Americans; and no doubt discussed the new colonies in depth with his friend Roger Williams, who made several trips to the new world. Maureen Quilligan comments that we are meant to see Columbus as a Satanic character: "we remain in ambiguity, before the sentence finally resolves itself, [and] we assume that the American is indeed unfallen, and therefore like that first naked innocence. In this understanding it is then Columbus, fully clothed, who inhabits the quintessential fallen perspective, and who stands confronting the American as if the discoverer were himself a Satanic character—just as we first see Adam and Eve's nakedness through Satan's eyes" (229).

Stevie Davies compares the Satanic journey through Chaos to the exhilarating discovery voyages that were filling in the unmarked areas of the map:

Like the world currently being explored by Renaissance adventurers, merchants, cartographers, and colonizers, Chaos comes into the poem with no maps: it is terra incognita, and as we voyage through it we lose our bearings. . . . Satan's voyage of discovery is much closer to what his contemporaries would experience than anything the modern traveller, safe with a blanket over his legs, can normally know. (123)

In these examples we can already see many of the influences, both political and spiritual, which will great impress the young Milton.

2.3 Birth & Early Years

In her *Biography on Milton*, Anna Beer shares an example of the "religious diversity and religion tension" into which Milton was born; it had been common practice to mark the sign of a cross on

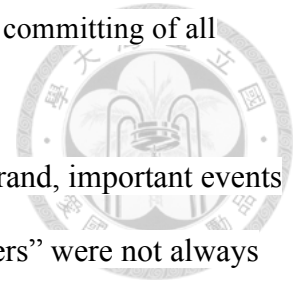
an infant's head, but many families (and ministers) refused this practice as an empty gesture of the Catholicism they'd come to demonize. Families and ministers at the other end wanted it done, some even with a sprinkling of oil to complete the baptism ceremony. The Church of England didn't have resources to ensure conformity, so the practice of worship in England remained diverse (Loc. 197).

Milton's grandfather was a staunch Roman Catholic who disowned Milton's father—a scrivener and a musician—when he found him reading an English version of the Bible; which demonstrates how religious differences at this time could tear families apart. Milton would increasingly be against all organized forms of ceremonial worship, preferring a personal, private connection with the divine. Milton's childhood was filled with study, as his father was determined to give him a first-rate education, but Milton's seemed to enjoy his late night study sessions (even if they were later responsible for his blindness. Events in his youth included the execution of national hero Sir Walter Raleigh and the beginning of the 30 years wars (both in 1618).

In 1620, Francis Bacon published *Novum Organum* which challenged all forms of received or “revealed” knowledge (sentiments Milton will later support). In 1625, Hugo Grotius published *On the Law of War and Peace*, which argued for the principles of a “natural law” to stem the unending violence of the 30 year war.

Fully convinced...that there is a common law among nations, which is valid alike for war and in war, I have had many and weighty reasons for undertaking to write upon the subject. Throughout the Christian world I observed a lack of restraint in relation to war, such as even barbarous races should be ashamed of; I observed that men rush to arms for slight causes, or no cause at all, and that when arms have once been taken up there is no longer any respect for law, divine or human; it is as if, in accordance

with a general decree, frenzy had openly been let loose for the committing of all crimes. (8)



Thus, while still in school, Milton would have gotten the impression that grand, important events were taking place, largescale destruction and violence, in which the “winners” were not always justified. In his early years, however, Milton was more concerned with local affairs.

2.4 5th November (1626)

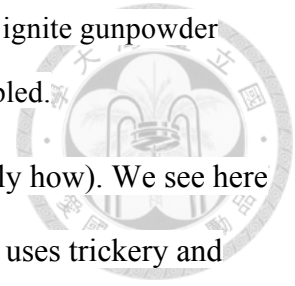
At 17 years old, Milton wrote one of his first major Latin poems, *In Quintum Novembris*, in which a satanic figure appears for the first time. Although not identified explicitly as Lucifer or Satan, this shadowy figure is a “Master of deception, he does his best to poison the heart untouched by sin. He sets his secret traps, and stretches hidden nets to catch the unwary.” He is a “crafty serpent” who “floats through the liquid air on pitch-black wings,” and is drawn to England, because they resist his rule.

“I have wandered the whole world,” he says, “and here I have found the only cause for tears: these are the only people to rebel against me, scorn my rule, these alone have power greater than my arts. Yet if my efforts have any effect, not long shall they continue unpunished.”

He disguises himself in the form of St. Francis, and whispers the idea to blow up the Parliament in the Pope’s ear, using a Machiavellian appeal to guile and subterfuge.

But do not challenge him to war or open conflict: that would be wasted labor; a master of deceit uses guile. Against heretics no subterfuge is disallowed. And now their great king calls to parliament patricians from the remotest parts of their country, the high-born men and venerable fathers in gowns and white hair. These you may

scatter in the air, tear limb from limb, and burn to ashes if you ignite gunpowder under the foundations of the building in which they are assembled.



In the end, God saves England by thwarting the attempt (it is unclear exactly how). We see here the use of a more classical approach to Satan, as a monstrous tempter, who uses trickery and guile; and his association with the Church of Rome against Protestantism. David Hawkes points out that, “Even at this early stage, Milton’s portrayal of evil is nuanced and sophisticated, demonstrating a learned knowledge of the various mythological traditions that have attempted to define it. For Milton, cosmic conflicts are replicated in psychology and also in politics” (60). The poem also contains a barb against the Catholic Mass: the Pope is carried around on a triumphal litter, “carrying with him his gods made of bread” (56). For Protestants, the bread was a sign of Christ, a memorial service, which the Catholics turned into an act of magical idolatry by claiming it to become the actual body of Christ.

Milton was also suspended from Cambridge in 1626 after an argument with his tutor William Chappell (who may have embarrassed him by using corporeal punishment). Students at this time shared a room with their tutors in a communal sleeping space, so there were lots of opportunities for conflict to brew. He spent an enjoyable “exile” at his father’s house, before returning to school under a new tutor.

Meanwhile, political tensions were rising. Prince Charles and Buckingham, King James’ “favorite” who had risen to power with little merit (besides good looks and dancing), went on an adventure into Spain that ended poorly; then Buckingham led a failed naval expedition against Spain; then he led another against France in defense of the Protestant Huguenots that also failed. When King James died in 1626 and Charles took the throne, Buckingham remained a powerful influence. Charles convened Parliament to ask for more money to support his war on Spain, but

Parliament was skeptical of giving more money to Charles to support Buckingham's poorly conceived military expeditions, and instead drew up a list of charges against Buckingham. They refused to vote on any tax issues until Buckingham was condemned and sentenced. Charles dissolved the Parliament to save Buckingham, and tried to raise money on his own through a Forced Loan program. Most of Charles's subjects felt they had no choice but to pay, though some refused.

In 1628, Charles convened Parliament again, needing money for another war (in France this time), but Parliament immediately began discussing their grievances against Charles's unpopular policies: the Forced Loan, taxation without consent, the imposition of martial law and imprisonment without trial were all challenged, along with Charles's unpopular decisions in religion, which many feared would turn the Church of England into a version of Catholicism. They presented Charles with a Petition of Right, which he resisted, but then signed in June, 1628. When the conversation turned back to Buckingham and Charles's unpopular religious adviser William Laud, Charles dissolved Parliament again.

Buckingham was assassinated soon after by a disgruntled (and unpaid) soldier whose appeals were being ignored. Hoping that Parliament would now co-operate with him, he recalled Parliament in 1629, however they immediately began discussing "the subtle and pernicious spreading of the Arminian faction" and complained of Charles's continued taxes on imports and exports. Charles responded by dissolving Parliament and arresting the loudest dissenters. For the next eleven years, he reigned without Parliament, raising funds by making deals with monopolies and imposing unpopular taxes and levies (which, being made without Parliament's consent, were seen as an invasion of rights).

Meanwhile, Milton graduated from Cambridge with an MA in 1632, and his poem 'On Shakespeare' was published in the second folio of Shakespeare's plays in the same year. He'd gone to university thinking to enter the church, but had developed an animosity to the clergy; he felt that whoever joined must "subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he with with him a conscience that could retch, he must straight perjure himself" (qtd. in Shears 57). Instead, he focused on a career in writing.

2.5 Comus (1634)

Milton's first major work was a play written for the Bridgewater family in 1634, *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, to celebrate the Earl of Bridgewater's new post as Lord President of Wales. The Earl's brother-in-law, the Earl of Castlehaven, was executed for a sodomy and rape scandal involving his wife, daughter and servants, and the Bridgewater children had also been complaining of demonic possession. Either of these circumstances could have prompted the theme of the play, which was the temptation of evil and its resistance through reason.

According to Sands, children during this period were controlled and restricted even in terms of facial expressions, being forbidden to puff out their cheeks, yawn, bite or lick their lips, or frown. In light of this repressive context, possession could be regarded as a form of social protest that "legitimated normally unacceptable behavior" (88).

Common symptoms included body contortions, levitation, speaking in foreign tongues and voices, the ejection of foreign objects from the body such as hair, lace, feathers, pins and nails, repulsion at holy objects and words, and deprivation of the senses. (Bell 93)

The children were treated with magical pendants and St. John's Wart (which is still used today for depression and anxiety). Belief in the reality of demonic possession was strengthened by elaborately staged public exorcisms, which, according to Bell, were used as a form of propaganda. Catholic exorcisms, for example, contained ritualistic 'weapons' to use against the possessing demons, including binding, flogging, burning, and fumigating, the use of holy potions, and the sign of the cross. Protestants, however, saw these practices as idolatrous, and their dispossession rituals involved only prayer and fasting. As a result of these differing views of exorcism, "public displays of battles with Satanic forces became a showcase for rival strands of Christianity." (Bell 94)

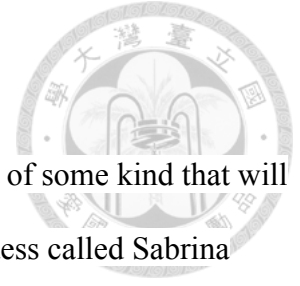
Though Milton's *Comus* focuses on a Dionysian-like rogue who attempts to seduce a young lady, the focus is on the resistance of temptation through strength of will. However, while it can be seen as a debate between reason and passion, both sides use logical arguments to support their case. The real conflict is, whether to give up and give in, or stay strong and committed *even* in the face of superior logic.

Comus argues from a philosophical position that nothing in nature is evil, and that, just as nature gives of itself freely, so should she.

Beauty is nature's coyn, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
Unsavoury in th' injoyment of itself.

The Lady responds, "Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde . . . false traitor, / Twill not restore the truth and honesty / That thou hast banish't from thy tongue with lies." Even though Comus's arguments seem rational, the Lady resists from strength of will.

I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
And vertue has no tongue to check her pride.



Comus decides that argument enough is not alone, so he resorts to a potion of some kind that will lower her defenses; but just then, her brothers rush in and save her. A goddess called Sabrina descends and ends the play with a call towards virtue.

Mortals that would follow me,
Love vertue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher then the Spheary chime;
Or if Vertue feeble were,
Heav'n it self would stoop to her.

At this point, Milton is a strong advocator of moral chastity, and believes that true freedom is found in virtue (rational resistance to the body's temptations). It is interesting to point out, however that Milton will later, after having more experience with the opposite sex, seem to favor Comus's arguments, that there is no sin in "mutual and partak'n bliss." The idyllic state of Adam and Eve's sexuality in *Paradise Lost* uses language that is very similar to Comus's speeches. Many of his later arguments also steer towards, rather than the avoidance of temptation, the embrace of it; since without knowledge of evil, pure blind obedience to moral action is not in itself good. But on a simpler level, we can see in *Comus* an early version of the Devil tempting Eve.

In 1638, Milton published *Lycidas*, a pastoral elegy dedicated to a classmate who had drowned the year before. In it, he introduces the figure of St. Peter, who criticizes the priests of the Church of England as largely uneducated "grim wolves with privy paws."

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,

But, swoll'n with wind and the rank mist they draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.



In 1638, Milton departed on a tour of the continent, which included a visit to Galileo (in prison for his radical ideas—which Milton will comment on later). Milton returned to England after hearing news about a brewing civil war (the Scottish were refusing Charles's forced episcopal system of church government, in favor of a Presbyterian system without bishops). On the way home, he spent a month in Venice, where he could see “the form of government he came to consider as the best for promoting human rights and liberty, an aristocratic republic, which Grotius had also praised” (Forsyth 64). Once back in England, he decided not to live at home, but found lodgings in London, then moved to a bigger house in Aldersgate. His sister had just died so his two nephews came to live with him as boarding pupils. He mapped out a unique plan of study for them. In his *Commonplace book*, he cites abuses of royal power, and makes a summary of Machiavelli on why a republic is preferable to a monarchy.

In 1639, Charles led English forces against Scottish forces, but soon caved and reached a settlement that allowed Scotland to decide certain matters for itself. In 1640, Charles summoned Parliament (known as the Short Parliament), bringing to an end his 11-year personal rule. Charles wanted support to continue his war, but Parliament again wanted to address more pressing issues. Charles dissolved Parliament and continued his war efforts on his own; however after retreating and letting Scottish forces take two English provinces, he was forced to convene another Parliament (known as the Long Parliament) to raise funds to pay the Scottish to leave.

The Parliament impeached Thomas Wentworth, the Earl of Stafford, who had been the King's leading advisor in the Bishops' War; declared the ship tax illegal; and impeached Archbishop Laud. Although Charles had promised Wentworth that “upon the word of a king, you

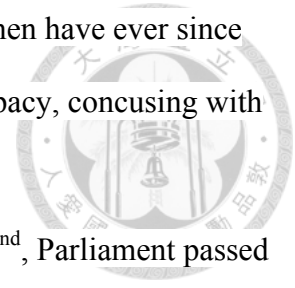
shall not suffer in life, honour or fortune,” Parliament condemned him to death, and Charles signed the death warrant. Strafford was executed in May of 1641. This was seen as a sign that King Charles was finally amenable to reason, and would support the wishes of the people.

Trevor-Roper describes the mood of exhalation that followed.

At last the long struggle was over, the unbearable tension was suddenly released, and throughout England there was a new mood of exhilaration. . . The great bogymen, whose life was a standing threat to liberty, religion, Parliament, had been destroyed; the nightmare of the past had been dissolved; and from now on, it seemed, the great task of reformation was easy, almost automatic. . . these were the months of Milton’s great pamphlets, those marvellous works, so buoyant, so intoxicated, so rich in imagery, in which he saw England as a young man glorying in his strength, waking and shaking off his past torpor and bondage, and himself, its poet, singing, among “the hymns and hallelujahs of the saints,” “the jubilee and resurrection of the state.” (Loc 4093-4096).

In 1641, buoyed by the enthusiasm of the times, Milton leapt into the pamphlet wars, with *Of Reformation of Church-Discipline in England*. William Laud had been arrested at the same time as Wentworth, and with his absence there was room for a discussion about the form the Church of England would take. Milton urged his country-men to sweep away the last relics of papacy and prelacy, and argued against a centralized church government that demanded visible rules of religious practice. He imagines bishops as “a huge and monstrous Wen” or “a swolne Tumor” in the head. He addresses them as “a bottle of vitious and harden’d excrements,” as all men will see, “when I have cut thee off, and open’d thee.” He compared the hirelings to wolves, like he had in *Lycidas*. As for the bishops, “those vassals of perdition,” Milton believed they should be executed. In June 1641, the “root and branch” bill abolished the bishops and everything that

went with them. Milton wrote several more pamphlets, claiming that “all men have ever since Adam, being borne free, should have the power to retain or remove episcopacy, concusing with our own occasions, and conveniences” (qtd. Forsyth 71).



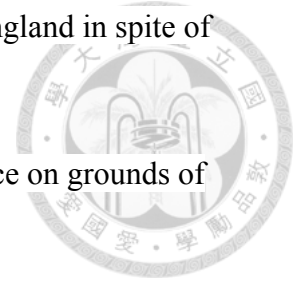
Parliament and the King continued to grow apart. On November 22nd, Parliament passed The Grand Remonstrance, listing grievances about acts carried out by the king’s government, in Church and State, since the beginning of Charles’s reign. It was presented to Charles on December 1st, 1641. Unwilling to back down from his claim of absolute rule, in January 1642 Charles charged five of the most outspoken leaders of his opposition with treason. When he interrupted Commons accompanied by soldiers, there were riots in London and the king and his family fled the city. Charles raised support in the North and West, and in August, unfurled the royal standard in front of the forces he’d gathered, effectively starting a civil war against the forces of Parliament.

Milton, meanwhile, was getting married. He’d gone to Oxford to visit a man called Richard Powell, who since 1627 had been paying interest on a loan from Milton’s father. Powell had been falling behind and was in danger of losing his estate; Milton agreed to wed Richard’s eldest daughter, Mary Powell. They moved in together back in London, but within two months, Mary left him and returned home; he didn’t see her again for three years.

2.6 Divorce Tracts (1643)

Milton was now in an awkward position. Mary’s family, who were Royalists, might have been keeping her away from the liberal Milton until they saw how the civil war would play out. He waited for Mary to return, then started sending messengers, the last of which was dismissed with some sort of contempt (Forsyth 82). Feeling trapped and frustrated, stuck in a marriage with no

wife, Milton begin publishing treatises on Divorce, which was illegal in England in spite of Henry VII's precedent.



In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton argued for divorce on grounds of incompatibility.

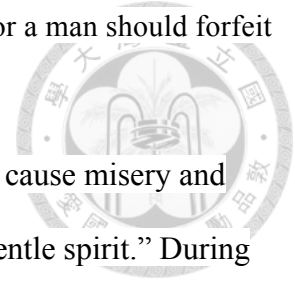
That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindring, and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugall society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce the naturall frigidity, especially if there be no children, and that there be mutuall consent. (qtd. in Lewalski 164)

For these views he was soon reviled as a libertine. One woman, a sectarian preacher named Mrs. Attaway, immediately left her husband for another enthusiast, claiming they were both free from sin. A Ranter, John Robins, authorized his disciples to change spouses, and set the example by changing his own wife (Forsyth 87).

Milton also complained that chastity is a punishment, as lacking in experience will make men prone to errors in judgement that will have a lifetime of consequences, as opposed to men who have lived loosely, but gained enough experience to choose a compatible mate.

The sobrest and best govern'd men are least practiz'd in these affairs; and who knowest not that the bashfull mutenes of a virgin may oft-times hide all the unlivelines and naturall sloth which is really unfit for conversation; nor is there that freedom of accesse granted or presum'd, as may suffice to a perfect discerning till too late: and where any indisposition is suspected, what more usuall then the perswasion of friends, that acquaintance, as it increases, will amend all. And lastly, it is not strange though many who have spent their youth chastly, are in some things not so quick-sighted, while they hast too eagerly to

light the nuptial torch; nor is it therefore that for a modest error a man should forfeit so great a happiness, and no charitable means to release him.

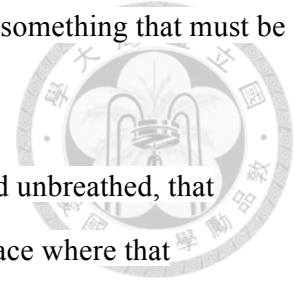


Milton argues that marriage is meant to increase happiness, and should not cause misery and suffering; “for not to be beloved & yet retained, is the greatest injury to a gentle spirit.” During this period, Milton also tried to marry someone else, claiming he was free to do so since his marriage *should* have been ended. Milton’s book was called thoroughly wicked and deserving to be burnt for its “atheistical opinions.” In 1644, Milton’s friend Roger Williams wrote a tract in favor of religious toleration (*The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*), arguing against persecution for causes of conscience alone. His opponents lumped him together with Milton for having “heretical” opinions. Ephraim Pagitt wrote that extremists “preach, print, and practice their heretical opinions openly; for books, vide the bloody Tenent, witness a tractate of divorce in which the bonds are let loose to inordinate lust” (qtd. in Bryson 12). For months, Milton was linked to calls for a suppression of heresy, and to enforce the licensing of books (like his). In response, he developed a defense of free speech and freedom of the press.

2.7 *Areopagitica* (1644)

In *Areopagitica*, Milton argues for the freedom to express opinions, as well as the unregulated printing of ideas. “Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.” He claims there is no danger in printing everything, because if Truth and Falsehood Grapple, Truth will always win. He also makes the claim that a man can be a heretic even when holding the right opinions, if he believes them simply because his pastor told him to (instead of discovering them for himself). Milton argues that licensing is “a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of Learning.” It is worth reflecting on the following passage in relation to *Comus*: while previously, virtue had been in resisting temptation, here it is

necessary to *give into* or expose yourself to temptation, because knowledge is something that must be fought for and won.



I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat

Milton published two more divorce tracts in 1645. The war was going well for Parliament under its lieutenant-general, Cromwell, with his new model army. William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, was executed for treason in January 1645, and the office of bishop was abolished a year later.

In June 1645, Charles suffered a crippling defeat at the Battle of Naseby. Milton took a larger house near London, but Mary's family the Powells, seeing that Charles was doing poorly, arranged for Mary to return to Milton, begging forgiveness. They moved into the new house in October, and seem to have settled their differences. In 1646 their first daughter was born.

Meanwhile, the Parliamentarians sieged the Royalist forces at Oxford, but King Charles snuck out of the city in disguise and turned himself over to Scottish forces. In 1647, the Scots handed over Charles to the Parliamentarians in return for £100,000 and withdrew from England. Charles was held prisoner at Holmby House in Northamptonshire, where he continued to plot for the restoration of his power. He briefly escaped, but was re-imprisoned on the Isle of Wight, where he continued to try and make deals, including an agreement with the Scots to invade England and restore him to the throne. The Royalist forces rose up in 1648, starting the Second Civil War, but Cromwell's New Model Army defeated them and consolidated England.

The Parliament agreed to re-open negotiations with the king, but Cromwell and the army, frustrated with the political maneuvering, wanted to arrest the king and try him for treason. In

December, they arrested members of Parliament who opposed them, and the remaining members (the Rump Parliament) indicted King Charles on January 1st, 1649. The Chief Justices of the three common law courts refused to try the king, so the Rump Common declared itself capable of legislating alone and established a High Court of Justice. Of the 135 commissioners, only 68 attended the trial of Charles for high treason and “other high crimes.” Charles refused to enter a plea, claiming that no court had jurisdiction over a monarch. On January 27th, King Charles I was found “guilty of all the treasons, murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolations, damages and mischiefs to this nation, acted and committed in the said wars, or occasioned thereby.” On January 30th, King Charles I was beheaded at Whitehall on a scaffold set up in front of the Banqueting House. England had held the first modern revolution and became a republic.

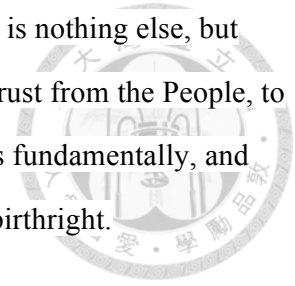
Milton had been watching the political situation with interest, and began writing the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* to defend the acts of the army and justify the existing government. It was published just a few weeks after the King’s death.

2.8 Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649)

Regicide wasn’t an entirely new issue: Thomas Aquinas had condoned extra-legal tyrannicide in the worst of circumstances. “When there is no recourse to a superior by whom judgment can be made about an invader, then he who slays a tyrant to liberate his fatherland is [to be] praised and receives a reward” (qtd. in Dyson 228).

For Milton, government should be entirely a civil contract between ruler and subjects. Freedom was given up voluntarily for social order, but could be reclaimed whenever the subjects were no longer happy with their ruler. According to Milton, “mankind need not be enslaved by arbitrary rules and authorities, except that it enslaves itself, not out of sin, but out of weakness and willful stupidity.”

It being thus manifest that the power of Kings and Magistrates is nothing else, but what is only derivative, transferr'd and committed to them in trust from the People, to the Common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be tak'n from them, without a violation of thir natural birthright.



The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates began by

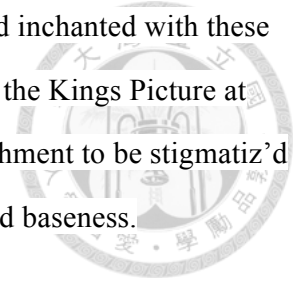
Proving that it is lawful, and hath been held so through the ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked King, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death; if the ordinary MAGISTRATE have neglected, or deny'd to do it. And that they, who of late so much blame Depositing, are the Men that did it themselves.

However, soon after the death of Charles I, Royalists put out a spiritual autobiography attributed to him called *Eikon Basilike*, which portrayed Charles as a suffering savior, justified royalism and generated sympathy. Cromwell's new government, having taken note of Milton for his work (and sympathy) in *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, hired him as Secretary of Foreign Languages to write a response to *Eikon Basilike* which would disarm its power. Samuel Johnson would criticize Milton's choice a little more than a century later:

Nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery; that he, who had justified the murder of his king, for some acts which seemed to him unlawful, should now sell his services, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evidence that he could do nothing lawful. (283)

Milton was the first contractual employee of the new republic; in October, 1649, he published *Eikonoklastes* ("Image Breaker"). For Milton, worshipping the king as God was idolatry, a practice he hoped to destroy with truth. In the second edition, Milton calls Charles's supporters "inconstant, irrational, and Image-doting rabble" and claimed:

that like a credulous and hapless herd, begott'n to servility, and enchanted with these popular institutes of Tyranny, subscrib'd with a new device of the Kings Picture at his praiers, hold out both thir eares with such delight and ravishment to be stigmatiz'd and board through in witness of thir own voluntary and beloved baseness.



The Council of State next asked Milton to write a response to Salmasius' *Defensio Regia* ("Defense of Kingship")—the Continental outcry against the English revolution. Milton finished *Defensio pro populo Anglicano* ("Defense of the English Republic") in February, 1651. He followed with a Second Defense in 1654, defending the Parliamentary regime controlled by Cromwell (who had reluctantly become Lord Protector but refused the crown when it was offered to him). Milton describes himself as a soldier of the pen, using writing as a weapon to overthrow and destroy "unconquerable" tyrant.

But not entirely unknown, nor perhaps unwelcome, shall I return if I am he who disposed of the contentious satellite of tyrants, hitherto deemed unconquerable, both in the view of most men and in his own opinion. When he with insults was attacking us and our battle array, and our leaders looked first of all to me, I met him in single combat and plunged into his reviling throat this pen, the weapon of his choice.

Milton also discussed his *Areopagitica*, arguing against the idea of truth being determined by a limited few; and defends his Divorce Tracts, claiming they were a discussion of religious freedom, domestic freedom and civil freedom, "the three varieties of liberty without which civilized life is scarcely possible."

2.9 De Doctrina Christiana

Milton most likely finished *De Doctrina Christiana* around 1558, while working for the government; although not published until much later, it gives us some insight into Milton's religious views, as well as his concept of evil. Primarily, Milton is against any kind of universal faith which compels a certain kind of worship.

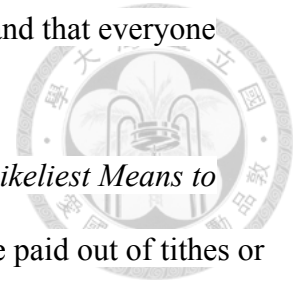
I decided not to depend upon the belief or judgement of others in religious questions for this reason: God has revealed the way of eternal salvation only to the individual faith of each man, and demands of us that any man who wishes to be saved should work out his beliefs himself. (qtd. in Tanner 6)

In *De doctrina Christiana*, Milton deals with the problem posed by several biblical texts in both the Old and New Testaments: "God openly confesses that it is he who incites the sinner, hardens his heart, blinds him and drives him into error, [but] it must not be concluded that he is the originator even of the very smallest sin, for he is supremely holy" (qtd. in Forsyth 156).

Although he cites a key passage from Isaiah, "I am the Lord, there is no other; I make the light, I create darkness, making peace and creating evil," (45.6–7) Milton refuses to put all blame for evil on God, because it would limit man's freedom. According to Milton, man maintains his free will even in the face of God's omnipotence: "It is sufficiently clear that neither God's decree nor his foreknowledge can shackle free causes with any kind of necessity." However, he avoids actually trying to resolve this complex issue, instead claiming that, while there are those who assert God himself is the cause and author of sin, "If I should attempt to refuse them, it would be like inventing a long argument to prove that God is not the devil" (qtd. in Forsyth 166).

Now famous, Milton continued expressing his ideas and influencing the republican government. In 1659 he published *A Treatise of Civil Power*, "a radical defense of Christian

liberty, arguing that magistrates should have no authority over the church and that everyone should be allowed to follow his conscience” (Forsyth, *John Milton* 142).



In the same year, he also published *Considerations Touching The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church*, which argued ministers should not be paid out of tithes or the public purse and that there should be no difference between clergy and laity. He also claimed that marriage should be an entirely civil affair, and that there can be no such thing as heresy if everyone is free to follow their conscience.

When Cromwell died in 1658, he passed power onto his son Richard, but the English Republic soon collapsed into feuding between political and military factions. He was removed from power by an army faction, who established another Rump Parliament. General George Monck, commander of the English forces in Scotland, was afraid England would descend into anarchy and marched his forces back to England. Milton published *Proposals of certain expedients for the preventing of a civil war now feared* in November of 1659.

Meanwhile, Charles II, who had fled England years before, published the *Declaration of Breda* in 1660 promising to pardon his father’s enemies if he was restored to the crown. Fearing the possibility of a restored monarchy, Milton published *The Ready and Easy Way to Establishing a Free Commonwealth*, where he rails against the “sluggards or babies” who would so readily give up their liberty, after fighting so hard for it. He’s appalled at the idea that:

A nation should be so valorous and courageous to win their liberty in the field, and when they have won it, should be so heartless and unwise in their counsels, as not to know how to use it, value it, what to do with it, or with themselves; but after ten or twelve years’ prosperous war and contestation with tyranny, basely and besottedly to run their necks again into the yoke which they have broken, and prostrate all the fruits of their victory for nought at the feet of the vanquished.

However in May 1st, 1660, the return of Charles II was imminent, and the “regicides” were in danger. Milton went into hiding as the king returned. The regicides and those associated with them were brutally put to death. In June, *Defensio pro populo Anglicano* and *Eikonoklastes* were publicly burned. Milton came out of hiding when Parliament passed the “Act of Free and general Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion” which should have guaranteed his safety. He was arrested nevertheless and spent several weeks in the Tower, before being released on December 17th.

Milton had narrowly escaped death, but he was villainized everywhere as a king-killer, and his life’s work a failure, with all his glorious and hopeful ideas of a free republic bitterly defeated. Under Charles II, the Church of England, including the bishops, was restored. Milton’s friend Henry Vane was brought to trial and beheaded. Charles II married the Portuguese Infanta, Catherine of Braganza in May 1662, increasing paranoid fears about Catholic influence. Milton had lost most of his savings, and his daughters stole and sold his books. Also, Milton had been blind for nearly a decade, relying on others to help him write and publish his works. Milton married again, the daughter of his friend and personal physician, Elizabeth Minshull. She was 24 and he was 54. The new government asked him to work for them, but he refused. As his wife reported, it “would be very inconsistent with his former conduct, for he had never yet employed his pen against his conscience” (qtd. in Dobranski 94).

Milton was done with politics. For the rest of his life, he’d stick to poetry.

2.10 Paradise Lost (1667)

Milton had been working on *Paradise Lost* for years, and now had the time to finish it.

Unfortunately, he had to rely on others to help him write it down, but he’d compose in his head and wait for friends to visit so they could write down a few verses. In the summer of 1665, plague forced the family to move to a cottage in the country. One fifth of the population of

London died. Thomas Ellwood, a Quaker friend who had arranged the accommodations, was the first one Milton showed the manuscript to for feedback. In September 1666, the Great Fire broke out and burned for four days. More than 13,000 houses, eighty-seven churches and the main buildings in the City had all been destroyed. Over 100,000 people were homeless and destitute.

Amid such a series of catastrophes the whole climate of opinion in Protestant Europe was convulsed. It was the end of an era, the end perhaps of an illusion. The age of the Renaissance, that age of unbounded optimism, Olympian speculation, carefree *douceur de vivre* was over. Armageddon had arrived. (Trevor-Roper 229)

Near the end of April 1667, Milton signed a contract for his new poem with Samuel Simmons. In June, the Dutch sent a fleet up the Medway and burned the ships of the English navy. These were difficult, depressing times. The first edition of *Paradise Lost* had “no preface to encourage people to buy it, nor commendatory verses, not even the name of the printer” (Forsyth 165). This could be because of Milton’s now tarnished reputation, or fear of how the work would be received. In a reissue of 1668, Simmons redrafted the title page, including his own name and the author’s name. It starts with a defense of the choice not to rhyme

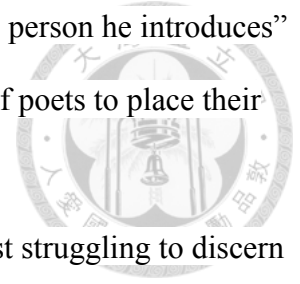
This neglect of Rime... is to be esteemed as an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty restored to Heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Riming

In 1671, Milton published *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. He died in 1674.

2.11 Does it matter?

Does Milton’s biography have anything to do with *Paradise Lost*? Firstly, we should assume, even if not a direct political commentary, that Milton has put some of himself into the poem. In

the *Apology* Milton had written, “The author is ever distinguished from the person he introduces” (YP I 880); but he also says in the *Pro Se Defensio* that it is “The custom of poets to place their own opinions in the mouths of their great characters (qtd. in Forsyth 193).”



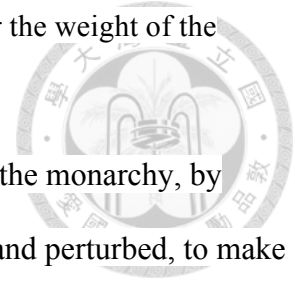
As Gordon Campbell writes, Milton is a “restoration nonconformist struggling to discern a pattern of divine intervention in his life” (85). Stevie Davies comments, “as in many other ways, Satan’s journey though Chaos implies Milton’s journey” (129). Shattuck writes, “In the flamboyant figure of Satan, Milton alludes to the momentous events through which he himself had just lived: a revolution that failed” (78). According to Riggs, Milton invites us “to compare his portrait of the poet with his portrait of Satan. The similarities are not hidden; the differences are consciously and carefully defined” (17).

What are these similarities? Milton devoted his life to republican idealism and political revolution, in the name of resisting all forms of idolatry and external authority (including religious, social and political customs and rules). Nevertheless, his cause was defeated and himself publically scorned, despite all of his best arguments. Towards the end of his life, he wrote two major characters, Satan—an updated version of Comus, a proud tempter, who is degraded and defeated by a more powerful force; and Samson, who is similarly brought low by his enemies, but who rises up again in an act of revenge-terrorism. While Milton may not deliberately associate himself with his characters, given his biographical details, as well as his pride and stubborn refusal to give up his ideals and work for the new government, we also shouldn’t expect him to meekly roll over and give in to his enemies.

As Forsyth points out,

It is hard to resist seeing the blind hero of Samson Agonists as a version of Milton himself after the Restoration... in this light the poem, cased as a Greek tragedy, is a kind of revenge fantasy, with the English monarchy and aristocracy, all the Royalists

in fact, herded together into the theatre and then crushed under the weight of the falling masonry. (192)



You could argue that the aim of *Paradise Lost* is a subtle, covert attack on the monarchy, by poisoning the ears of the people against tyranny—to make them confused and perturbed, to make them doubt and question the tyrant’s omnipotent rule, a counter-propaganda to the king’s rule.

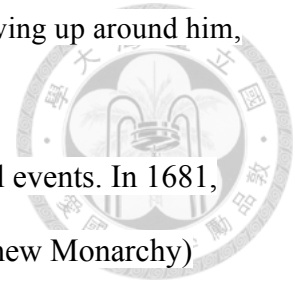
According to Annabel Patterson, censorship after the Restoration demanded a coded form of language—an “oblique discourse”—that demanded readers “read between the lines” and infer submerged political intentions in a text.

For what we find everywhere apparent and widely understood, from the middle of the sixteenth century in England, is a system of communication in which ambiguity becomes a creative and necessary instrument, a social and cultural force of considerable consequence. (qtd. in Shears 48)

While this reading of *Paradise Lost* (Satan as a representation of Milton, rebelling against the monarchy and being ultimately defeated) may be too speculative, it is easy to compare Milton’s strong opinions with specific issues and voices in his poetry. It’s also likely, given Milton’s personality, that he used his poetry to make *some* kind of political statement.

Eloquent theorist though he was, Milton never remained merely in the realm of abstraction. Not only did he live and work in a culture in which reading was for action, not in place of action, but he, unlike most other writers, was involved, day-by-day, in matters of state. Whether government servant or political prisoner, advocate of religious freedom or critic of monarchy, Milton learnt, because he had to learn, how to deal with censorship and intolerance, how to make his voice heard in the clamorous debates of his time. He was immersed in, and exploited, the rapidly

changing, edgy, disreputable public print culture that was growing up around him,
(Beer preface).



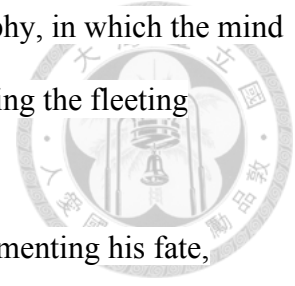
It was, after all, common to write literature as a veiled allegory for political events. In 1681, Dryden (who, unlike Milton, had switched sides and gone to work for the new Monarchy) published *Absalom and Achitophel*, which uses the rebellion of Absalom against King David as an allegory to discuss the Popish Plot (1678) and the Exclusion Crisis (1679-1681). Since Charles II was getting older with no heirs, Protestants feared his openly Roman Catholic brother James II could get the throne. The Earl of Shaftesbury sponsored the Exclusion Bill to prevent James from becoming king, and prompted Charles to legitimize Monmouth. When Monmouth was caught preparing to rebel and seek the throne, Shaftesbury was suspected of fostering the rebellion. *Absalom and Achitophel* was published just before Shaftesbury's arrest. Monmouth and Shaftesbury were acquitted, but after James did get the throne in 1685, Monmouth raised a new rebellion, and was executed for it. According to Bryson in *The Tyranny of Heaven*,

In presenting the entire course of universal history as revolving around kingship, both the having and the desiring, Milton makes the case that it is not kings who must be overthrown, but *kingship itself*. In portraying God as king, Milton graphically illustrates the primary hierarchical metaphor that in his time rendered the English incapable of liberty, or, as Milton so acerbically declared in the face of the Restoration of 1660, “worthie. . . to be for ever slaves.” (29)

Orthodox critics refuse to recognize in Satan a potential symbol for Milton's failed revolution, mainly on the grounds that Milton himself was religious—but given Milton's extreme antinomianism, it isn't hard to argue that the God of *Paradise Lost* is not the God he believes in.

I would argue that Milton's ideas of God, sin, evil, and justice were heavily influenced by Boethius's sixth-century *On the Consolations of Philosophy*. Although assumed to be linked

with Christianity, *The Consolation* is more a summary of Platonic philosophy, in which the mind can elevate itself towards the True Good through will and reason, by resisting the fleeting passions or desires towards wealth or fame.



In *The Consolation*, a philosopher has been jailed unfairly and is lamenting his fate, asking why evil should triumph over good, and why good men are victimized. The main conclusion of the book is that, despite appearances, the good is always stronger than the weak. This is the conclusion of *Comus* as well; the language used in *Comus*, and later *Paradise Lost*, shows many close similarities with the author of *The Consolation*; for example, in *Comus* the Lady's brothers debate "providence, foreknowledge, will and fate" but "found no end, in wandering mazes lost." *The Consolation* reads, "'Art thou mocking me,' said I, 'weaving a labyrinth of tangled arguments, now seeming to begin where thou didst end, and now to end where thou didst begin?'"

As Laurie Kuribayashi points out,

Boethius is cited only twice, for instance, in the notes to Merritt Hughes' standard edition of Milton's work, and without any implication that Milton drew directly from the earlier author. The neglect is surprising in view of the considerable scholarship on Boethian influence upon Milton's predecessors, but these studies concentrate their attention on the Middle Ages and stop well short of Milton. The neglect is even more surprising because of the great many concerns that Boethius and Milton have in common, and because Boethius provided precisely reasoned formulations for some of the very problems that Milton had to deal with in his "justification" of the "ways of God to men".

E.H. Dye comments, “John Coolidge has labeled *Lycidas*, ‘Milton’s ‘Consolatio Poeticae,’” on the basis of some resemblances between a passage in the elegy and “a place in Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy*.”



By comparison, the bonds between *Comus* and *The Consolation* we have found truly do go deep. Extending far beyond the Christian Humanism and “progress toward beautitude” Coolidge observed in both *Lycidas* and *The Consolation*, there are numerous other vital points of similarity between *Comus* and Boethius’ immensely popular dialogue share in common. Prominent in both stories are: The trials their protagonists suffer, the Circe myth, deprecation of the passions, a chase ideal of temperance of Neoplatonic idealism, and the liberating intervention of divine grace that endows both heroine and hero with sufficient judgemental wisdom for them to achieve individual happiness. Such close concord suggest that Milton was influenced by the *Consolation* from the earliest moments of the Mask’s creation. (Dye 1-7)

Already an influential text therefore, *The Consolation* would have resonated deeply with Milton after the Restoration, when the majority of his life’s greatest efforts had failed and he found himself (like Boethius) imprisoned unfairly for defying a tyrant. According to *The Consolation*, the way to free oneself from a tyrant’s wrath is by cultivating wisdom and moving beyond hope and fear, beyond good and evil:

Let men compose themselves and live at peace,
Set haughty fate beneath their feet,
And look unmoved on good and bad,
And keep unchanging countenance:
Unmoved they’ll stand before the ocean’s rage
Which churns up waves from deep below,

Unmoved by Mount Vesuvius,
Her furnace blast and hurling flames,
Unmoved by fiery thunderbolts in flight
Which sweep in ruin towers on high.
Why then are miserable men in awe
When tyrants rage impotently?
If first you rid yourself of hope and fear
You have disarmed the tyrant's wrath:
But whosoever quakes in fear or hope,
Drifting and losing mastery,
Has cast away his shield, has left his place,
And binds the chain with which he will be bound. (9)

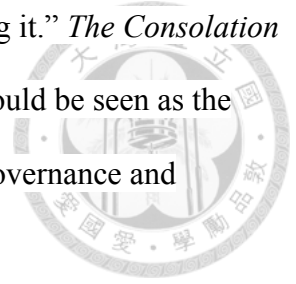


In *Paradise Lost*, instead of the True Good we find in Milton's writing or Platonic philosophy, we find instead a Christianized version of Zeus, hurling thunderbolts and raging against those that defy him. Boethius is suffering, we are told, not because of his current dejected circumstances, but because he has been estranged from wisdom, which is *his fault*.

However, it is not simply a case of your having been banished far from your home; you have wandered away from yourself, or if you prefer to be thought of as having been banished, it is you yourself that have been the instrument of it. No one else could ever have done it. (16)

Heaven is described as peace of the inner mind, a state of grace one can free enter into (or fall out of). "So there can be no fear of exile for any man within its walls and moat. On the other

hand, if anyone stops wanting to life there, he automatically stops deserving it.” *The Consolation* shows us, then, two different gods: the tyrant god of thunderbolts, which could be seen as the arbitrary forces of fate; and the True Good, for which “submitting to His governance and obeying His laws is freedom” (17).



Likewise, in *Paradise Lost*, Satan’s suffering and exile is his own doing, because happiness is a state of mind. His desire led to estrangement, and to reclaim it he must, like Boethius, move beyond hope and fear, good and evil (which he does):

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse; all good to me is lost. (4.108-109)

Boethius also tackles the issue of free will in the face of divine omnipotence, claiming that “all human activity depends on will and power” (88) and that creatures with innate reason have the power to choose to will or not will: however they are more free when they contemplate God and less free when they descend into bodies, and even less when they are “imprisoned in earthly flesh and blood.” Likewise, Milton’s Satan (eventually) recognizes that he had the “Will and Power to stand” but also the freedom to fall. He has no one to blame but “Heavn’s free Love dealt equally to all” (4.66-68).

There are far more textual comparisons, but this is enough to establish Milton’s familiarity with Boethius’s *The Consolations*, and demonstrate how Milton’s Satan has more in common with a soul seeking wisdom than a universal principle of hate and malice (whose only aim is to do harm).

The orthodox reading, promoted by Stanley Fish and his successors, is that Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* to educate readers about the temptation of Satan, and to teach them to ignore him and stay strong, to not be won over by his rhetoric and guile. The romantic or “satanic” reading,

is that Milton was, either deliberately or accidentally, more sympathetic to Satan's rebellion, even though it failed.

For now, it's not important to side with either, but only to recognize what these adverse reactions to *Paradise Lost* symbolize, and which has triumphed in modern culture. In the face of divine omnipotence, there are two basic responses. Jesus represents absolute obedience, without thought or reflection. The other path—of Satan, Adam and Eve—is the path to knowledge and freedom: this is the Faustian belief, that man should always strive to improve himself in knowledge, that no knowledge is harmful. This is also the Gnostic or Neoplatonic belief, in the purification or edification of the soul, a process of refinement. These two responses are not exclusive, but are more likely dependent on each other: blind obedience is not really virtue because it isn't really a free choice until after the fall. Obedience to God is freedom and happiness, but cannot be chosen until after the separation and exile. We will take up these themes again in Chapter 5, when we explore *Paradise Lost's* in light of postmodern theory. Before that, we need to recognize that Satan's ambitious efforts towards independence, and his refusal to submit to an unjust tyrant, were far more in line with the emerging Enlightenment thinkers, as well as Milton's republican revolutionary ideals, which is why he was so easily embraced by many writers as heroic.

2.12 Conclusion

The basic issues Milton's Satan struggles with are the same as those found in Boethius's *The Consolation*.

1. Tyrannical kingship is bad, even if by gods.
2. Evil is not from god; god is pure good

3. God is natural order; there is no getting out
4. Submitting to His governance and obeying His laws is freedom.



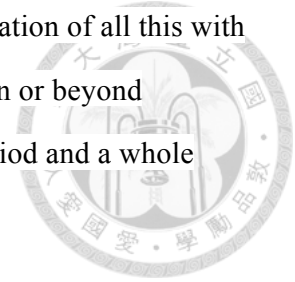
The important thing to note here, is that Milton’s ideas were too early for his times, but in many ways bore fruit after his death:

What is particularly impressive about these imprecations . . . is the company into which Milton is put in terms of intellectual, political and social history. Milton, in the eyes of those who would brand him as either a heretic or atheist or both, stands with those whose ideas will take root and come to full flower in the Enlightenment and beyond. Milton’s story—even as told by his contemporary opponents—is one of progress, and as unfashionable as it may have been for some time to subscribe to a “Whig” narrative of history, Milton himself subscribed to something very much like a narrative of historical progress, hoping, in fact, that England would take the lead role.” (Bryson, *Atheist Milton* 13)

The whole Milton—including the politics; the theology; the insistence on freedom to read, to write, and think his own thoughts and those of no other; the willingness to die rather than be silent—needs to be brought into play in the discussion of Milton’s vision of heaven and earth. To assume that there is little—or no—political critique represented in Milton’s heaven is effectively to silence a man in death who would not tolerate being silenced in life (Bryson, *Tyranny of Heaven* 29)

Whatever he owes to medieval predecessors, then, this interior and troubled dimension of Satan makes him a product of the early modern world. He is so resolute in his determination to explore this dangerous consciousness that, in this respect, he is the perfect image, extended and expanded from Marlowe, of what is genuinely

Faustian about the risk the Renaissance took. . . It is the association of all this with Hell (or at least with Chaos), with what is Godless or forbidden or beyond redemption, that made the Miltonic images exemplary of a period and a whole cultural shift. (Forsyth, *Satanic Epic* 57)

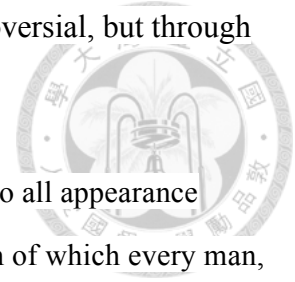


Milton is in the middle of a shift between two opposing cultures: one believes in a literal hell and devil, and the importance of submission, obedience and self-denial. For the other, hell is only a psychological state, and we are free to use our Will and Power to choose our own personal good, which we can discover through reason.

One can say, then, that Milton's Satan was invented at the last possible moment, at the very time when belief in the Devil and the combat myth was in decline, undermined by the new forms of rationalism or liberal religion—or the excesses of the great witch-persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Is Hell a place or a psychological state, for example? In *Paradise Lost* it is both: Hell is there, indeed created by God, yet Milton's Satan, echoing Marlowe's Mephistopheles, also says in famous words "Myself am Hell." In Milton the *De doctrina Christiana*, written at the same time as *Paradise Lost*, Satan rarely appears. There Milton is more interested in the symbolic and interior aspect signaled by George Herbert when he wrote in "Sinne (II)": "devils are our sins in perspective." In Milton's poem, on the other hand, Satan is what he became for the Romantics, the vehicle for the imagination. (Forsyth 79)

Milton isn't unique in these concerns: in 1643 Sir Thomas Brown wrote "The heart of man is the place the devill dwels in; I feel sometimes a hell within myself" (*Religio Medici*). But he is unique is his deep and thorough arguments for political freedom and human rights, including the right to freedom of the press and freedom of conscience. As Andrew Dickson White wrote in

1910, Milton wrote ferociously in a time when these ideas were still controversial, but through his influence he changed the world.



Into the very midst of all this welter of evil, at a point in time to all appearance hopeless, at a point in space apparently defenseless, in a nation of which every man, woman, and child was under sentence of death from its sovereign, was born a man who wrought as no other has ever done for a redemption of civilization from the main cause of all that misery; who thought out for Europe the precepts of right reason in international law; who made them heard; who gave a noble change to the course of human affairs; whose thoughts, reasonings, suggestions, and appeals produced an environment in which came an evolution of humanity that still continues. Andrew Dickson White wrote in *Seven Great Statesmen in the Warfare of Humanity with Unreason*. (55)

Milton has made a massive impact on human history and civilization, not only in his direct and indirect literary influences, but also as the character of the Devil continues to play a major role in philosophy, psychology, and politics. What I hope to demonstrate over the next two chapters is that the ideology of Satanism—the revolutionary heroism, the passionate quest for personal autonomy, the primacy of will, power and passion—has all shifted from demonic (resistance to Faustian progressivism) to widely held positive values. In popular culture, these values have divorced from the character of Satan completely and been assimilated into religious and spiritual values.

Paradise Lost doesn't have all the answers. But at a time when humans were being bold and defiant, striving towards freedom and reason to increase the benefits to mankind, Milton was asking the right questions. Are we really free? Is it evil to desire too much, to want to know too

much? Will there be any consequences to our actions? *Paradise Lost*, perhaps because it fails to successfully resolve its core aim, “to justify the ways of God to men,” to prove that God is not the Devil, because it *fails* to solve the questions it raises, forced other writers and thinkers to dwell on these problems, again and again. It’s only when you stop talking about *Paradise Lost* and move into the *legacy* it founded, and see how it triggered movements that changed the world and started two world wars, do you begin to see how important *Paradise Lost* has been in the history of civilization.



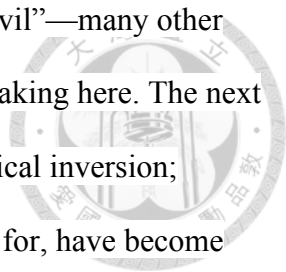
Chapter 3: Give Me Liberty

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to trace the influence of *Paradise Lost* on later literature, culture and politics. Most links are strong: authors refer to *Paradise Lost* specifically, or to Satan in general, or are using themes and language inspired from *Paradise Lost*. In other cases, links can only be inferred, as *Paradise Lost* is a seminal text in the liberal tradition other authors participate in. The aim of this chapter is to show how the development—of man’s relationship to God and to himself—changed drastically over the next two centuries (roughly from 1700 to 1900).

Since this influence can be seen nearly everywhere, I’ll focus on texts that depict the devil as a character, deal with the topics of revolution (in particular, defiance against a divine order), and how by the end of the nineteenth century, there was a rejection of a universal, externally enforced morality and instead a quest to find a universal “natural” morality based on reason. Because these same beliefs (liberty, defiance, will and power) are also the values associated with Milton’s Satan, he was seen as a positive symbol for humanist values.

It should also be pointed out that the majority of these writers were themselves associated with the devil, charged with blasphemy and sedition by conservative orthodoxy, and otherwise demonized (often for holding opinions we now take universally for granted). In terms of theory, we’ll jump roughly from Kant, to Hegel, to Nietzsche, to Freud.

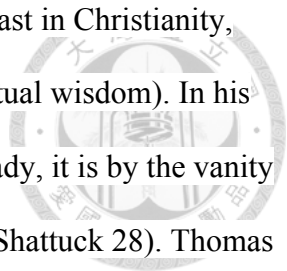


It might seem overly facile or simplistic here to offer a “history of evil”—many other writers have done it before, and better. But that’s not the project I’m undertaking here. The next two chapters aim to show how the idea of evil went through a complete ethical inversion; resulting in the fact that the “negative” values Satan is traditionally blamed for, have become “positive” values which, rather than forbidden by God, are part of a divine plan for us. It is easy to show how, for example, Romantics called Milton’s Satan a hero; and then pretend that we’ve moved on, and learned to be properly skeptical about Satan’s claims in *Paradise Lost*. It is less easy to see how the values represented by Milton’s Satan became Modernist principles, *firstly* under the banner of the name Satan or Devil for shock value, but later separating from that title and bringing those heretical, blasphemous qualities into mainstream culture and even spirituality, by re-inventing our definitions of God and Satan. To fully understand this ethical inversion and its relevance to my project, a historical review is necessary.

3.2 Background

In 1640 Rene Descartes published his *Meditations*, which rejected all external knowledge in favor of an internal truth discovered by reason and experience. Although he realized the diabolical implications of *cogito ergo sum* and attempted to reconcile his philosophy with Christianity, it instead widened the gap between science and religion. According to Dreyfus, Descartes “managed to reconfigure the Western world entirely, taking the willfulness that in Dante had been the defining feature of evil and making it the most fundamental and God-like aspect of human being” (140).

In Dante, Ulysses represents constant striving after experience and knowledge: “to this brief waking-time that is still left to your senses, you must not deny experience of that which lies beyond the sun, and of the world that is unpeopled” (*Inf*, 26.114-17).



Traditionally, curiosity had been a sin—the “lust of the mind” (at least in Christianity, since Augustine. For Greeks, “know thyself” was the first principle of spiritual wisdom). In his *Essays*, Montaigne wrote that “presumption is our natural and original malady, it is by the vanity of this very imagination that man sets himself up as equal of God” (qtd. in Shattuck 28). Thomas Hobbes repeated this view in *Leviathan* (1651). Hobbes lists the inner passions that motivate mankind, claiming curiosity, the desire to know, is the singular distinction of man over other animals. The “perseverance of delight in the the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge” exceeds the “short vehemence of carnal pleasure” (qtd. in Shattuck 46). However, Hobbes also claimed that the idea of supernatural demons was promoted by high priests to manipulate and control the common people through fear of the unknown.

As the church lost its power to punish heretics, the freedom to pursue new knowledge (as well as the need to do so) encouraged other thinkers to side with Ulysses and search for universal principles in nature. In 1687 Isaac Newton published his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. In 1688, Pascal published *Pensées*, which attempts to bring men back to faith through reason alone, by making belief in God a rational choice. Pascal also criticizes Milton directly: “Self is hateful. You, Milton, conceal it; you do not for that reason destroy it; you are; then, always hateful” (455).

Philosophers like Gottfried Leibniz (*Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, 1710) believed in a version of the universe that was similar to Boethius’s *Consolation*: God was good, and thus any apparent evil was an illusion. Since courage is good for example, and mankind cannot develop courage without evil things to be scared of, evil must actually be good, even when it doesn’t appear so, because God, being perfectly good and rational, would choose the best possible universe to live in.

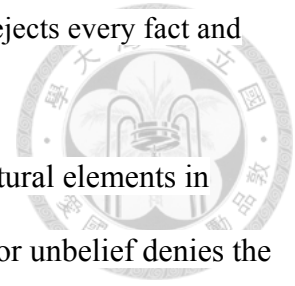
During this period, it still wasn't safe to be a non-believer, but many people were outwardly orthodox and secretly deist—believing in a rational God and Leibniz's optimism, but viewing the idea of a personal devil as superstition to scare the weak-willed. The Duke of Wharton, for example, had friends meet on his estate and talk philosophy. They called themselves the Hellfire Club, and had a “profound contempt of established morality, thought and theology” (Blackett-Ord 46). The Duke also had statues of Apollo and Dionysus on his estate, signifying rational intelligence and emotional instinct.

Leibniz's idea that “we live in the best of all possible worlds” drew scorn, especially from Voltaire, who published *Candide* in 1759 to show that nature is irrational and can be brutal. *Candide* enjoyed both great success and great scandal. Immediately after its secretive publication, the book was widely banned because it contained blasphemy and political sedition.

While many thinkers were openly rebelling against Christian values (humility, submission), others resisted outright atheism and saw a divine, guiding force in the universe. In 1733, Isaac Newton published *The Prophecies of Daniel*, in which he laments, “At no period in the history of Christianity since Pentecostal days has there been such a widespread spirit of unbelief that exists at the present time.” Newton took this as a sign that we were in the End of Days, and used biblical prophecy to predict the world would end in 2060. He also makes it clear that the “science of Spiritualism” and the domain of Prophecy are worthwhile pursuits, even though “untrained and unscientific minds are bringing the entire subject into ridicule and even obloquy.” For Newton, both credulity and skepticism were to be avoided.

If we can ever hope to arrive at the final haven of truth it can only be by steering straight between the whirlpools of credulity and skepticism; it is difficult to estimate which is the more formidable peril a gross state of superstition which greedily accepts

every marvel or a self-satisfied rationalism which scornfully rejects every fact and problem not susceptible of solution by the unaided reason. (4)



Newton also responded to church-goers who denied all the supernatural elements in Christianity, like the miracles and prophecies. He argues that “rationalism or unbelief denies the possibility of the supernatural” but what we consider as “supernatural” may just be things science has not yet explained. (However the examples he give—a floating chair in a séance, and a photograph of that floating chair—hardly inspire confidence).

It’s fun to note the anti-Edenic story of Newton’s mathematical awakening as well; as he was reflecting under an apple tree, an apple fell and hit him on the head, giving him a glimpse of this theory of gravity. Unlike in *Paradise Lost*, where knowledge is a forbidden temptation, here knowledge falls unaided from nature’s bounty. Natural laws, like gravity, impress themselves upon us through experience.

According to Darren Oldridge, the Enlightenment thinkers “quietly discarded the idea of ‘natural evil’—the innocent suffering caused by catastrophes such as the Lisbon earthquake of 1755—and attributed such events instead to the working of natural law. This limited Satan’s involvement in the world at the same time that it lifted divine responsibility from a large part of human history” (41).

But the devil didn’t disappear without a fight. In the 1726 *A Political History of the Devil*, Daniel Defoe’s Devil is like a criminal mastermind who works behind the scenes, getting fools to do his work for him so it looks like he had no hand in it. And yet still, Satan is presented sympathetically:

It may perhaps be expected of me in this history, that since I seem inclined to speak favourably of Satan, to do him justice, and to

write his story impartially, I should take some pains to tell you what religion he is of; and even this part may not be so much a jest, as at first sight you may take it to be; for Satan has something of religion in him, I assure you. (2)



French physician Julien Offray de La Mettrie wrote *The Natural History of the Soul* in 1745, which argued that man are simply complex animals (and that if apes were trained they could become perfect men), followed by *Man a Machine* in 1747. His works, which suggested a hedonistic search for sensual pleasure, along with the Epicurean system of ethics, influenced the Marquis de Sade, who became a proponent of extreme freedom, unrestrained by morality, religion or law. For his erotic works and “abnormal” sexual practices he spent 32 years of his life in prison and insane asylums, where he continued to write.

According to de Sade, there is no soul, and everything can be explained with natural processes. All theological evidence revealed God as a cruel despot whose agents hypocritically claimed his omnibenevolence. In *A Philosophy of the Bedroom*, Sade writes:

Had man been formed wholly good, man should never have been able to do evil, and only then would the work be worthy of God. To allow man to choose was to tempt him; and God’s infinite powers very well advised him what would be the result. Immediately the being was created, it was hence to pleasure that God doomed the creature he had himself formed. A horrible God, this God of yours a monster! Is there a criminal more worthy of our hatred and or implacable vengeance than here! . . . More powerful than this villainous God, a being still in possession of his power, forever able to brave his author, the Devil by his seductions incessantly succeeds in leading astray the flock that the Eternal reserved unto himself. Nothing can vanquish the hold this demon’s energy has upon us. (2010-11)

However, Sade rejects the idea of a supernatural agent of evil, as well as the moral virtue in refusing desire. Mankind were merely animals, that shouldn't resist the natural inclination towards pleasure and away from pain: "The most wicked individual on earth, the most abominable, the most ferocious, the most barbarous, and the most indefatigable murderer is therefore but the spokesman of her desires, the vehicle of her will, and the surest agent of her caprices." As Flowers clarifies, "When humans act in accordance with the hidden "will" of Nature, they are rewarded with pleasure and success. When they act contrary to the will of Nature, they are visited with pain and failure." (Loc. 3269-3270).

For Sade, happiness depends on the greatest possible extension of pleasure. This is done by enlarging the scope of one's tastes and fantasies. It is only through willful imagination that the possibilities for pleasure are extended. Social or religious conditioning prevents this in most cases. Finally, happiness is not so much found in the enjoyment of pleasure as in the desire itself and in the destruction of obstacles in the way of its accomplishment.

Sade distinguishes between three types of people:

1. Those who are of weak or repressed imagination, courage, and desires— and who live without remarkable incident.
2. The "natural perverts," who act out of obsession which is usually congenital in origin.
3. Libertines, who consciously develop their fantasies and set about to realize them.

(Flowers, Loc. 3276-3279)

It is this third category, the libertines, which Sade saw as the apex of humanity. By active use of the imagination, libertines transform themselves through acts of will, in accordance with Nature. Due to Sade's extremes blasphemies and his pornographic tendencies, he's been called

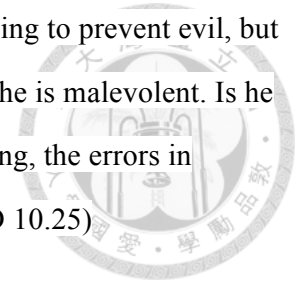
“Satan’s Saint” (and much worse). But the core of his ideas—that man is a rational animal and that “evil” is simply nature seeking pleasure—were gaining ground. Still, the incarceration and suffering of De Sade was a warning to other freethinkers that some beliefs would not be tolerated.

It is not incidental that this period saw the growth of Freemasonry, a secret society that many would later identify with Satanism. Freemasonry was basically a church of reason and progress; a quest towards achieving a sacred and moral duty, and the betterment of mankind, through reason and will, rather than faith and tradition. According to its own foundational myths, the organization began with Freemasons, whose necessary study of geometry and other areas of knowledge made them both dangerous and indispensable to the state religion (who discouraged free thought but needed massive temples and churches built) on mathematical principles).

Freemasonry had a system of rituals that developed the mind of man towards the good, in an evolution similar to the Neoplatonic spiritual evolution practiced by mystics and mystery cults. But it also provided a safe place where people could meet and discuss their ideas freely, without fear of persecution or public shaming. The secrecy of the movement allowed them to initiate members slowly and make sure they were committed to the same principles.

In 1751, David Hume, unhappy with the response to his first book *A Treatise on Human Nature*, published *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hume argues that most events are deterministic, and that most human actions probably are as well. Hume attempts to also show how determinism and free will are compatible ideas (the arguments involved are similar to Milton and Boethius’s arguments for freedom in the face of an omniscient deity, but it is important to note Hume’s natural determinism are based on universal natural laws, rather than an all-seeing God). Hume openly challenges the dangers of religion:

Epicurus's old questions are still unanswered: Is he (God) willing to prevent evil, but not able? then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? then whence evil? . . . Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous. (D 10.25)



Consequently, Hume claims “The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of science and learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind” (E 1.10, SBN 11).

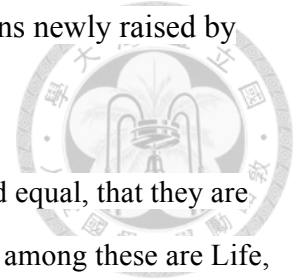
Throughout the Middle Ages, philosophy was seen as the handmaiden of theology; now it had shaken religion off and wanted to seek truth unfettered by tradition. In Rousseau's *Emile* and *The Social Contract* (1762) the author aims to show how human action is a result of social education; how a man's moral ideas are not natural but taught—therefore, not free. Therefore, Rousseau advocated self-rule rather than blind custom to socially determined virtues.

Every man having been born free and master of himself, no one else may under any pretext whatever subject him without his consent. To assert that the son of a slave is born a slave is to assert that he is not born a man. (152-53)

Rousseau also argues, “Once you teach people to say what they do not understand, it is easy enough to get them to say anything you like,” and warns mankind to “look no farther for the source of evil, you are he.” Rousseau's books were burned and he had to flee France.

The idea of “natural” laws, along with Sade's claim that mankind should seek out its own pleasure, were controversial (and inherently blasphemous) theories; nevertheless they were instrumental in the American and French revolution. We could mention the Boston Tea Party of 1773 organized by the “Sons of Liberty,” and the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in

1776. King George III was indicted by Thomas Jefferson on the assumptions newly raised by Enlightenment thinkers.



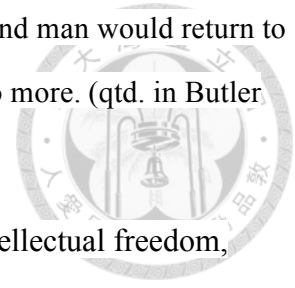
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . . When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

To the authorities in power, the revolutionary republicans of America and France were seen as agents of the devil trying to import Satan’s revolt in heaven to the political systems of the world; most governments (and their subjects) held onto the Pauline formula that “There is no power but of God” (Romans 13:1); that kings and rulers were allowed to rule by God’s will, and that political revolution was inherently satanic.

The new American republic was unique for separating church and state, something Milton’s friend Roger Williams had attempted to do in the early colonies (but failed). Thomas Paine, in *Common Sense* (1776) hopes this process will continue:

The adulterous connection of Church and State, wherever it has taken place . . . has so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would

follow. Human inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more. (qtd. in Butler 124)



Paine lays out a vision of, in Davidson and Scheick's words, "an age of intellectual freedom, when reason would triumph over superstition, when the natural liberties of humanity would supplant priestcraft and kingship, which were both secondary effects of politically managed foolish legends and religious superstitions" (18-19). He ends the *Rights of Man* with the statement: "From what we now see, nothing of reform in the political world ought to be held improbable. It is an age of revolutions, in which everything may be looked for" (qtd. in Foner 216). Paine "transformed the millennial Protestant vision of the rule of Christ on earth into a secular image of utopia," emphasizing the possibilities of "progress" and "human perfectibility" that could be achieved by humankind, without God's aid (qtd. in Foner 91).

Paine also comments on how integral Satan has been to the mythology of Christianity.

The Christian Mythologists, after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again to bring on the sequel of the fable. After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the Church Mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit. . .but instead of this they leave him at large, without even obliging him to give his parole—the secret of which is, that they could not do without him; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian Mythology. (Flowers Loc. 3203-3207)

Like Sade, however, society wasn't ready for Paine's open blasphemies. Hailed only a few years earlier as a hero of the American Revolution, Paine was now lambasted in the press and called "the scavenger of faction", a "lilly-livered sinical rogue", a "loathsome reptile", a "demi-human

archbeast”, and “an object of disgust, of abhorrence, of absolute loathing to every decent man except the President of the United States [Thomas Jefferson]” (qtd. in Foner 40).

In 1780 Jeremy Bentham published the *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, which is an attempt to establish a universal moral law by recognizing that mankind, as a human animal, will always seek out its own pleasure, and avoid pain. These two “sovereign masters” motivate our actions; hence we need to establish a system of ethics that cannot be manipulated by natural inclinations.

The principle of utility recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law. Systems which attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light. (qtd. in Wootton 585)

Bentham’s system, which became known as Utilitarianism, focuses on calculating out the repercussions of each action, and making decisions based on maximum potential for good. These ideas would be developed further in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*.

3.3 Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason (1781)

Kant is important to our study for two reasons; the first is that he posits a limit to reason alone, which can only be experienced through a kind of helpless feeling in the face of the sublime.

Whereas the beautiful is limited, the sublime is limitless, so that the mind in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot, has pain in the failure but pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt.

In *Kant and Milton*, Sanford Budick claims this so-called “aesthetic idea,” sets the mind in motion and suggests an excess of thought; “that through a play of light and dark represents and enacts an eclipse of representation in the face of that which exceeds our comprehension, and

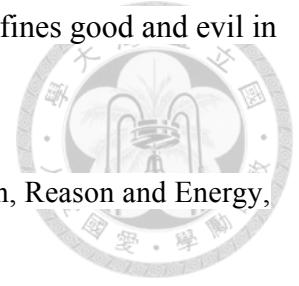
as a result draws after it an infinite succession of thoughts. The surfeit of thought and the repeated negation of representation induce the “momentary blackout” that is the hallmark of the sublime” (qtd. in Fallon). Kant gives as example, Milton’s description in *Paradise Lost* of the flight of Raphael to Earth (5.247-87), which exhibits the purest form of the aesthetic idea. “The experience of the sublime in the aesthetic idea can produce, through the process of emulation or succession (Nachfolge), precisely that freedom and moral feeling at which Kant aims” (Fallon).

For Kant, the Devil is a “transcendent a priori concept whose independent existence cannot be meaningfully argued.” The existence of evil (the inclination for mankind to cause harm without motivation) for Kant, is a radical flaw—an absurdity, which cannot be explained in purely naturalistic terms (Russell 144).

In 1784, Kant defined Enlightenment as the beginning of mankind thinking for itself rather than depending on external knowledge, following the maxim “Dare to Know!” Kant argued famously that Enlightenment means learning finally to take responsibility for your own actions. “In other words, the maturity that comes with Enlightenment requires me to obey the Pope or the King only if I freely choose to do so. Autonomy, or setting up one’s own laws and choosing to act in accordance with them—the ultimate sinfulness of the souls in Dante’s *Dis-* now becomes the highest human good” (Dreyfus 140).

This impetus towards freedom, and against external constraints, fueled the French Revolution from 1789-1799. As American ambassador, Thomas Jefferson helped the French draft the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* in 1793. Beginning with the idea that all men are born free and equal in rights, the *Declaration* argues for the protection of personal property; the right to free speech; and the right to freedom of opinions.

In 1790, Blake wrote the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which redefines good and evil in rational terms:



Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

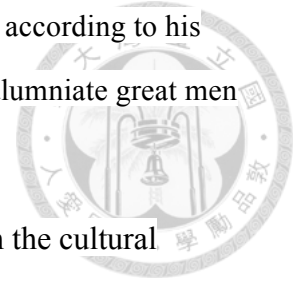
Traditional spirituality (based on Neoplatonism) taught that humans have a body and a soul, and that energy or desire comes from the body, and is Evil; and Reason comes from the soul, and is Good. Speaking in “The Voice of the Devil,” Blake denies this, instead arguing the naturalist approach, that there is no body distinct from the soul; that our five Senses are the chief inlets to the Soul; and that Energy is life and Eternal Delight.

Those who restrain Desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or Reason usurps its place and governs the unwilling. And being restrained, it by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of Desire. The history of this is written in *Paradise Lost*.

Blake’s comments can be seen as the beginning (or an early portion of) the Romantic movement, which prioritized sensual feeling and pure experience. Blake criticized the then popular Swedenborg, because he’d “not written one new truth, instead he’d written all the old falsehoods.” According to Blake, the angels Swedenborg claimed to have talked with were all religious, when he should have been talking with the “Devils who hate all religion.”

The *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* ends with a short presentation of “Great Man” theory,

The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best: those who envy or calumniate great men hate God; for there is no other God.



This goes against the ruling themes of universal equality, but is in line with the cultural enthusiasm and belief that, while we have equal rights, history is pushed forward by Great Men of history, who dare to pursue their own interests and forge change through the force of their will. In Blake we can already see the inversion of ethics that will become more defined in the next several centuries: instead of resistance to passion and pleasure, in the name of reason, “good” becomes the overthrow of reason, by the body’s natural energies and the enthusiasm of striving to become something greater.

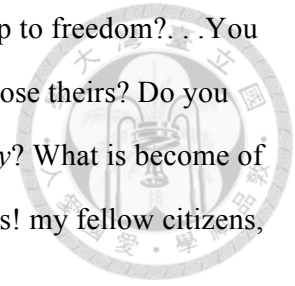
In 1791, the US Government passed the *Bill of Rights*, which on the surface guaranteed more rights to citizens.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

However, in the face of colonialization and slavery, the discussion over “universal human rights” seemed hypocritical, and many began speaking out against common practices and unchecked capitalism. In 1793 Bentham wrote another text urging the French to emancipate their colonies.

You abhor tyranny: You abhor it in the lump not less than in detail: You abhor the subjection of one nation to another: You call it slavery. You gave sentence in the case of Britain against her colonies: Have you so soon forgot that sentence? Have you so

soon forgot the school in which you served your apprenticeship to freedom? . . . You choose your own government, why are not other people to choose theirs? Do you seriously mean to govern the world, and do you call that *liberty*? What is become of the rights of men? Are you the only men who have rights? Alas! my fellow citizens, have you two measures? (408)

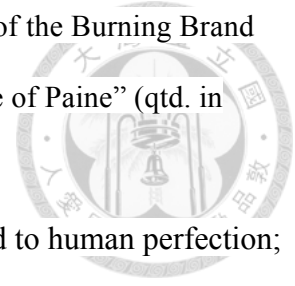


Meanwhile, the religious idea of Satan as a personal destroyer of mankind wasn't completely abandoned. In 1794, William Ashdowne wrote *An attempt to prove that the opinion concerning the devil, or satan, as a fallen angel, and that he tempts man to sin*, mostly using Biblical quotes. More influential was the Gothic romance *The Monk*, published by Matthew Gregory Lewis in 1796. When the hero, Ambrosio, is brought before the Inquisition and tortured, he confesses his sins and is condemned to burn. In despair, Ambrosio cries out to Lucifer to save his life, and then signs his soul away. Lucifer saves him from the fire and leads him into the wilderness, but then drops him over a cliff, where he suffers an extended, agonizing death. (However in this case, the use of Satan could simply be a metaphor, warning readers that sacrificing ideals to ease pain leads to greater suffering).

In 1798, Coleridge wrote the *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, which plays with the nature of sin, evil, death and punishment; the death of the albatross could indicate the death of superstition or religion, which leads to a mortal terror and isolation, which can only be rectified by appreciation of the beauty in nature. These are themes Melville will pick up again in *Moby Dick*.

While William Godwin's 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* argued (like Leibniz) that humanity will inevitably progress towards perfectibility and enlightenment, not all are so sure. In a 1805 letter to his friend Benjamin Waterhouse, criticizing especially Tom Paine's brand of blasphemy, John Adams writes "I should call this the Age of Frivolity . . . the Age of

Folly, Vice, Frenzy, Brutality, Daemons, Buonaparte, Tom Paine, or the Age of the Burning Brand from Bottomless Pit, or anything but the Age of Reason. . . Call it then the Age of Paine” (qtd. in Larkin 8).



For Enlightenment thinkers, freedom of rational inquiry should lead to human perfection; but this seemed unlikely given humanity’s propensity to do evil. Should all men be perfectly free to seek out their own good, and chase their own desire? Against claims that this kind of freedom would lead to anarchy, Enlightenment thinkers mostly taught that passions and desires needed to be ruled by reason and judgment. The Romantics, however, denied this distinction, and prioritized sensory pleasure and experience—even if it brought pain and suffering—because it led to self-knowledge and increased awareness.

Romanticism was the result of, according to Isaiah Berlin, “A new and restless spirit, seeking violently to burst through old and cramping forms, a nervous preoccupation with perpetually changing inner states of consciousness, a longing for the unbounded and the indefinable, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self-assertion both individual and collective, a search after means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals” (96).

Accepting that these passionate striving were traditionally associated with Satan, the Romantics embraced him as a symbol for progress and liberation. Others, like Hegel in his 1806 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, defined this creative impulse as a necessary criteria for the development of self-consciousness, in terms that were psychological rather than religious:

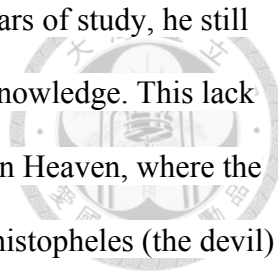
It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; . . . the individual who has not staked his or her life may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he or she has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. (qtd. in Heehs 133)

For Hegel, freedom demanded a self-transcending of nature, which progressively develops and self-perfects. Identity could only result from difference, which is intimately bound up with negativity. Being or non-being are the same; change (which is positive) results from resistance. All limitations are fetters, which must constantly be cast off as one becomes freer and more self-determining.

3.4 Goethe's Faust (1810)

Earlier literature based on the legends of Faust were written to warn people away from seeking the three things forbidden by the orthodox authority in the Middle Ages: knowledge, power, and pleasure. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, based on Hegel and other philosophers of the past century, striving towards knowledge, power and pleasure had become not only mankind's natural right, but also its moral imperative. (If "power" sounds too negative, replace it with control over one's circumstances, or "freedom", which is what power actually affords).

Ethical discourse had moved away from the idea of a personal Satan; the Devil or principle of evil was seen by most as some kind of natural or anti-natural force. The temptation was still there, but considered as a psychological or interior impulse in man; which needed to be either resisted or embraced. Early in Goethe's version, Faust comments on the "two souls" within him. One wants to be happy in the moment, "forsaking its brother in grossly loving zest"; the other strives for higher things in an unplacatable desire to know and experience ("rises forcibly in quest of rarefied ancestral spheres" (qtd. in Treitel 29). It's interesting that, for Goethe, both reason and passion are represented as a *striving towards*. Rather than the traditional emphasis on abnegation or resistance, Faust's conflict is between the quest for knowledge and the quest for happiness.



The story begins with Faust contemplating suicide, because after years of study, he still has so much left that he doesn't know, and fears the impossibility of total knowledge. This lack of knowledge creates an unending dissatisfaction with life. This is noticed in Heaven, where the Lord claims this dissatisfaction will eventually lead to spiritual fruits; Mephistopheles (the devil) disagrees, seeing only an animal impulse towards pleasure and away from pain. They make a wager (similar to the story of Job)—Mephistopheles claims he can lead Faust on a downward course; the Lord claims, even in his darkest aberration, a good man will still be conscious of the right path. In symbolism that parallels *Comus*, when the Lady refuses the cup that represents temptation (and so death of chastity) Faust embraces his death: “Pure crystal goblet! forth I draw thee now (375). . . Let this last draught, the product of my skill, / My own free choice, be quaff'd with resolute will.” (390) This deliberate decision is described as a bold step into the abyss (the remark that “phantasy creates her own self-torturing brood” is almost certainly a direct nod to Milton's description of Death):

Now is the time, through deeds, to show that mortals
The calm sublimity of gods can feel;
To shudder not at yonder dark abyss,
Where phantasy creates her own self-torturing brood,
Right onward to the yawning gulf to press,
Around whose narrow jaws rolleth hell's fiery flood;
With glad resolve to take the fatal leap,
Though danger threaten thee, to sink in endless sleep! (366-374)

Faust is distracted by Easter bells and temporarily abstains from the potion; in the meanwhile, Mephistopheles introduces himself as a spirit that negates (“evermore denies”), and part of the power that produces good, while scheming evil. He offers Faust his abilities to conjure: “Rich

odours shall regale your smell, On choicest sweets your palate dwell, Your feelings thrill with ecstasy” (1114-16), but Faust has no desire for pleasure or worldly ambition. He curses hope, love’s dream, faith and patience, wine and pleasure. Eventually he agrees to let Faust try to tempt him with joy’s lure, and that this temptation will last until Faust is satisfied with some experience enough to want it to linger awhile longer. They sign the agreement with a drop of blood. Faust cautions Mephistopheles that he expects more than simple joy, but a total human experience (in a sense, Faust is prioritizing the Romantic pursuit of experience over the Rational pursuit of knowledge):

I crave excitement, agonizing bliss,
Enamour'd hatred, quickening vexation.
Purg'd from the love of knowledge, my vocation,
The scope of all my powers henceforth be this,
To bare my breast to every pang,—to know
In my heart’s core all human weal and woe,
To grasp in thought the lofty and the deep,
Men’s various fortunes on my breast to heap,
And thus to theirs dilate my individual mind,
And share at length with them the shipwreck of mankind. (1140-50)

Mephistopheles tries to get Faust to find pleasure in simple things, like drinking with friends in a tavern. There’s also a telling passage where Mephistopheles meets a witch, who doesn’t recognize him without his hooves, tail, talons and horns—when she at last recognizes him as Satan, he tells her not to use that name, and that he’s changed his appearance to more easily deceive people.

Then Faust sees a young girl, Gretchen, and demands to possess her by midnight. Her innocence and beauty momentarily charms him, and he asks Faust for a case of jewels to impress her with. Gretchen's mother, however, sees the gift as evil and gives it to a priest. With persistence, however, Faust wins Gretchen's heart (the same day) and kisses her. Once again alone, however, he notes how quickly his despression returns.

With this exalted joy,
Which lifts me near and nearer to the gods,
Thou gav'st me this companion, unto whom
I needs must cling, though cold and insolent,
He still degrades me to myself, and turns
Thy glorious gifts to nothing, with a breath. (3003-05)

Faust also recognizes he's destroyed Gretchen's innocence; she was happy, but now that he's left her, life is "the grave; and all the world to me is turned to gall." Faust views himself as a predatory monster:

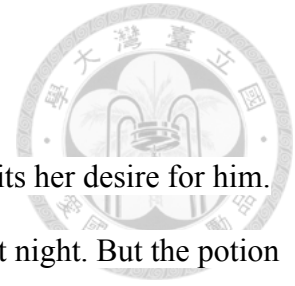
Do I not ever feel her woe?
The outcast am I not, unhoused, unblest,
Inhuman monster, without aim or rest,
Who, like the greedy surge, from rock to rock,
Sweeps down the dread abyss with desperate shock? (3010-14)

When he returns to her, she asks him if he believes in God. He answers by describing the nature's "impenetrable agencies" and the "feeling when thou utterly art blest,"

Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name for it!
'Tis feeling all;

Name is but sound and smoke

Shrouding the glow of heaven. (3220-25)



Gretchen isn't convinced, pointing out that he's "not a Christian," but admits her desire for him. Faust gives her a potion, to put her mother to sleep so that Faust can visit at night. But the potion is too strong and the mother dies. Her neighbors begin to gossip, and her brother steps in to defend her honor, just as Faust is ready to leave her, now that he's gotten what he wanted. Guided by Mephistopheles, Faust kills her brother and they flee the scene on a broomstick, to attend a summit of evil and demonic powers. Faust sees a vision of Gretchen with a red line around her neck and discovers that he got her pregnant. After abandoning her with child, and killing both her mother and brother, Gretchen has drowned the newborn child in despair, and is now condemned for murder. She's to be executed the next day. Faust tries to save her in prison but her mind is gone and she doesn't recognize him. She suffers because of her memory of what she's done; Faust tries to get her to forget, but she refuses.

In misery! despairing! long wandering pitifully on the face of the earth and now imprisoned! This gentle hapless creature, immured in the dungeon as a malefactor and reserved for horrid tortures! That it should come to this! To this! (4195)

Mephistopheles answers that he didn't force make Faust do anything he didn't want to do: "Did we force ourselves on thee, or thou on us? . . . Who was it plunged her into perdition? I or thou?"

Part One of *Faust* demonstrates how destructive human desire can be: lured by beauty, Faust destroys several lives to satisfy his lust.

In Part Two of *Faust*, however, (published in 1832), Faust becomes exempt from the devil's clutches because of his striving, and is saved. Marlowe's version ends with Faust's damnation as a warning to others. "Regard his Hellish fall, Whose fiendful fortune may exhort

the wise Only to wonder at unlawful things whose deepness doth entice such forward wits To practice more than heavenly power permits” (Scene XIV). In Goethe’s version, after a lifetime doing “evil” (sins of *hubris*, like using technology to reclaim land from the sea), Faust finds a touch of guilt and decides to focus upon improving the lives of his subjects: that thought brings him happiness, and he dies. Mephistopheles tries to claim his soul, but angels descend and steal it away—because Faust’s last act of will was selfless, he won salvation.

He’s escaped, this noble member
Of the spirit world, from evil,
Whoever strives, in his endeavour,
We can rescue from the devil. (1194-97)

“Whoever strives, can be saved” might indicate that dissatisfaction and the quest for knowledge and wisdom will eventually lead to goodness; as sensory pleasures are fleeting and long-lasting happiness can only be found in helping others.

Mephistopheles, however, feels cheated. “I have been robbed of costly, peerless profit, The lofty soul pledged me by solemn forfeit, They’ve spirited it slyly from my writ.” Shattuck agrees that the ending seem unsatisfying, since Faust is saved for a moment of goodwill after years of evil deeds: “It would be hard to contrive a more arbitrary and unearned ending to the lengthy drama” (101). On the other hand, Faust can be seen as a satire on the religious belief that a man can be saved on his deathbed.

Is the pursuit of knowledge *evil*? Is there a limit to man’s knowledge? These themes were taken up by Byron in *Manfred* (1816). Manfred is a philosopher and scientist, and more than that, a magician. Like Faust, he is seeking death, or “forgetfulness.” He was in love with a woman, his sister, who died because of their love, and his guilt torments him. He summons the beautiful

Witch of the Alps, to either kill him or bring back his sister. She offers to help if he serves her, but he refuses to submit. The next day he's visited by the Abbot of St. Maurice, who asks if the rumors are true: has he been communing with evil spirits? When Manfred dies, and a spirit comes to take his soul, he refuses the spirit, because his own guilt tortures him more than Hell ever could.

Metaphorically, you could say that Manfred and Faust's quest for knowledge, their endless desire for more, killed the identity/subjectivity of their loves, who were beautiful and simple in faith. Manfred says he killed

Not with my hand, but heart – which broke her heart –

It gazed on mine, and withered. I have shed

Blood, but not hers – and yet her blood was shed --

I saw – and could not staunch it. (2.2.125-129)

The path to knowledge is the path to death, to the obliteration of self; it necessarily leads to the death of love, the mirror that reflects your sense of self-identity. The only cure is obedience, which purges responsibility, but this is one thing Manfred cannot handle.

I will not swear – Obey! and whom? the spirits

Whose presence I command, and be the slave

Of those who served me – Never! (2.2.169-71)

Manfred is told he will die tomorrow, and prepares his casket. When the Abbot comes to visit him and offers to act as an intermediary, to save his soul, Manfred refuses.

I hear thee. This is my reply; whate'er

I may have been, or am, doth rest between

Heaven and myself. – I shall not choose a mortal

To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd

Against your ordinances? prove and punish! (3.1.65-69)



When the spirit comes to claim him in death, he defies it as well. He wrestles with the spirits to his last breath; claiming, like Milton, that the mind is its own place. Unlike Faust, Manfred takes *total* responsibility for his own actions.

I do defy ye, though I feel my soul

Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;

100

Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath

I breathe my scorn upon ye – earthly strength (3.4.114-18)

...

The mind which is immortal makes itself

Requital for its good or evil thoughts –

Is its own origin of ill and end –

And its own place and time – its innate sense. . .

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;

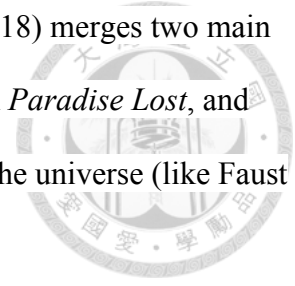
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey –

But was my own destroyer, and will be

My own hereafter. – Back, ye baffled fiends!

The hand of death is on me – but not yours! (3.4.15-62)

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* (1818) merges two main themes; the idea of a creature rebelling against his creator, such as Satan in *Paradise Lost*, and the idea of a proud scientist lifting nature's veil to understand the rules of the universe (like Faust or Manfred).



The creature in *Frankenstein* actually reads *Paradise Lost* (along with Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*) and comments, "They produced in me an infinity of new images and feelings, that sometimes raised me to ecstasy, but more frequently sunk me into the lowest dejection."

But *Paradise Lost* excited different and far deeper emotions. It moved every feeling of wonder and awe that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition, for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me. (99)

The monster identifies with Satan, for being discarded by his creator, and rages against his own maker. "Unfeeling, heartless creator! You had endowed me with perceptions and passions and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind" (107) Like his maker, no matter how much good he tried to do, people immediately judged him on looks alone and treated him with violence. Unloved, he is driven to embrace evil. "There is love in me the likes of which you've never seen. There is rage in me the likes of which should never escape. If I am not satisfied in he one, I will indulge the other." Like Satan, he abhors what he becomes, but feels compelled to continue.

I abhorred myself. But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness; that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was forever barred, then

impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. . . I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture; but I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested, yet could not disobey. . . I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish, to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my daemonic design became an insatiable passion. (167-68)

In 1820, John Keats tried to create his own epic poem *Hyperion*, which reframed Milton's *Paradise Lost* by using gods of mythology, rather than Christianity. It began with Saturn, having just been overthrown by the younger, "infant thunderer" and rebel, Jove. In the fragment that exists, Saturn is shown, like Satan, as a fallen god, and *Hyperion* urges readers to "strive" and take actions – "seize the arrow's barb Before the tense string murmur."

Keats never finished the poem. In a letter, he writes "I have given up *Hyperion*—There were too many Milton inversions in it" (qtd. in Leonard 98). However in a letter to his siblings, Keats confirms the Romantic view that pain and suffering is necessary for knowledge, and should be embraced rather than avoided. "Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a soul" (qtd. in Moton 377).

In 1820, Percy Bysshe Shelley published *Prometheus Unbound*. Although he claims Prometheus is a better model for poetry than Satan, he nevertheless focuses on resistance in the face of a stronger power. For this reason he resisted Æschylus' original conclusion which ends in reconciliation between the two. "The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary."

For Shelley's *Prometheus*, like *Manfred*, defiance is absolute and eternal.



To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.” (qtd. in Ferber 206)

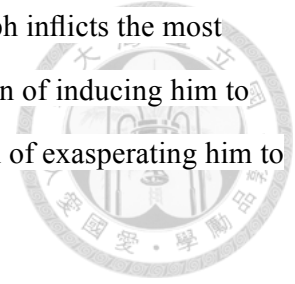
In *Essay on the Devil and Devils*, Shelley describes how belief in the Devil and eternal punishment is rapidly fading from polite society:

They seem to wish to divest him of all personality. . . Hell is popularly considered as metaphorical of the torments of an evil conscience and by no means capable of being topographically ascertained. No one likes to mention the torments of the everlasting fire and the poisonous gnawing of the worm that liveth forever and ever. (qtd. in Oldridge 42)

In the *Defense of Poetry*, Shelley claims that the supremacy of Milton’s genius is due to the “bold neglect of moral purpose” in *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s Devil, Shelley claims, has far more virtue than his God.

Implacable hate, patient cunning and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremest anguish on an enemy, these things are evil; and although venial in a slave, are not to be forgiven in a tyrant; although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeat in one subdued, are marked by all that dishonours the conquest in the victor. Milton’s Devil as a moral being is so far superior to his God, as One who perseveres in some purposes which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and

torture, is to One who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments. (qtd. in Lujik 72)



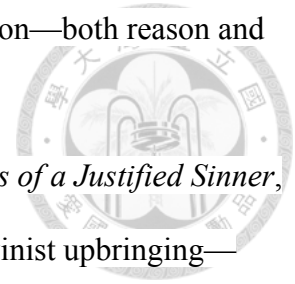
In 1821, Byron explored similar themes in *Cain*. Lucifer leads Cain on an adventure, and teaches him about the nature of Good and Evil. God and Lucifer are not in themselves Good or Evil; and things need to be judged independently on their own merits.

He as a conqueror will call the conquered
Evil, but what will be the Good he gives?
Were I the victor, his works would be deemed
The only evil ones. . .

Evil and Good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the Giver;
But if he gives you good—so call him; if
Evil springs from him, do not name it mine,
Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
Not by words, though of Spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be. (616)

Lucifer also points out that the fatal apple has given Cain a gift: “Your reason: — let it not be overruled / By tyrannous threats to force you into faith / ‘Gainst all external sense and inward feeling” (616). It’s important to note here, that faith was viewed as opposed to both feeling and reason. For classical philosophers, the body’s passions led one into sin while the mind’s reason lifted one to contemplate God. Although Romantics differed from most Enlightenment thinkers

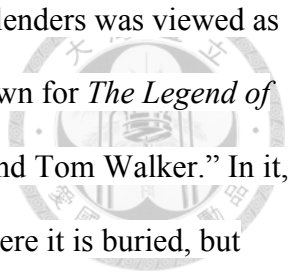
by focusing on sensations and experience, they didn't see it as *against* reason—both reason and passion were united in their *striving* against limitations



In James Hogg's 1824 novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the Devil calls himself Gil-Martin and uses Robert's (the protagonist) Calvinist upbringing—where he was told he was “part of the elect” and so predestined to eternal salvation—to encourage him to give into his pre-existing tendencies towards violence. Robert grows increasingly confused, as Gil-Martin seems less and less like a malevolent, supernatural force, and more like a wicked part of his own psychology (in this sense it can be viewed as an earlier version of *Fight Club*.)

In the 1831 *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the Devil becomes symbol for rebellion, as well as alienation from God; it also challenges the traditional depiction of evil as monstrous and ugly. Archdeacon Frollo and his adopted son, Quasimodo (the hunchback), both fall for the beautiful Esmeralda. Once Frollo learns, however, that he cannot have her love, he arranges for her to be falsely accused of murder and witchcraft, which results in her public hanging. When Frollo laughs at her suffering, Quasimodo pushes him off the cathedral to his death. The novel underscores the idea that the capacity for both great evil—and great love—is in every man, regardless of appearance or religious affiliation.

Despite the rapid progress of human achievement, given mankind's propensity towards evil, not everyone was convinced that humanity's evolution was positive. Would the total freedom and boundless energy to know and dominate nature lead ruin? Emerson comments in 1822, “will it not be dreadful, to discover that this experiment made by America, to ascertain if men can govern themselves – does not succeed? that too much knowledge, & too much liberty makes them mad.” (qtd. in Banta 143)



In America especially, the greedy tendencies of bankers and moneylenders was viewed as the embodiment of unchecked evil. In 1824, Washington Irving (better known for *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip van Rinkle*) illustrates this theme with “The Devil and Tom Walker.” In it, Tom is seeking a buried pirate treasure and the devil offers to show him where it is buried, but only if it will be used in his service. The Devil, “Old Scratch,” proposes that Tom become a slave trader; Tom refuses but agrees to go into business as a moneylender. Later in life, Tom is collecting on a mortgage, and is accused of making a lot of money off the suffering of others. He replies, “The devil take me if I have made a farthing!” So the Devil does come up and rides off with him on his black horse. The story serves as a warning against pure capitalistic greed.

Despite (or because of) the political separation of Church and State, America gave rise to a new religions, in spiritual revivals called “Great Awakenings.” Most of these movements have died out, but it is worth commenting on Mormonism, which continues to be a major religion today. In 1827, Joseph Smith was directed by the angel Moroni to dig up a buried stone box, which contained the golden plates that became the Book of Mormon.

Mormonism, like most forms of spiritualism in the nineteenth century, believes that men can evolve and become gods themselves. While this ambition to “become like a god” is exactly the sin Satan is blamed for, Mormons justify it by referring to biblical passages.

Just as a child can develop the attributes of his or her parents over time, the divine nature that humans inherit can be developed to become like their Heavenly Father’s.

. . . When Jesus was accused of blasphemy on the grounds that “thou, being a man, makest thyself God,” He responded, echoing Psalms, “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?”

Mormonism claims that the book Smith discovered was written around 600BC, however the passage concerning “Lucifer” proves Smith was copying from the King James Bible. The title “Lucifer” that was later interpreted as a name for Satan didn’t appear until St. Jerome published a Latin translation of the bible in the late fourth century—the original reference was referring to Venus, the morning star.

Book of Mormon: 2 Nephi 24:12

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! Art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! –

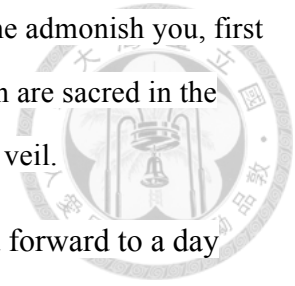
KJV Bible: Isaiah 14:12

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! -

The problem that this presents for advocates of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is that an Israelite living around 600 B.C. would have no clue as to what Lucifer as a term meant, much less include this Roman name in their Scriptures, and even less use that name to refer to Satan. (Weber)

The practice of discovering or inventing new texts, often aided by spiritual entities, was common throughout the nineteenth century. Like Milton, Americans as a whole were pro-spirituality and knowledge, and against any kind of prohibition or limit. In 1838, Emerson gave a lecture at the Harvard Divinity School, where he praises the Faustian ideal while denying revealed religious truths.

I would study, I would know, I would admire forever. . . Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil.



Emerson denied that belief in impossible miracles was a virtue, and looked forward to a day when faith and science were not in conflict; he also argued that internal instinct is more important than blind allegiance to external moral dictates. Emerson was labelled an atheist and banned from the college. In 1841 Emerson published *Self-reliance*. His easily quotable maxims, once blasphemous, have become deeply integrated in American culture.

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. . . Dare to live the life you have dreamed for yourself. . . Go forward and make your dreams come true. . . Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it. . . Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm (Goodreads)

In 1840, Arthur Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality*, rejected Kant's Categorical Imperative in favor of a morality based on compassion and participation. All other apparent morality is actually selfish and egoistic. True morality can only occur when not prioritizing selfish desire, when done purely for the other. "Compassion, as the sole non-egoistic motive, is also the only genuinely moral one" (105). Schopenhauer also distinguishes between normal, egoistic evil (doing harm to others if necessary to obtain one's desires) and diabolical or devilish evil, which is to harm others intentionally out of spite or malice.

In 1841, Thomas Carlyle published *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, which sets up the heroic as its own kind of religion.

We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near. The

light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world; and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness—in whose radiance all souls feel that it is well with them. (2)

In *Byron*, Carlyle includes Milton as a “heroic” man because he triumphed over adversity: “was Milton rich or at ease, when he composed *Paradise Lost*? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few” and also claims that Milton’s Satan is “Byron’s grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently for his conduct” (qtd. in Hoffman 208).

In 1845, Hegel proclaimed, “Everything that exists is rational” and that history is pulled forward out of necessity, by Great Men. He also comments on the death of God; or the vacancy of meaning that entices mankind forward.

The pure concept, however, or infinity, as the abyss of nothingness in which all being sinks, must characterize the infinite pain, which previously was only in culture historically and as the feeling on which rests modern religion, the feeling that God Himself is dead, (the feeling which was uttered by Pascal, though only empirically, in his saying: Nature is such that it marks everywhere, both in and outside of man, a lost God). (*Faith and Knowledge*, qtd. in Groom 29)

Inspired by Carlyle’s theories, as well as Hegel’s view of the progressive evolution of nature, some believed it was the duty of the superior men (who considered themselves Heroic Vitalists) to dominate the weak. According to Bentley, “The Heroic Vitalists feared that the recent trends toward democracy would hand over power to the ill-bred, uneducated, and immoral, whereas

their belief in a transcendent force in nature directing itself onward and upward gave some hope that this force would overrule in favor of the strong, intelligent, and noble” (49-58).

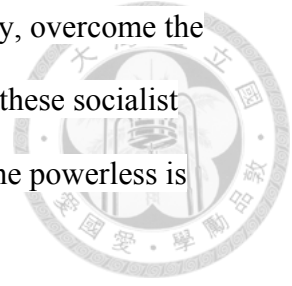
In 1843, Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The Birthmark*, *Unpardonable Sin* and *Rappaccini's Daughter*; each about the nature of sin and evil in nature, and the impetus to overcome it (which usually leads to destruction). Evil tempts like a rose by its beauty, but it comes with thorns. The desire to perfect nature by removing flaws (scientific discovery) is destructive. But Hawthorne's ethical conservatism was unique in its times. Bold, daring heroes were more popular. In 1844, Dumas made both rebellion and calculated murder heroic in *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Christo*: the first about heroic rebellion against state and religious tyranny, the second about studious and long-term revenge.

In 1848, Marx published *The Communist Manifesto*, in which he adapts Hegel's view of progressive history and revolution, but grounds it in economic alienation. Marx quotes Goethe's Mephistopheles, "Everything in existence is worth being destroyed." When he was younger, Marx wrote his thesis on Epicureanism. The following passage, taken from Marx's poem *The Fiddler*, is often used (on the internet) to prove Marx was a Satanist; but the more likely message of the full poem is that human nature compels actions towards both good and evil:

With Satan I have struck my deal,
He chalks the signs, beats time for me
I play the death march fast and free.

Marx believed that history has an organized structure and evolves, not by the mind of god, but through exclusively material considerations (economic/human behavior). Due to industrialization, the *bourgeoisie* (ruling class that had come to own the means of production) was able to widen the gap between a product and its maker, causing increased alienation. The *proletariat* (ordinary

laborers who produce value through effort), would, by sheer force of history, overcome the overripe capitalist establishment (Flowers Loc. 3799). According to Marx, these socialist revolutionaries would vanquish capitalism; moreover, such revolution by the powerless is morally justified and historically inevitable.



In Chapter 4 of *The Holy Family* (1845), Marx said that capitalists and proletarians are equally alienated, but that each social class experiences alienation in a different form:

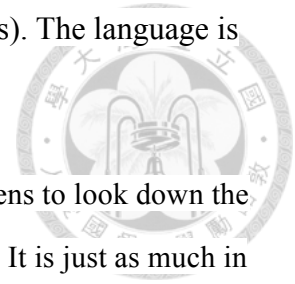
Within this antithesis, the private property-owner is therefore the conservative side, and the proletarian the destructive side. From the former arises the action of preserving the antithesis, from the latter the action of annihilating it. (qtd. in Easton 367)

To the question, why this feeling of suffering and alienation if God does not exist, Marx argued that it was because we find our identities in production; but most work robs us of that freedom, because it decides what we must work on, and then the labor is taken away from us. The (violent) revolutionary politics of Marxism would inspire a great deal of political violence.

In “The Black Cat” (1843), Edgar Allen Poe claims the soul has “a touche of Perverseness,” which is the “unfathomable longing of the soul *to vex itself*—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for wrong’s sake only” (qtd. in Svendsen 97). This urge to do evil had no cause or motivation, as such it did not seem to fit into the belief that evil is just nature seeking pleasure and enjoyment.

Kierkegaard tried to establish a source for this innate evil in *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), by arguing that freedom automatically entails an immediate sense of guilt. When faced with the possibility of choice, we feel paralyzing anxiety (which, according to Kierkegaard,

cannot be explained apart from the idea of original sin, or our fallen natures). The language is strongly reminiscent of *Paradise Lost*.



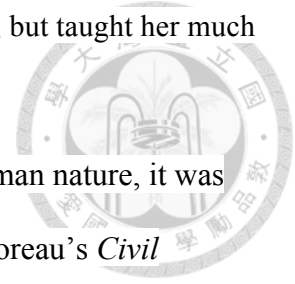
Anxiety may be compared with dizziness. He whose eye happens to look down the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But what is the reason for this? It is just as much in his own eye as in the abyss, for suppose he had not looked down. Hence, anxiety is the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis and freedom looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself. Freedom succumbs to dizziness. . . In that very moment everything is changed, and freedom, when it again rises, sees that it is guilty. Between these two moments lies the leap, which no science has explained and which no science can explain. (qtd. in Tanner 108)

According to John S. Tanner in *Anxiety in Eden*, “As among the most notable interpretations of the Edenic myth ever written, *Paradise Lost* and *The Concept of Anxiety* cry out to be read together. Rooted in a seemingly simple story of Genesis, they conduct wide-ranging, brilliant investigations into the psychology of innocence, sin, and guilt, probing the nature of human fallibility and freedom” (11).

In 1850, Nathaniel Hawthorne published the *Scarlet Letter*. The moral of the story could be that evil and sin is just how people treat each other, but it’s more than that, it’s about the terrifying freedom that comes with alienation.

She had wandered, without rule or guidance, into a moral wilderness... Her intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely as the wild Indian in his woods. . . The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her

teachers—stern and wild ones—and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss. (Chap. 18)



Despite, or perhaps because of, these fascinations with a “dark side” of human nature, it was perceived that human legal systems may become corrupt. According to Thoreau’s *Civil Disobedience* (1849), it is better to resist unjust laws and “stop the machine” of government.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth—certainly the machine will wear out... but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn. . . Unjust laws exist; shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? (qtd. in Snodgrass 614)

But what happens when the unjust laws are God’s laws? According to Kierkegaard, we feel guilt when peering into the abyss of freedom. For this reason, perhaps, while many celebrated mankind’s sudden and rapid development of scientific knowledge and the domination over nature, others saw new technology as a form of blasphemy, warning that some truths were not meant to be explored by men.

3.5 Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851)

Traditionally *Moby Dick* has been interpreted as a Christian narrative, sanitized like *Paradise Lost* by claiming that the white whale is the mystery of nature, or God, and that those who seek to discover forbidden knowledge will be righteously destroyed. But Melville, in a letter to Hawthorne, writes “I have written a wicked book. . . and feel spotless as a lamb.” He offers to send Hawthorne a sample, but warns the book is filled with hell-fire:

Shall I send you a fin of the Whale by way of a specimen mouthful? The tail is not yet cooked—though the hell-fire in which the whole book is broiled might not unreasonably have cooked it all ere this. This is the book’s motto (the secret one),—*Ego non baptiso te in nomine*—but make out the rest yourself. (qtd. in Dreyfus 144)

The Latin passage referred to, the “secret motto”, is most likely *Ego non baptiso te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti—sed in nomine Diaboli*: “I baptize you not in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” it says, “but rather in the name of the Devil.”

Moby Dick revolves around Captain Ahab, who seeks vengeance against the whale for a past injury. While the other crewmates are superstitious, Ahab is self-reliant and determined. Henry A. Murray claims, “Melville’s Satan is the spitting image of Milton’s hero ... the stricken, passionate, indignant, and often eloquent rebel angel of *Paradise Lost*, whose role is played by Ahab” (qtd. in Dreyfus 160). For conservative readers who prefer the orthodox interpretation of Satan, however, Captain Ahab damns himself by his megalomania and hubris.

In *Failure and Success in America*, Martha Banta reads Ahab more in line with Kierkegaard’s description of anxiety in the face of the abyss, but with a unique twist: the absence of meaning *lures* Ahab into action via an imaginary limit; as does his crews submission:

Ahab’s weight of egomania paradoxically springs from his idea about the possible vacancy of meaning behind the white brow of the whale and the universe – a vacuum that would say no to the ego’s limitless expectations. His ego rushes in to fill the space left open by the crew’s submission of its individuality to his greater force. (143)

According to Hubert Dreyfus in *All Things Shining*, the moral of *Moby Dick* is that, “Either we become crazy at the recognition that there is no such truth, or we drive ourselves crazy trying to prove there is.” The authors muse that perhaps the purpose of life is to “lower the conceit of attainable felicity” (182). But if *Moby Dick* was meant as a warning, why would he call it wicked?

In 1925, J.H. Pitman commented on the Leviathon simile in *Paradise Lost* (I.200-8), seeing “devilish deceit” in the whale’s large size (which can be mistaken for an island). An orthodox reading for *Moby Dick* is that Ahab, like Satan, destroys himself in a vainglorious attempt at conquest; however this assumes that there are limits to human knowledge and ambition, as well as some supernatural force that will “punish” transgressors. Perhaps the “evil” nature of Melville’s book comes from the fact that we might sympathize with Ahab, who (like Manfred or Frankenstein’s monster) responds to assumed limitations with defiance:

Oh! thou clear spirit of clear fire, whom on these seas I as Persian once did worship,
till in the sacramental act so burned by thee, that to this hour I bear the scar. I now
know that thy right worship is defiance. No fearless fool now fronts thee. Of thy fire
thou madest me—a true child of fire. But thou art but my fiery father; my sweet
mother I know not! O cruel! what hast thou done with her? Defyingly I worship thee!
(507, qtd. in Levine 261)

Thus Henry Murray could say to the assembled Melvilleans at Williamstown in 1951 as they celebrated the centenary of *Moby Dick*, “Some may wonder how it was that Melville, a fundamentally good, affectionate, noble, idealistic, and reverential man, should have felt compelled to write a wicked book. Why did he aggress so furiously against Western orthodoxy, as furiously as Byron, or Shelley, or any other Satanic writer who preceded him, as furiously as Nietzsche or the most radical of his successors in our day?” (Spark 450)

To some extent, Melville’s work can be seen as a response to the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau. Nature doesn’t always, Melville might argue, provoke a benign and peaceful response from us; rather its complete indifference and ineffability challenges us to respond with refusal and opposition—the determination to thrive and build despite Nature’s best attempts to lay us low. Perhaps this is why Melville sets his story on the sea, rather than land. As

one comment on the online forum *ilovephilosophy* notes, supporting the claim with a quote from *Moby Dick*: “Aha! Thoreau was wrong in his conception of nature. Only on land—on solid ground—does nature appear simply benign, beautiful and enlightening. On the ocean, man encounters the truer face of nature—wondrous, but also threatening & terrifying. Authentic heroism charges out into the mystery.”

In landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God - so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! For worm-like, then, oh! who would craven crawl to land! Terrors of the terrible! is all this agony so vain? Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demigod! Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing - straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!

Ahab’s brand of open defiance, even against God, was gaining strength as a *response* to the the anxiety generated by the terrifying sublime (the abyss of human freedom and the ambition to conquer Nature’s powerful forces). Many saw Milton’s Satan as a daring and courageous rebel, the original embodiment of perseverance.

In 1857, Baudelaire published a collection of poems known as the *Flowers of Evil*. In the section “Révolte,” the narrative voice congratulates Peter for denying Jesus; in “Abel et Caïn” the voice urges Cain to ascend to heaven and throw God to earth. In “Litanies of Satan”, Baudelaire writes:

O you, the most knowing, and loveliest of Angels,
a god fate betrayed, deprived of praises,
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!
O, Prince of exile to whom wrong has been done,

who, vanquished, always recovers more strongly,
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!
You who know everything, king of the underworld,
the familiar healer of human distress,
O Satan, take pity on my long misery! (273)



This aim of artistic independence, Baudelaire claimed, was to create the new without being hampered by external influences: “The artist stems only from himself. . . He stands security only for himself. . . He dies childless. He has been his own king, his own priest, his own God.” (qtd. in Whitworth 191)

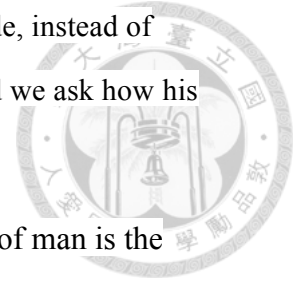
In 1859 Darwin published *The Origins of Species*, which caused a “large scale abandonment of literal reading of the Bible” (Woll 197). Increasingly, mankind were seen as rational animals, which should be free to pursue their own interests and personal tastes, even if regarded “immoral.” John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* argued for total freedom of thought and emotion, as well as a liberated sexuality, as long as both parties consent and are of age.

The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant . . . Over himself, over his body and mind, the individual is sovereign. (qtd. in Perry 92)

In 1861, the growing clash between the American pursuit of liberty and the slave trade resulted in the Civil War and emancipation. Also in 1862, William R. Alger wrote against *The Theory of a Personal Devil*, in which he argues that no such Devil can be found in nature:

It is a baffled attempt, a falsity, a mental phantom, and no solution at all. Instead of answering the question, it simply removes the question one step further off, and wins a facetious peace for the mind, not by overcoming, but by eluding, the genuine

problem. By the supposition of a Devil, it is plain that we evade, instead of explaining, the origin of evil; for then the Devil is the evil, and we ask how his existence is to be accounted for. (169)



Instead, Alger argues, “Limitation is the true devil.” The moral act of man is the resistance or rebellion against the imposition of external limits, as we saw in Emerson or Thoreau. This revolution can be tragically moral even—or especially—if it fails.

In 1862, Victor Hugo first published *Les Miserables*, which revolves around the question of evil; a criminal steals a loaf of bread and is confined to prison, an officer attempts to uphold the laws that put him there—but has his sense of identity crushed when he realizes he is not the better man. In 1871, Mikhail Bakunin published *God and the State*, where he confirms the idea of Darwinian evolution. Humans were like apes, until Satan gave them reason.

But here steps in Satan, the eternal rebel, the first free-thinker and emancipator of worlds. He makes man ashamed of his bestial ignorance and obedience; he emancipates him, stamps upon his brow the seal of liberty and humanity, in urging him to disobey and eat of the fruit of knowledge.

Bakunin continues to outline the three essential elements of human development:

- (1) human animality;
- (2) thought; and
- (3) rebellion;

He concludes, “To the first properly corresponds social and private economy; to the second, science; to the third, liberty.” In 1871, Dostoyevsky’s *Demons* illustrated the negative, self-destructive tendencies of man. Dostoyevsky’s mysterious, aristocratic Nikolai Stavrogin is based in part on the violent propaganda of Bakunin and his associate Nechaev, which

Dostoyevksy's biographer Joseph Frank calls "more striking than its total negativism, the complete absence of any specific aim or goal that would justify the horrors it wishes to bring about. It contains blood-curdling exhortations and apocalyptic images of total annihilation: 'We must dedicate ourselves to wholehearted destruction, continuous, unflagging, unslackening, until none of the existing social forms remains to be destroyed'" (qtd. in Fernie 89).

In 1874, Gustave Flaubert published *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, another "temptation by the Devil" story mimicking Christ's temptation in the desert. However, rather than resisting worldly pleasures, Anthony becomes delirious in the miracle of life, which leads to an even greater desire to reveal nature's mysteries.

O joy! bliss! I have beheld the birth of life! I have seen the beginning of motion!

My pulses throb even to the point of bursting! I long to fly, to swim, to bark, to bellow, to howl! Would that I had wings, a carapace a shell,— that I could breathe out smoke, wield a trunk, — make my body writhe, — divide myself everywhere, — be in everything, — emanate with odours, — develop myself like the plants, — flow like water, — vibrate like sound — shine like light, squatting upon all forms — penetrate each atom — descend to the very bottom of matter, — be matter itself! (260)

For those who still believed that human progression and knowledge as positive, Satan was seen as a heroic liberator. In 1875, Madame Blatavksy's theosophical society referred positively to Lucifer, who she saw as a light-bringer, like Prometheus. She sees that Satan "claimed and enforced his right of independent judgment and will, his right of free-agency and responsibility" (193)

3.6 Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)

Nietzsche's writing picks up the themes that have been partially explored in other writers: how the absence of religious truths, leading to mankind's complete liberty, generates anxiety that demands response; and thus the need for courageous, daring men who could, with Will and Power, establish themselves as gods to restore confidence. (Faith in God gave men the certainty they needed to live their lives; the Death of God forces men to develop self-confidence).

In 1882, Nietzsche wrote *The Gay Science*, which features the infamous passage, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." He continues to ask, *now what?*

How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? (Section 125)

In 1883, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche introduces his Superman, which he considered an appropriate response to the Death of God. According to Zarathustra, the meaning of the earth for man to develop his own ideal experience, in this life, through will and power, and ignore those who teach "otherworldly hopes."

The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go! (qtd. in Taylor 531)

Zarathustra is not one fixed meaning or truth, but simply the process of self-determined becoming. “I am that which must ever surpass itself” (qtd. Jung 1214). Nietzsche recognizes that his daring hero, who fills in the void left by the absence of God, will be recognized as satanic to those who see themselves as “good and just”, and still believe in a personal Devil.

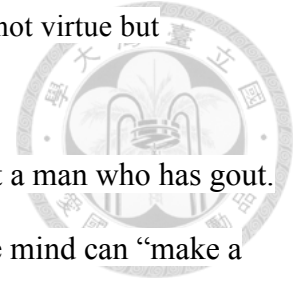
In you there is much to be laughed at, and especially your fear of what hath hitherto been called “the devil.” So alien are y in your souls to what is great, that to you the Superman would be frightful in his goodness. Ye highest men who have come within my ken! This is my doubt of you, and my secret laughter: I suspect that you would call my Superman—a devil! (159)

Nietzsche recognizes that his new definition of “good” is diametrically opposed to the religious virtues of humility and weakness; but this ethical inversion had been going on for over a century already. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Nietzsche references *Paradise Lost* in the passage, “He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee” (146). Applied to Milton’s Satan or Captain Ahab, this could be a warning against Faustian striving for justice or knowledge. However given Nietzsche’s opposition to traditional values, I take it to mean, “if you believe in evil, you will become evil.” (A meme I saw on Facebook recently read, “Remember that time an atheist killed a bunch of people for disagreeing with his beliefs? Yeah, me neither.”)

Nietzsche’s criticism with faith was that it made people weak-willed and passive. Muscles grow through rigorous use. Happiness, the end goal for Nietzsche’s Superman, is the result of overcoming resistance to grow in power.

What is good?—Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man. What is evil? —Whatever springs from weakness. What is happiness? —The feeling that power increases, that resistance is overcome. Not

contentment but more power; not peace at any price, but war; not virtue but efficiency. (The Antichrist 2)



In 1883, Arthur Conan Doyle published the *Narrative of John Smith*; about a man who has gout. The doctor orders him to bed for a week with the Miltonic warning that the mind can “make a heaven of hell.” In a series of dialogues, Smith expresses hopes for Lamarckism: the eradication of crime and disease, and eventually of the perfection of the human race (to demi-gods) through education and invention.

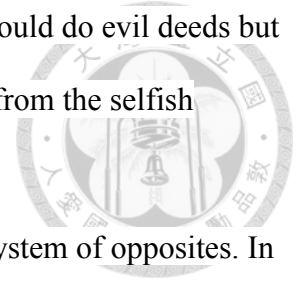
In 1890, Sir James George Frazer published *The Golden Bough*, a study in “magic and religion,” where he examines primitive religions and how they came about from an anthropological perspective. His comparison of Jesus to solar deities who die and are reborn every year was so scandalous he had to exclude it from the second edition.

In 1891, Oscar Wilde’s *A Picture of Dorian Gray*, was published with a preface claiming “there is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.” In the same year Wilde published *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, where he argues,

Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man’s original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion. (1043)

Nearing the end of the nineteenth century, the Faustian zeal towards self-empowerment had become less “evil” and more of a natural imperative, in the Hegelian sense. History progressed forward by its own impetus, propelled by the courage of great men. Nietzsche recognized that Christianity stressed virtues of weakness and humility, of self-denial; in response he emphasized will to power, action and enthusiasm. Disobedience had become a *virtue*. But that made it more

difficult to see where evil came from; as *Dorian Gray*, showed us, a man could do evil deeds but still remain young and charming—”pure” evil probably didn’t exist, apart from the selfish fulfillment of men’s desires; and if it did exist it was invisible.



For spiritualists, evil was seen as just the other side of a balanced system of opposites. In 1891 J. Legge published an English translation of the *Tao Te Ching*, which was influential to the mood of spiritualism, especially for those who saw in it a path towards greater power.

He who has in himself abundantly the attributes (of the Tao) is like an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him. (1)

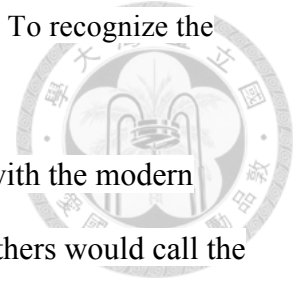
Interestingly, one passage seems to have been mistranslated.

To him by whom this harmony is known,
(The secret of) the unchanging (Tao) is shown,
And in the knowledge wisdom finds its throne.
All life-increasing arts to evil turn;
Where the mind makes the vital breath to burn,
(False) is the strength, (and o’er it we should mourn.) (3)

“Life-increasing arts to evil turn,” where mind makes the vital breath to burn would appeal to readers who saw creativity as a force of opposition to the established order, a revolution of what is to make what will be; although it misses the warning in the next passage, that “whatever is contrary to the Tao soon ends.” But the mention of evil isn’t in the original text, as shown in these two other translations.

To know the harmonious is called the eternal. To know the eternal is called enlightenment. (Susuki’s Translation)

To recognize this harmony (for growth) is to know the eternal. To recognize the eternal is to know enlightenment. (Goddard's Translation)



Nevertheless, some saw the traditionally negative role of “evil” as in line with the modern understanding of will and power; as Nietzsche himself pointed out: what others would call the Devil, was actually the path to freedom, power and spiritual truth. At the same time, while traditional religious ideology was quickly falling away, there was a deep spiritual belief in higher beings who guided mankind towards wisdom through revelation (as they did for Joseph Smith, Madame Blavatsky and many others.)

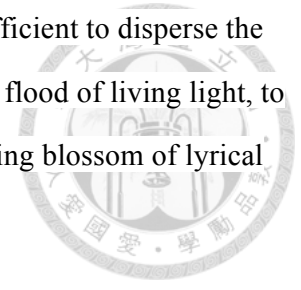
Aleister Crowley aligned himself openly with the Satanic tradition, called himself the Beast 666, and claimed to advocate of human sacrifice (which is unlikely). Crowley was a sensationalist and publicity hound, but in him we can examine some of the common practices of the times. For example, he found fault with Legge's translation of the Tao, and made a new translation with the help of a “spirit helper.” He translated the same passage this way:

He who understandeth this harmony knoweth the mystery of the Tao, and becometh a True Sage. All devices for inflaming life, and increasing the vital Breath, by mental effort are evil and factitious. (3)

Crowley's spirit guide was called Alamantrah, who came readily and “exhibited to me a codex of the original, which conveyed to me with absolute certitude the exact significance of the text.”

I was able to divine without hesitation or doubt the precise manner in which Legge had been deceived. He had translated the Chinese with singular fidelity, yet in almost every verse the interpretation was altogether misleading. There was no need to refer to the text from the point of view of scholarship. I had merely to paraphrase his translation in the light of actual knowledge of the true significance of the terms employed. Anyone who cares to take the trouble to compare the two versions will be

astounded to see how slight a remodeling of a paragraph is sufficient to disperse the obstinate obscurity of prejudice, and let loose a fountain and a flood of living light, to kindle the gnarled prose of stolid scholarship into the burgeoning blossom of lyrical flame. (Liber 157)



In other words, Crowley (speaking no Chinese) loosely paraphrased Legge’s translation to make it amenable to his own interpretation; and he did it with the guide of a magic spirit. Crowley is a modern Faust figure, but the interesting difference is that this was reality, not fiction or legend. It was *credible* to spiritualists who were making similar claims; and it wasn’t seen as demonic or diabolical (evil)—it was mostly assumed that the spirits were guiding humans towards progress by revealing sacred truths. Magicians could also use the spirits to do evil, but it was their will, their evil that caused it; the spirits were morally neutral. Crowley later change the name of his spirit guide, “Alamantrah” to the shorter “Lam.” Speaking of the Devil specifically, Crowley adopts the theosophical view of Lucifer, who is not the enemy of mankind but the bringer of knowledge. However Crowley also points out (that it can stand for “the God of any people that one personally dislikes,” and also as a projection of mankind’s crimes into nature.

Satan [is] regarded with horror by people who are ignorant of his formula, and, imagining themselves to be evil, accuse Nature herself of their own phantasmal crime. (*Magick* chapter 5)

Crowley developed his own rules of moral conduct, for his own path to spiritual wisdom which he called *Thelema*. In *Liber 77* he writes,

1. man has a right to live by his own law.
2. man has a right to eat what he will
3. man has a right to think what he will

4. man has a right to love as he will

5. man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights.



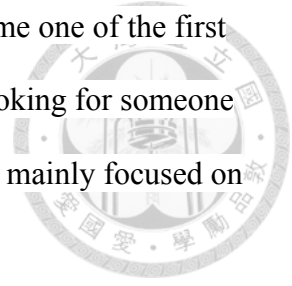
While the last point sounds excessively violent, Crowley includes it as a safeguard against tyranny: in other words, man has the right to depose a corrupt ruler who denies his freedom—in this sense, Crowley’s “Satanism” is not much different from Milton’s prose writings. In the same book we find the Nietzschean ideas that “there is no god but man” and “might makes right.”

Crowley, Madame Blavatsky and many others believed they could use ceremonial magic for practical purposes (Crowley uses the spelling “magick” to distinguish the “real” stuff from performers like Houdini, who used tricks and illusions). Others started performing fancy rituals, séances and other spiritual performances as a kind of theatre (or sometimes as a theater of the grotesque, involving animals sacrifices and blood to summon demons). Even those who weren’t interested in the occult or communicating with demonic forces, often still celebrated the newfound liberal humanism. Walt Whitman published *Leaves of Grass* in 1891

Resist much, obey little. Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved, Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city of this earth, ever afterward resumes its liberty. . . . I dance with the dancers and drink with the drinkers,, the echoes ring with our indecent calls, I pick out some low person for my dearest friend, he shall be lawless, rude, illiterate, he shall be one condemned for deeds done.

It’s worth pointing out, for example, that Crowley, Whitman and others had to *demand* the right to love as they chose; homosexuality, for example, was commonly seen as a perversion and against the law in many places (Oscar Wilde was incarcerated for “indecentcy” in 1895). Although society had come a long way since Sade, many restrictions remained.

In 1895 Marie Corelli published *The Sorrows of Satan*, which became one of the first modern bestsellers. The setting is London, and the Devil is on the loose, looking for someone morally strong enough to resist temptation. In a twist, however, the book is mainly focused on Satan's yearning to achieve salvation, which has been denied to him.



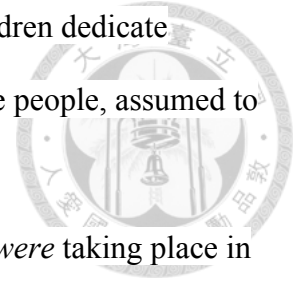
In 1896 George Méliès made the first horror film, *La Manoir Du Diable* (The Devil's Manor). Using stop-action effects he could make the Devil turn into all kinds of items—ghosts, witches, acrobats and angelic visions—and then turn back into a bat again. The character of the devil and the vampire were conflated during this time. Also in 1896, spiritualist A.E. Waite (co-creator of the modern Tarot deck) writes that there is no place for the Devil in the modern world.

Assuredly the demon of Milton has been cast down from the sky of theology, and, except in a few centres of extreme doctrinal concentration, there is no place found for him. The apostles of material philosophy have in a manner searched the universe, and have produced well, the material philosophy, and therein is no question of Lucifer. (8)

The interesting thing, however, is that Waite is replying to sensationalist reports of actual Devil worship in France. For the religious, all of this progress, technology, liberty and blasphemy was seen as proof that the Devil was rampant in modern culture. In 1885, a French anti-clericalist named Leo Taxil confirmed this view, when he suddenly converted to Catholicism and wrote a number of books claiming that Freemasonry was a world-wide satanic conspiracy. Taxil started an anti-Masonic newspaper, and in 1887 even had an audience with Pope Leo XIII, who subsequently sanctioned his anti-Masonic campaign.

A.E. Waite denied some of the things that Taxil, and his associate Diana Vaughan, were reporting as truth: “That there is a living cultus of Lucifer; that Black Masses are celebrated, and involve revolting profanations of the Catholic Eucharist; that the devil appears personally; that

he possess his church, his ritual, his sacraments; that men, women and children dedicate themselves to his service, or are so devoted by their sponsors; that there are people, assumed to be sane, that would die in the peace of Lucifer” (9).



However, the topic was confused by the elaborate ceremonies that *were* taking place in Paris at the time: it appears that people were offering “black masses” in Paris as a variety show for tourists, with magical apparatuses—daggers, blood, skulls and candles—and probably a few mechanical tricks to show the presence of spirits. At least that’s the view in J. K. Huysmans’ 1891 *Là-Bas* (Down There), which is sort of a Faustian journey into the darkside of the Parisian, devil-worshipping underground. The book ends in a vividly described black mass, “a monstrous pandemonium of prostitutes and maniacs” desecrating the crucifix and holy host. This was fiction, but allegedly based on real experiences. Waite’s argument was that nobody would *seriously* believe in and worship Satan; but for some, this seemed entirely possible.

In 1897 (after Waite’s book refusing that any kind of devil worship was a reality), Taxil announced at a press conference that his conversion was a fraud, the books he had written were complete fabrications, and that he had published them to embarrass the Catholic church. His motive for targeting the Freemasons was because they had rejected his application to join them. Diana Vaughan, the central character in his book *The Devil in the Nineteenth Century*, was also fiction—Diana Vaughan was the name of one of his typists. However, many people were so invested in the lie that they refused to believe his confession; they found it easier to believe the Freemason-Satanist conspiracy had pressured him to recant.

In 1897, *Dracula* and a less famous book, *The Blood of the Vampire* were published, as well George Bernard Shaw’s *The Devil’s Disciple* (1897). These works demonstrate the two separate functions Satan had come to embody by the end of the nineteenth century. On the one

hand, horror novels, or fake accounts like those of Taxil, titillated people with descriptions of monstrous evil in the civilized world, always waiting to pounce (either to tempt into evil, or to steal life force). Vampires were popular because they represented danger, but also sexuality, and also a kind of xenophobia against Eastern European immigrants. On the other hand, the Devil, Lucifer, Satan was seen as a superstition and symbolic for rebellion, pride and obstinate refusal (which had become positive virtues)—hence the main character in *The Devil's Disciple*, the only courageous hero who is willing to stand up and fight for freedom and justice, openly identifies as Satanic.

From this day this house is his home; and no child shall cry in it: this hearth is his altar; and no soul shall ever cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid. Now then: how many of you will stay with me; run up the American flag on the devil's house; and make a fight for freedom? (26)

While for centuries artists and writers had aimed towards technical perfection through rigorous academic training, creative producers were now rebelling against the classical institutions in favor of more direct and authentic modes of expression. In 1897, Klimt led the Vienna Secession, which would have a large impact on modern art. No doubt influenced by Marx, Klimt and other Vienna artists spurned 19th century manufacturing techniques and urged a return to quality handmade objects; they also refused to obey rules about form and structure and began to experiment with radical (and often fragmented) ways of depicting the world they experienced.

In 1895, Freud published his first major work, *Studies on Hysteria*. As early as 1563, Johann Weier theorized that many “witches” who freely confessed to demonic possession or pacts with the devil were suffering from *fantasies* brought on by melancholy or depression. Freud, who had a copy of *Malleus Malificarum* in his library, used this as a departure point to

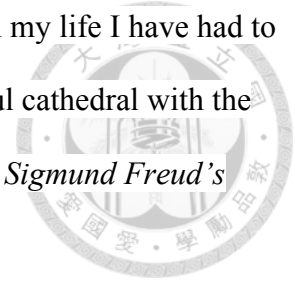
examine psychological ailments. He also identified himself as having a hysteria-prone personality, and claimed that, if he were born earlier, he could have been burned. In a 1933 letter to Ernest Jones he writes, “What progress we are making. In the Middle Ages they would have burned me. Now they are content with burning my books” (qtd. Stevens 22). In a letter to Martha where he quotes Milton’s Satan: “Let us consult / What reinforcement we may gain from hope, / If not, what resolution from despair” (qtd. Vitz 116). In fact Freud early on identified his work as Satanic: he saw the repressed desires of the subconscious through the lens of a subjugated Lucifer.

The big problems are still unsettled. It is an intellectual hell, layer upon layer of it, with everything fitfully gleaming and pulsating; and the outline of Lucifer-Amor coming into sight at the darkest centre. (qtd. in Vitz 127)

Freud’s personal letters show a great familiarity with *Paradise Lost*, *Faust* and *Dante*. At the beginning of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud used a line from the *Aeneid* as his motto: “Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo” (*Aeneid*, book VII.312). A common translation of the line is, “If I cannot deflect the will of heaven, then I shall move hell.” John Dryden had translated it as “If Jove and Heav’n my just desires deny, Hell shall the pow’r of Heav’n and Jove supply.” The original line actually mentions only Hell’s river, Acheron. Freud’s interpretation of the line was, like the underworld’s river, our unconscious might rise up and flood our dreams with projected fantasies, which served as a kind of wish-fulfillment.

When told of the popular success of his next book, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), which laid out his psychoanalytic theory, Freud replied quoting Faust, “Not even if he had them by the scruff of the neck, I swear, would ever these people smell the devil” (qtd. in

Vitz 128). He later commented, “Do you not know that I am the Devil? All my life I have had to play the Devil, in order that others would be able to build the most beautiful cathedral with the materials that I produced” (qtd. in Vitz 171). According to the Paul Vitz in *Sigmund Freud’s Christian Unconscious*,



This disturbing statement, along with the two preceding quotes, certainly implies that, in some sense, Freud saw himself as actively working against the angels of the Lord. (128)

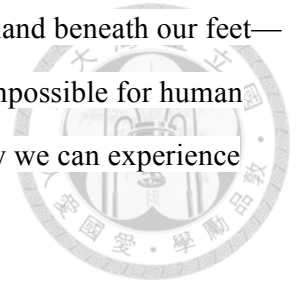
The importance of Freud to our study is that, in seeking out a cause for “evil” or violence, humanity could now access the hidden motivations of the subconscious as something separate from the rational mind. As Shengold says, “Freud discovered that he was Mephistopheles as well as Faust; the devils were not without but within” (qtd. in Vitz 147).

In a 1905 case study on hysteria, Freud writes, “No one who, like me, conjures up the most evil of those half-tamed demons that inhabit the human breast, and seeks to wrestle with them, can expect to come through the struggle unscathed” (*Dora* 100).

But Freud wasn’t the only one wrestling with demons: Nietzsche had already pointed out the particular pathos of modernity: “We have burned our bridges behind us—indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. . . . Woe, when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more freedom—and there is no longer any “land” (*The Gay Science* 181). Remaining sane in the face of the abyss of meaning took a nearly superhuman will, and a deliberate, constant struggle to maintain confidence. As Dreyfus comments,

It is a freedom of will so complete that by its force one can experience searing pain as overwhelming joy; crushing, crushing boredom as instant bliss; hell itself as the sacred, mystical oneness of all things deep down. There are literally no constraints whatsoever to the meaning we can construct for our experiences. In the context of

this infinite freedom any restriction whatsoever— even of the land beneath our feet— is woeful, deplorable; it chafes and burns. But what if this is impossible for human beings? What if our very humanness sets limitations to the way we can experience ourselves and our world? (49)



The bridges had been burnt, and humanity was enjoying the exhilarating freefall. If there was a voice of this period, it would be Rainer Maria Rilke, whose poetry displays both a confidence in knowledge through personal experience, in the right to desire and will, and also in the recognition of a subversive interior “darkness” as the source of creativity.

This is what the things can teach us: to fall, patiently to trust our heaviness. Even a bird has to do that before he can fly. . . Yet, no matter how deeply I go down into myself, my God is dark, and like a webbing made of a hundred roots that drink in silence. . . You darkness, that I come from, I love you more than all the fires that fence in the world, for the fire makes a circle of light for everyone, and then no one outside learns of you. I have faith in nights. (qtd. in Nelson 201)

You see, I want a lot.

Perhaps I want everything

the darkness that comes with every infinite fall

and the shivering blaze of every step up.

You have not grown old, and it is not too late

To dive into your increasing depths

where life calmly gives out its own secret. (qtd. in Barrows)

3.7 Conclusion

By the end of the nineteenth century, study in comparative mythology, new scientific discoveries and the progressive loss of Church power had convinced many people that “God” and “The Devil” were superstitious fictions from primitive belief systems. New systems of philosophical thought had sprung up to fill the void, which made man ultimately responsible for his own moral conduct. The Devil was often used as a literary character, but as a guardian and symbol of liberty instead of a symbol of temptation or evil. While the rise in spiritualism led to a common belief in “spirits”, these would do the bidding of superior power and will (unlike earlier devils that *tempted* through guile or deceit).

And while it was recognized that mankind had some kind of inner-propensity to evil, nature was regarded as morally neutral and responsive. The subjugation of nature through willpower and technology was generally seen as positive progress towards a greater future for humankind. As Leonard Piekoff writes,

The development from Aquinas through Locke and Newton represents more than four hundred years of stumbling, tortuous, prodigious effort to secularize the Western mind, i.e., to liberate man from the medieval shackles. It was the buildup toward a climax. . . For the first time in modern history, an authentic respect for reason became the mark of an entire culture; the trend that had been implicit in the centuries-long crusade of a handful of innovators now swept the West explicitly, reaching and inspiring educated men in every field. Reason, for so long the wave of the future, had become the animating force of the present. . . Confidence in the power of man replaced dependence on the grace of God—and that rare intellectual orientation emerged, the key to the Enlightenment approach in every branch of philosophy: *secularism without skepticism*. (100-106)

This enthusiasm, however, would soon be challenged by events in the first half of the twentieth century. Nietzsche's will to power, combined with a Darwinist naturalism in which the strongest members of the species should weed out the weak, encouraged the study of eugenics. The optimism that mankind could perfect itself through science convinced the Nazis to conduct large scale genocide; the Marxist idea of justified revolution led to assassination attempts and political upheaval. Humanity's newfound ability for destruction basically destroyed the Rationalist hope in human progress, and confirmed the conservative view that people were inherently evil, and needed to be controlled by force.



Chapter 4: The Witch Hunts

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I demonstrated how modernity's quest for personal autonomy and the pursuit of all forms of knowledge led to a disillusionment over the revealed truths of religion, and a tendency both to see "evil" as a condition of human psychology, as well as the Devil as a positive symbol of resistance and revolution. At the same time, however, the exhilarating freedom of modernity created a paradoxical pessimism and melancholy in the face of the absolute meaninglessness of life and the subject, and the failure of rationalism to result in the utopia of human progress that many people expected. These vague anxieties became crippling terrors as positive exuberance unleashed violent revolutions, assassinations and two world wars. As a result, conservative, religious narratives about absolute evil and the need to resist it resurfaced, at least in the United States; especially as it watched socialist revolutions solidify into atheistic societies, and then devolve into cruel dictatorships. At the same time, the liberal ideals once associated with Satan were assimilated into popular culture and even spirituality, which resulted in new forms of religious worship and a resurgence of Satanistic tendencies towards the end of the 20th century.

4.2 Background

In 1902 Hugo von Hofmannsthal captured the mood of Modernism, and the elusiveness of faith-based knowledge, in a *Letter of Lord Chandos*. “To me the mysteries of faith have been condensed into a lofty allegory which arches itself over the fields of my life like a radiant rainbow, ever remote, ever prepared to recede should it occur to me to rush towards it and wrap myself into the folds of its mantle” (72). Rather than chase after ever-receding illusions, the writer instead finds meaning in the immediate, physical experience over common objects, whose “insignificant form, whose unnoticed being, whose mute existence, can become the source of that mysterious, wordless, and boundless ecstasy.” (78)

Gottfried Benn in *Primal Vision* writes “After years of struggling for knowledge and ultimate things, I finally had come to realize that there may be no such ultimate things” (31). During this time the Catholic Church was still—in a tone reminiscent of Raphael’s speech in *Paradise Lost*—warning of the consequences of pride and unchecked science or philosophy. In 1907 Pope Pius X published an encyclical “one the doctrines of the Modernists” countering the opinion that “science is to be entirely independent of faith, while on the other hand, and notwithstanding that they are supposed to be strangers to each other, faith is made subject to science” (17). In response the encyclical claims,

Some among you, inflated like bladders with the spirit of vanity strive by profane novelties to cross the boundaries fixed by the Fathers. . . These enemies of divine revelation extol human progress to the skies, and with rash and sacrilegious daring would have it introduced into the Catholic religion as if this religion were not the work of God but of man, or some kind of philosophical discovery susceptible of perfection by human efforts. (*Pascendi Dominici Gregis* 17)

The Church's complaints, however, had little effect on the mood of Modernism—science had proven itself by the fruit of its labors, which had produced nearly miraculous scientific wonders. In "Interrogating the Universe" Peter Conrad comments, "The universe has come to expect such testing inquisitions, it is regularly taken apart and pieced together in a revised form by its human inventors . . . Once the astronomers had dislodged God as the cosmic motor, Newton the rationalist prepared the earth for human exploitation with his mechanical laws, which presumed regularity of motion and the fixity of matter" (59-60). Science was based on natural laws that *worked*—it didn't require faith or philosophical justification.

Resistance to organized religion and the Catholic Church especially was intensified. Karl Kraus openly criticizes churches as for-profit organizations, and wonders when they will lead a war against the people to reclaim lost market share.

But one cloudy day people will see things more clearly and ask whether it is right to miss not a single step on the direct road away from God, and whether the eternal mystery from which man originates and the mystery into which he enters really encompass only a business secret that gives man superiority over man and even over man's maker. (qtd. in Kolocotroni 73)

Gottfried Benn saw Christ as "the successful entrepreneur, social lion, advertising genius, and founder of modern business life, who knew how to save the situation at the marriage in Cana with Cheap Jordanian rotgut. . . For the dollar was agreeable to God, and land-holding as such a moral asset" (35).

The challenge of modernity was that, without religious guidance or ethical traditions, humanity had no moral basis for making difficult decisions, or even for basic everyday choices. Franco Moretti points out that the meaning of life "is no longer sought in the realm of public life, politics and work; it has migrated into the world of consumption and private life" (246). But

many thinkers also recognized that our selfish motivations and desires were just animalistic drives towards pleasure or self-preservation. Nietzsche urged bold action, but after Freud's revelation of unconscious desires, it was no longer possible to trust our instincts.

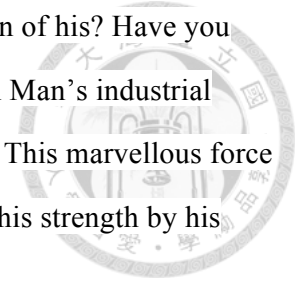
In "The Ideology of Modernism," Georg Lukács argues "the subject, after taking his decision, may be unconscious of his own motives....the qualitative leap of the denouement, cancelling and at the same time renewing the continuity of individual consciousness, can never be predicted" (qtd. Middleton 173). Habermas sums up the issue in *Modernity: An Unfinished Project*: freedom leads to rebellion against normative processes, which "which neutralizes considerations of moral goodness or practical utility" (41). Modernism demands humankind to produce its own meaning, but also rejects all meaning, which leads to the empty chasing of pleasure and ultimately the breakdown of society:

Modernism represents a great seductive force, promoting the dominance of the principle of unrestrained self-realization, the demand for authentic self-experience, the subjectivism of an overstimulated sensibility, and the release of hedonistic motivations quite incompatible with the discipline required by professional life, and with the moral foundations of a purposive-rational mode of life generally. (42)

The pressure also generates a peculiar type of neurosis: "a consciousness which continually stages a dialectic of esoteric mystery and scandalous offence, narcotically fascinated by the fright produced by its acts of profanation – and yet at the same time flees from the trivialization resulting from that very profanation" (41).

In 1903, George Bernard Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell* constructed a philosophical debate between Don Juan and the Devil, centering around Nietzsche's idea of the "Übermensch." The Devil asks,

Is Man any the less destroying himself for all this boasted brain of his? Have you walked up and down upon the earth lately? There is nothing in Man's industrial machinery but his greed and sloth: his heart is in his weapons. This marvellous force of Life of which you boast is a force of Death: Man measures his strength by his destructiveness. (192)



Don Juan maintains that *Nature* must have a purpose; that the Life Force, in Hegelian terms, unfolds forward progressively, saying “I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path” (203). According to Don Juan, Nature, through the Life Force, has made “a special brain - a philosopher's brain.” Instead of just yielding in the direction of least resistance, philosophers will be “Nature's pilot.” Don Juan then reveals a new definition of heaven and hell: “To be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer” (227).

In other words, *choosing a direction* is the moral purpose of humankind, and the ability that separates us from base animals. The Devil, however, responds: “I prefer to be my own master and not the tool of any blundering universal force,” and claims that “if you are naturally vulgar and credulous, as all reformers are,” it will thrust you first into religion, then to science, then to politics.

The end will be despair and decrepitude, broken nerve and shattered hopes, vain regrets for that worst and silliest of wastes and sacrifices, the waste and sacrifice of the power of enjoyment: in a word, the punishment of the fool who pursues the better before he has secured the good. (228)

Don Juan replies, “But at least I shall not be bored.”

This is the modern response: to the Devil, to God (or the absence of Him), to the idea that our thoughts and decisions are predetermined by unconscious forces or an evolutionary drive... even if, in the end, none of it matters, choosing to steer is “better” than drifting along the path of least resistance. Robert Frost will sum this up beautifully in “The Road Not Taken” (1920).

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference

For many, however, choosing the new wasn't enough; it was also necessary to destroy the old. In 1909, F.T. Marinetti published the *Futurist Manifesto*, a celebration of speed, violence, youth and industry. In its appeal to tear down the traditional institutions of the past, the manifesto anticipates the Marxist revolutions that will begin less than a decade later. It celebrates the technological enhancements that glorify humankind's sense of adventure: the “deep-chested locomotives whose wheels paw the tracks like the hooves of enormous steel horses,” and the “sleek flight of planes whose propellers chatter in the wind like banners and seem to cheer like an enthusiastic crowd.”

This was a time of marvels: human voice was transmitted wirelessly by radio in 1900; the first manually controlled aircraft flew in 1903; 1909 saw the first transmission of images, or television. The mood of human progress was exhilarating and also terrifying. Classical myths like Icarus or the Tower of Babel warned of the dangers. Build or fly too high and attract the wrath of the gods. But the gods were gone. The *Futurist Manifesto* aims to “destroy the museums, libraries, academies” and “glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for.... Art, in fact, can be

nothing but violence, cruelty, and injustice.” There is a recklessness to the writing, a hunger for destruction.

And like young lions we ran after Death, its dark pelt blotched with pale crosses as it escaped down the vast violet living and throbbing sky. . . There was nothing to make us wish for death, unless the wish to be free at last from the weight of our courage! . . . Let’s give ourselves utterly to the Unknown, not in desperation but only to replenish the deep wells of the Absurd! . . . Erect on the summit of the world, once again we hurl our defiance at the stars!

It’s important to note the desperation here—the desire to be “free from the weight of our courage.” The loss of all meaning has become a black hole: courage must always be reproduced. The vastness of the universe automatically swallows up these displays of defiance (and thus, demand more). Marinetti describes Futurism as a “religion of will” in his 1910 novel *Makark The Futurist*:

In the name of human pride, which we adore, I declare to you that the time is near when men with huge cheeks and a chin make of steel will, in a prodigious way through the effort of their exorbitant will alone, give birth to giants of infallible deeds. . . The divinity and individual continuity of the omnipotent spirit of will which must be externalized to change the world! . . . This is the only religion! (qtd. in Eysteinnsson 187)

Nobel Prize winner Anatole France wrote *The Revolt of the Angels* in 1914 as a satire on war, government and religion. The guardian angel Arcade has been stealing books from the library, to help plan a revolution in heaven and replace God with Lucifer (God is revealed to be a narrow minded tyrant and minor demiurge who has gained control of heaven through lies and deceit). At

the end the book, after Satan's revolution has been one, Satan resists taking over heaven, since he knows he will just become another God:



God, conquered, will become Satan; Satan,
conquering, will become God. May the fates
spare me this terrible lot; I love the Hell which
formed my genius. (347)

If there is no universal Good or Evil, then war will be continuous, the subjected always trying to overthrow the more powerful forces, and then secure power for themselves, in meaningless carnage. Instead, Anatole's Satan ends by reminding us that whether or not people believe in the divine tyrant (laldabaoth) doesn't really matter; what matters is that they free themselves from negative influence of the "god of old."

Now, thanks to us, the god of old is dispossessed of
his terrestrial empire, and every thinking being on
this globe disdains him or knows him not. But
what matter that men should be no longer sub-
missive to laldabaoth if the spirit of laldabaoth is
still in them; if they, like him, are jealous, violent,
quarrelsome, and greedy, and the foes of the arts
and of beauty? (348).

As for the demons, Satan claims they have destroyed the Tyrant "if in ourselves we have destroyed Ignorance and Fear." He also claims to have failed his first revolution (the one

featured in *Paradise Lost*, because he had failed to understand that “Victory is a Spirit, and that it is in ourselves and in ourselves alone that we must attack and destroy laldabaoth” (348). The difficult is, once you’ve removed divine universals, Anatole’s internal program of self-development can be terrifying in its openness.

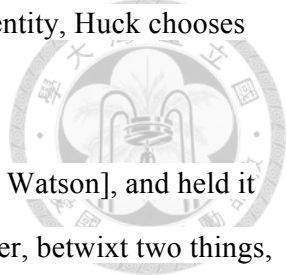
Mark Twain’s *The Mad Passenger* is narrated by a man in exile, searching for his lost country, one which he describes as the place where there are no words like “modesty, immodesty, decency, indecency, right, wrong, sin.” There, his true home, he would encounter no “religions” or any “curious systems of government or odd code of morals.” There would be the real world set well away from the nightmare “normal” world which possesses too many forms of the idea of *no*. Ultimately the narrator realizes that he is but “a homeless thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!” (qtd. in Banta 143).

This is just after Twain’s family home had been sold, and the death of his wife Livy, so there are personal reasons for this sense of homelessness, but they also reflect the “unmooring” and sense of purposelessness common to modernity. In a letter written around the same time, responding to the question of how the world, past and future, looked to him, he writes:

As they have been looking for the past 7 years: as being non-existent. That is, that there is *nothing*. That there is no God and no universe; that there is only empty space, and in it a lost and homeless and wandering and companionless and indestructible *Thought*. And I am that thought. And God, and The Universe, and Time, and Life, and Death, and Joy and Sorrow and Pain only a grotesque and brutal *dream*, evolved from the frantic imagination of that insane Thought. (qtd. in Tuckey 24)

Even before Twain’s personal crises, these themes displayed themselves in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). Through the rebellious Huck, Twain shows his aversion to “sivilizing” influences and how “evil” natural urges have to be stamped out by society (a society which is far

more “evil” than it appears). In a critical passage that defines Huck’s moral identity, Huck chooses Hell willingly over society.



It was a close place. I took . . . up [the letter I’d written to Miss Watson], and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I’d got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knewed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: “All right then, I’ll go to hell”—and tore it up. It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. (330)

Twain’s *The Mysterious Stranger* was published in 1916 (originally called *Chronicles of Young Satan*). In it, Satan raises a diatribe against religion, chastising the boys for not realizing that they have not suspected their beliefs are just a dream, “frankly and hysterically insane—like all dreams”:

You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks—in a word, that they are a dream, and you the maker of it. . . It is true, that which I have revealed to you; there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream—a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And you are but a thought—a vagrant thought, a useless thought, a homeless thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities! (187)

Although verging on nihilism, Twain is still concerned with the problem of evil, raging against what he sees as an unjust God. Others, like the *Futurists*, were celebrating the loss of meaning with varying levels of optimism. In 1916, Hugo Ball read the *Dada Manifesto* at a Dada soirée in Zurich. The word “dada” was chosen because of its meaninglessness—in that it means different things in different languages, and thus, means everything and nothing. The most important piece

of artwork for Dadaists was a signed urinal, by submitted by Marcel Duchamp to an exhibition for the Society of Independent Artists.

Meanwhile, the *Futurist's* cry for war had begun. In 1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated at Sarajevo. Austria declared war on Serbia; Germany declared war on Russia, France and Belgium. Britain declared war on Germany, and the USA entered the war in 1917. The same year, it suffered terrorist attacks from Italian Anarchists led by Luigi Galleani, editor of the anarchist magazine *Cronaca Sovversiva*.

Galleani organized worker riots intended to overthrow U.S. capitalist society, but also developed an aesthetic of violent rebellion and martyrdom, intended to “kindle the torch of the victorious revolution.” According to Berman in *Terror and Liberalism*,

Sacrifice was a perfect act of selfless solidarity, adopted freely and without coercion—the very model of the yearned-for revolutionary new society. . . the Ideal, a solitary aspiration of poets and philosophers, is embodied in the martyrdom of its first heralds and sustained by the blood of its believers. . . Galleani’s idea was to commit an aesthetic act of terror—”aesthetic” was his own word—in which the beauty or artistic quality consisted in murdering anonymously. Here the nihilism was unlimited, and the transgression, total. (35-36).

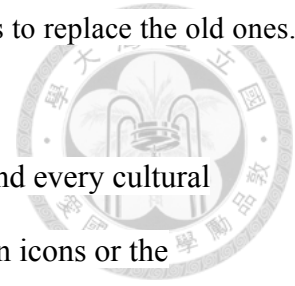
In 1905, the *Cronaca Sovversiva* included an advertisement for a booklet entitled *La Salute è in voi!* (Health is in You!), which was described as a must-have for any proletarian family, but actually contained an explicit bomb manual. The foreword to the booklet said it was to remedy the “error” of advocating violence without giving subversives the physical means of destruction. In 1914, Galleani published *Faccia a Faccia col Nemico* (“Face to Face with the Enemy”), in which he extolled anarchist assassins as martyrs and revolutionary heroes. In April 1919, Italian

anarchists mailed at least 36 dynamite-filled bombs to a cross section of prominent politicians, including John D. Rockefeller. None of the bombs killed their intended targets, but they went off in seven major cities, increasing panic. According to Rapoport, this “mini-war against American capitalism and government was probably the most extensive, best organized, and carefully planned operation of its type ever undertaken by Italian anarchists anywhere, and in terms of theoretical conception and practical execution, it came closest to modern definitions of terrorism” (192). In 1920, another Galleanist, Mario Buda, bombed Wall Street leaving 30 dead and over 200 seriously injured.

In 1917, these revolutionary impulses resulted in the February Revolution in Russia, which overthrew the Tsarist autocracy and established a provisional government; and then the Great October Socialist Revolution of the same year, which overthrew the provisional government and gave power to local soviets. The revolution was led by Bolsheviks, a faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour party, founded by Vladimir Lenin. The revolution was not universally recognized, however, which led to civil war until the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922. According to Stephen Flowers, Lenin was “as successful as he was because of his mystical vision of a primitive culture transformed into an ultra-modern, electrified, totally efficient machine. The machine was Lenin’s god” (Loc. 3899-3900). To create this new, technologically advanced, atheistic society however, all previous social institutions needed to be destroyed, along with the beliefs they left behind.

First, the vestiges of the old system, the bourgeois society and culture, had to be destroyed utterly. As institutions, the church and state could be eradicated or controlled in a relatively easy manner—through brute force. But the psychological and cultural (collective psychological) hold of the old ways would require a second

phase: the institution of new cultural and quasi-religious forms to replace the old ones.
(Loc. 3909-3913)



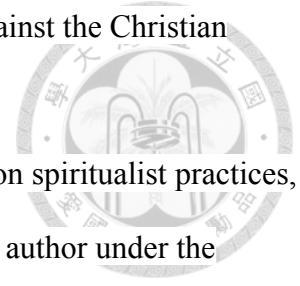
There were massive campaigns to debunk the Russian Orthodox religion and every cultural aspect of that church. The public was rationally “educated” against belief in icons or the miraculous powers of relics of the saints. In the former effort, for example, comic antireligious icons were produced in magazines such as *Bezbozhnik* (“The Atheist”).

The party encouraged liberal sexuality, “no female should refuse sexual advances of male member of the Komsomol.” Lenin was seen as the Antichrist; when his friend Joseph Stalin took over he was seen as “devil incarnate.” Any and all popular deviations from the strict, atheistically puritanical code of Stalinist authoritarianism became impossible (Flowers Loc. 3957).

4.3 World War I

By the end of World War One in 1919, over 9 million combatants and 7 million civilians were dead, and the world had witnessed the carnage of modern warfare, with its tanks, planes and machine guns. Due to the threat of Marxist-inspired terrorism, the U.S. entered the First Red Scare. Freedom of speech was limited in the Espionage Act of 1917, and the Sedition Act of 1918 forbade people from using “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” about the United States government or army (Stone 12). When shipyard workers went on strike in Seattle in January 1919, it was seen as a foreign, Marxian influence on American politics, aimed at the challenging the existing government. The Boston Police Strike in September 1919, was followed by the Steel strike of 1919 the same month, and then the Coal strike in November. Although these workers were striking for increased wages and improved labor conditions, they were accused of being a Bolshevik revolution, funded by Russia and organized by spies. Many saw

the threat of Communist Russia in religious terms; an atheistic violence against the Christian Nation of the USA.



Perhaps due to the immense loss of life, there was a revived focus on spiritualist practices, communicating with spirits, and considerations of the afterlife. In 1918, an author under the pseudonym O. Henry's Ghost published *My Tussle with the Devil and Other Stories*, which records a conversation the author has through an Ouija board, with the ghost of O. Henry. The Ouija board was used “not as a toy, but as a serious medium through which we received guidance in our affairs and teachings of the Great Law of Life, for which we were searching.”

Those with whom we talked were Great Invisible Teachers—who were on the Earth plane to help humanity—and a close relative whose development we followed with intense interest, and to whose advice in critical moments we owe much. (13)

The ghost communicates with the Ouija board, though several other spirits are around and jump in sometimes. The ghost claims a soul has to go through many lives, for progress and growth, before it can build a mansion or abiding place in the afterlife. The foundation stones to this structure are Knowledge, Wisdom, and Power—then it is built by the thought and desire of Aspiration, Beauty and Love. Although far separated from the violence of the revolutionaries, the thoughts expressed are Faustian.

Whatever you in your soul desire you receive. Ask and it is given you; seek higher and you find; and it is truly to be said: “As a man thinketh so he receives and is.” (35)

Even though based on biblical quotations, this philosophy of using will and desire to create the reality you want would have seemed heretical even to Milton. The text itself realizes this in the next paragraph, by anticipating that people of the world are going to say, “O. H. cannot write

from above—if what he says is true, he would be below.” The book solves this problem by redefining the role of Satan.

O. Henry is greeted by “His Satanic Majesty” and shown a transparent, perfumed, palace of dreams. The Devil offers it to him, along with sparkling gems and hundreds of voluptuous women, but asks for aid in return—to sow the seeds of Hate, Malice, Licentiousness and Cruelty.

The text is interesting because it distances the Devil from the Faustian process (using magic and summoning spirits to gain knowledge) and leaves him only as a sower of discord and hate; while divorcing from him from the Nietzschean virtues of Will and Power (which Nietzsche recognized as Satanic).

Arthur Conan Doyle, in *The History of Spiritualism* (1926) claims that World War I, with its massive death count, gave spiritualism a boost in popularity. Doyle’s friend Harry Houdini, meanwhile, made it a personal mission to debunk spiritualists as frauds. In 1925 he began offering a \$10,000 prize for anyone who could exhibit supernatural phenomena he couldn’t mirror. In 1926 he hired H. P. Lovecraft and his friend C. M. Eddy, Jr., to write an entire book debunking supernatural magic and religious miracles, which was to be called *The Cancer of Superstition*.

Spiritualism embraced many religious traditions but claimed no universal truth. An example of the spiritual milieu of the times is Hermann Hesse’s 1922 novel *Siddhartha*. Hesse’s protagonist finds enlightenment, not through any orthodox teaching but “from a river that roars in a funny way and from a kindly old fool who always smiles and is secretly a saint” (Freedman 233-235).

Freedman claims *Siddhartha* described Hesse’s interior dialectic:

All of the contrasting poles of his life were sharply etched: the restless departures and the search for stillness at home; the diversity of experience and the harmony of a unifying spirit; the security of religious dogma and the anxiety of freedom. (235)

However, even Hesse's hope for some type of religious security found little basis in reality.

Increasingly, rather than a positive "World Spirit" evolving the universe progressively forward, the universe was seen as empty of all meaning, or worse, as some kind of cosmic joke.

Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) like most of Kafka's novels, depicted a powerless protagonist at the mercy of a vague and unintelligible system, against which he has no voice or control.

Patrick Bridgewater claims that, unlike the Gothic tradition initiated by M.G. Lewis, with whom the Gothic novel "began to dedicate itself to the revelation of [. . .] a malign cosmos where the devil, not God, is the only authority and prime mover" (35) Kafka set out to prove the impossibility of the existence of such a world. However, in this attempt, he failed, as Kafka's characters rarely find justice or meaning against the senseless violence encountered. Bridgewater also notes that "the prototype of the 'heroic villain' of the Gothic novel is Milton's Satan, celebrated by Edmund Burke for his sublimity and heroized by the Gothics for his resistance to patriarchal power" and claims that all of Kafka's leading characters, who "give in to every temptation for the entirely diabolical and Gothic reason that he can see no reason why he should not, resembles the Gothic hero in his Faustian desire for knowledge" (36).

"The idea of the Devil is therefore internalized in Kafka's work: the Devil as Gothic personage is replaced by the devil as a non-Gothic subjective concept, one's *own* devil. . . The extent of Kafka's obsession with the Devil in the form of his own supposed diabolical weaknesses, is shown by the aphorism, "There can be knowledge of the diabolical, but not belief in it, for things cannot be more diabolical than they already are." (41)

Kafka even blamed his dark writing on the devil. In a 1917 letter, Kafka describes writing as a reward for service to the devil. “This descending to commune with dark powers, this release of spirits which in the nature of things are kept bottled up, dubious embraces, and whatever else may happen down there [. . .] Perhaps there is a different kind of writing; I know only this one” (qtd. in Bridgewater 42).

The point that Kafka’s books seem to make, as Adorno points out in “Notes on Kafka”, is that it’s hopeless to try to find meaning or justice in the universe.

The heroes of the *Trial* and the *Castle* become guilty not through their guilt—they have none—but because they try to get justice on their side. ‘The original sin, the ancient injustice committed by man, consists in his protest—one which he never ceases to make—that he has suffered injustice, that the original sin was done against him.’ (*Prisms* 243)

Needing justice and finding none in the established system or the meaningless universe, there was a trend towards heroic outlaws. The Robin-Hood like character of Zorro was created in 1919, and 1920 saw the silent film *The Mark of Zorro*. The hero of the film is a masked vigilante who thwarts the corrupt administration of Governor Alvarado.

In 1927, Freud published *Future of an Illusion*, in which he compared religion to a childhood neurosis, which he hoped humankind would grow out of. In 1930 he published *Society and its Discontents*, where he claims “the idea of life having a purpose stands a falls with the religious system. We will therefore turn to the less ambitious question of what men themselves show by their behavior to be the purpose and intention of their lives” (23). Freud concludes people strive after their own happiness; but also recognizes an aggressive and destructive element in humanity that goes beyond simply seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, which he calls the death instinct. The evolution of human civilization is a struggle between Eros and Death (69).

Freud concludes by asking the “fateful question” of whether the cultural development of the human species can master the disturbance of communal life by the instincts of aggression and self-destruction, nothing that,



Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating each other to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety. (92)

Writing just as Hitler was gaining power, Freud was right to worry. We could say that the disillusionment of the failed progress of human perfection, illustrated by the violence in World War I, as well as the reduction of religion to antiquated mythology and psychological drives, created an anxiety of being a helpless victim to mysterious and powerful forces (or worse, we are left alone to destroy ourselves).

As Freud was exploring the unconscious drives that motivate human action, others were mapping the limits of human freedom in other ways. In 1932, Alan Watts published *An Outline of Zen Buddhism*, which questioned even our private language; as he explained later in *The Taboo against Knowing Who You Are*,

We seldom realize, for example that our most private thoughts and emotions are not actually our own. For we think in terms of languages and images which we did not invent, but which were given to us by our society. (70)

Ludwig Wittgenstein had published the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in 1914, which also questioned what we could say or think intelligibly. Unlike Milton’s “the mind is its own place” or the Lady’s claim that “thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind”—it was becoming recognized that even our thoughts, being based in language, are socially determined. In other

words, you couldn't think or argue your way to freedom (similarly, Kafka's characters never get a chance to present a defense; they don't even know what they're charged with). As Kierkegaard or the Futurists had pointed out, freedom creates anxiety that must be filled with courage; but protesting the system wasn't really possible if you yourself are a product of the system. The solution, for Watts, is to stop striving, and to simply relax and be in the moment.

To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float.

(Essence of Alan Watts 37)

At the same time, while denying ambition, Watt's Zen Buddhism wasn't that different from the evolutionary spirituality of the last century: the purpose of humankind was to evolve into gods.

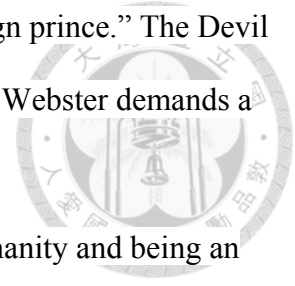
In our culture, of course, they'll say you're crazy and you're blasphemous, and they'll either put you in jail or in a nut house (which is pretty much the same thing).

However if you wake up in India and tell your friends and relations, 'My goodness, I've just discovered that I'm God,' they'll laugh and say, 'Oh, congratulations, at last you found out. *(Essence of Alan Watts 193)*

This evolution, however, is not through a Faustian drive to collect more knowledge or experiences, but a polishing of the soul through mindfulness (which is actually mindlessness: the turning off of rational thoughts). These Eastern practices may have offered a small measure of peace during the Great Depression start began with the stock market crash of 1929.

In 1937, Stephen Vincent Benét published *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, a Faustian tale inspired by Washington Irving's story *The Devil and Tom Walker*. Farmer Jabez Stone sells his soul to the devil, but when the time is up, decides he wants out of the deal. So he hires a famous lawyer (Daniel Webster) to get him out of it. Mr. Webster first claims that Stone is an American

citizen, and “no American citizen may be forced into the service of a foreign prince.” The Devil insists that he is a citizen as well, and has been instrumental in US history. Webster demands a trial, the right of every American. The Devil agrees.

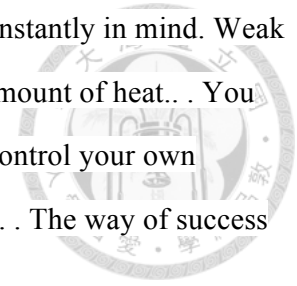


Webster speaks about the simple and good things in life, about humanity and being an American. Although some bad things happened in America, everything was working out for the best and even the traitors had a hand in it. The jury finds for the defendant, Jabez Stone, not because of the evidence but because “even the damned may salute the eloquence of Mr. Webster.” The Devil leaves town without the soul he’s come to claim, which was his by right. The conclusion to *The Devil and Daniel Webster* might be that nationalistic pride and clever rhetoric can defeat the Devil; but it was probably meant as a metaphor to bolster the mood during the Great Depression. However it also demonstrates a unique shift in demonic literature—that the Devil can be outsmarted, or beaten. In this case, the Devil is the controlling power system that must be escaped (the role that used to belong to God) and humans have replaced the Devil as the revolutionary element.

Similarly, according to legend, blues singer and songwriter Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil at a crossroads in exchange for his musical abilities. This myth influenced rock and roll, and especially the death metal bands of the 1980s. Like Prometheus, the Devil provided humanity with technical mastery. In Christianity, he expected something in return (your soul); but after the death of God, Satan was changed from a powerful, malignant force into something that could be overcome through skill and effort.

This strategy of self-reliance, persistence and effort, was codified in Napoleon Hill’s 1937 classic *Think and Grow Rich*. According to Hill, if you desire something enough, you can achieve it by keeping it focused in your mind.

The starting point of all achievement is DESIRE. Keep this constantly in mind. Weak desire brings weak results, just as a small fire makes a small amount of heat. . . You are the master of your destiny. You can influence, direct and control your own environment. You can make your life what you want it to be. . . . The way of success is the way of continuous pursuit of knowledge. (38)



Hill is arguing for the Faustian goals of knowledge and power, and the strength of will, fueled with desire and passion. The idea that we have total control over our reality (even in the middle of a Great Depression) continues to be popular today. Hill is less known for his 1938 book called *Outwitting the Devil: The Secret to Freedom and Success*, which includes a record of his discussions with Satan. This book was thought to be too controversial for its time, so it wasn't released until 2011. According to Hill's devil, most men are "drifters"—they are easy to control because they don't think for themselves. Hill's Satan pretends to not want to give away these secrets of control, but does anyway, to help Hill teach humankind how to rise above fear with "courage and purpose, resolute and unafraid." Hill's devil claims he is the ruler of the world, and his rule is threatened by "free speech and independent thought." The Devil also keeps people in chains by causing them to drift into the first job they can find after school, with no definite aim or purpose except to make a living; and then keep them in fear of poverty their whole lives.

As we've seen, this idea of evil as merely drifting, instead of deliberate choosing, was already raised by Shaw. More interestingly, it was also described, in exactly the same terms, in Boethius's *Consolations* in the sixth century.

But whosoever quakes in fear or hope,
Drifting and losing mastery,
Has cast away his shield, has left his place,

And binds the chain with which he will be bound

It gets a little confusing, however, when the Devil begins teaching Hill and his readers exactly *how* he would teach humankind to break free of fear: into the mouth of the Devil, Hill lays out a liberal, capitalistic strategy for education.



Teach children that definiteness of purpose, backed by definite plans persistently and continuously applied, is the most efficacious form of prayer available to human beings. Teach children that the space they occupy in the world is measured definitely by the quality and quantity of useful service they render in the world. . . Teach children that their own real limitations are those which they set up or permit others to establish in their own minds. . . Teach children to be true to themselves at all times and, since they cannot please everybody, therefore to do a good job of pleasing themselves. (98)

These moral dictates, could properly be called the religion of Satan: they teach mankind that with courage and perseverance, they can achieve anything they want. The Devil denies that they need to listen and obey any religious doctrine, or help others without recompense, or be made to suffer. He also prefers “the privilege of learning from experience” over “all schoolhouses and books.” Hill and the Devil discuss how these plans for education reform can be integrated into the American education system.

Hill’s Devil also redefines the concept of sin: “A sin is anything one does or thinks which causes one to be unhappy!” Overeating is a sin because it causes ill health and misery; over-indulgence is a sin because it breaks down will-power and leads into drifting. It is a sin to lie, cheat and steal because these habits destroy self-respect and lead to unhappiness; or to be dominated by negative thoughts of envy, greed, fear, hatred, vanity, self-pity or

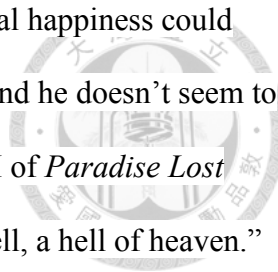
discouragement—but not because they’re evil or cause harm to others, only because they make one unhappy and weak-minded.

Conversely, to the question of “What is faith,” the Devil answers, “It is a state of mind wherein one recognizes and uses the power of positive thought as a medium by which one contacts and draws upon the universal store of Infinite Intelligence at will.”

Hill’s philosophy of success is a combination of many things: the death of organized religion and the idea of a personal God; a primacy of the Faustian effort towards human perfection (but brought to a personal level); the capitalistic enthusiasm that making money is *good* and being poor is *evil*; along with the Puritan freedom from external laws or influence, and the need for strict self-control. It is interesting, however, that most of Hill’s ideas are *good* in themselves, but still associated with the Devil. Even though the Devil is arguing against himself, and claims to keep humanity in fear and suffering, he is also giving Hill a strategy for breaking his hold over us. Hill argues that self-evident truths are no less important because they are being called to your attention by the Devil, rather than his opposition (111).

The Devil has become, basically, negative thinking, fear and doubt—interior psychology only—and God is nowhere present. Man needs to pick himself up by his bootstraps and is responsible for his own success and happiness. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous inaugural speech in 1933 confirms these ideas.

So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is...fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror, which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. . . Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously.



Hill's Devil doesn't seem to recognize that this ambitious pursuit of personal happiness could (and did) lead to corruptions, like the bankers that caused the Depression; and he doesn't seem to recognize real evil (doing harm maliciously). His Devil is the one in Book I of *Paradise Lost* who says, "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Milton's Devil, I will argue in Chapter 5, discovered that this idea wasn't actually true, because there is no way out of the totalizing discourse of God's power structure. In hindsight, Hill's Devil seems naïve, for arguing both that failure is good because it gives individuals a chance to test themselves, and that "no human being ever will live with the right or the power to deprive another human being of the inborn privilege of free and independent thought."

These ideas will not seem nearly as "self-evident" after the senseless horrors experienced during World War II. At the time, however, confidence in American strength and technology was at an all-time high near the end of the depression. In 1938, DC Comics published the first installment of Superman. He could leap tall buildings in a single bound, run faster than an express train, and nothing less than a bursting shell could penetrate his skin. The comic wasn't based on *fantasy* but on *science*: it gives a "scientific" explanation for Kent's amazing strength (citing how ants can carry many times their weight, and grasshoppers can jump many times their own height). Superman's first action is to get a signed confession from a criminal, then break into the governor's house and force him to stop the imminent execution of a prisoner who was falsely convicted. Later, when Superman chases after some crooks in a speeding car, they yell, "It's the Devil himself!" This might seem strange to us now, but the original superman, like Zorro, was operating outside of the normal legal system.

In 1939, the musical comedy-drama (and first techni-color film) "The Wizard of Oz" hit theaters, based on the 1900 novel by L. Frank Baum. In it, Dorothy gets lost in a fantasy world,

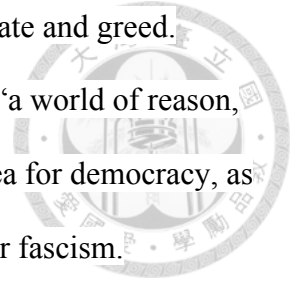
where she meets three “incomplete” figures (a Scarecrow who wants a brain, a Tin Woodman who wants a heart, and a Lion who wants courage). Dorothy joins them to find the Great Wizard of Oz, hoping to find a way home. The Wizard agrees to give them what they want, if they kill the Wicked Witch of the West and bring him her broomstick. After they do that, the Wizard still resists, until Dorothy pulls back the curtain and sees that he’s just a “bad man” projecting the appearance of great power. In the end however, Dorothy and her friends find out that they never really lacked anything, but had everything they needed (including a way home) already.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, inciting France and UK to declare war. Six days later, Charlie Chaplin made his first audio movie, “The Great Dictator.” In the film, Chaplin plays a Jewish barber who is mistaken for a dictator he resembles, and asked to take his place. At an important speech at the end of the film, Chaplin rejects his position as emperor, claiming that there is room for everyone, and human beings, of all races, should be good to each other.

The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way. . .Greed has poisoned men’s souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost....

The film urges soldiers not to give themselves over to be used like machines in war. “Don’t fight for slavery, fight for liberty! You the people have the power, the power to create machines, the power to create happiness. You the people have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a beautiful adventure.” The film won 5 academy awards, and can be seen as a confirmation of Napoleon Hill’s insistence on the creative powers of humankind, but also a

recognition that this creative power can be used for evil and violence, for hate and greed. However, the film also reaffirms the possibility of a perfect human future, “a world of reason, where science and progress will lead to all men’s happiness.” It’s also a plea for democracy, as opposed to the tyrannical governments set up in the name of communism or fascism.



In May 1941, Christian apologist C.S. Lewis began publishing the *Screwtape Letters* in a now-defunct Anglican gazette called *The Guardian*, which were introduced as letters of a senior demon, Screwtape, to his nephew and Junior Tempter, Wormwood. They were meant as satirical, although at least one clergyman saw them as serious theological advice. Outraged, he wrote to the editor that “much of the advice given in these letters ... [seems] not only erroneous but positively diabolical.” C.S. Lewis dedicated the book to J.R.R. Tolkien, whose *Lord of the Rings* came out in 1937. (Tolkien didn’t appreciate the gesture, he found the book disturbing and was also not a fan of Lewis’ Narnia series.).

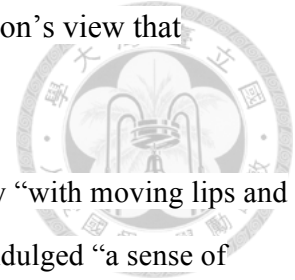
The Screwtape Letters is about the little ways that evil can tempt men into weakening their will by acting against their conscience. The book begins with the following two quotes, which serve to justify the project (taking the devil lightly or making a joke about him).

The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn. –Luther

The devil, the prowde spirite, cannot endure to be mocked. –Thomas More

The advice Screwtape gives is not to argue with reason, for that would awaken reason and who can see the result, but instead to distract him with thoughts about lunch. Interesting C.S. Lewis argues that reason will lead men to Christianity, and that therefore the demon should not try to stir up reason but tone it down. In a passage on prayer, Screwtape argues that humankind can be

fooled into romantic pretensions, and quotes Coleridge, who followed Milton's view that outward posturing is not important, but only internal conviction.



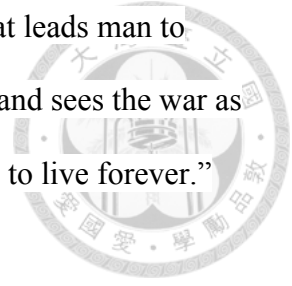
One of their poets, Coleridge, has recorded that he did not pray “with moving lips and bended knees” but merely “composed his spirit to love” and indulged “a sense of supplication”. That is exactly the sort of prayer we want; and since it bears a superficial resemblance to the prayer of silence as practised by those who are very far advanced in the Enemy's service, clever and lazy patients can be taken in by it for quite a long time. At the very least, they can be persuaded that the bodily position makes no difference to their prayers. (IV)

I bring this up mainly because Milton was also against the importance of any fixed posturing, such as kneeling; but C.S. Lewis is a theologian, hence he's the antithesis of the Modernists, whose Faustian tendencies can be traced back to Milton's liberation politics. In other words, Lewis's work can be seen as a Christian rejection of Modernist tendencies. Screwtape also advises Wormwood to turn men's thoughts towards themselves, and look for solutions to their desires within themselves.

Whenever they are attending to the Enemy Himself we are defeated, but there are ways of preventing them from doing so. The simplest is to turn their gaze away from Him towards themselves. Keep them watching their own minds and trying to produce feelings there by the action of their own wills. When they meant to ask Him for charity, let them, instead, start trying to manufacture charitable feelings for themselves and not notice that this is what they are doing. When they meant to pray for courage, let them really be trying to feel brave. (IV)

Both Hill's devil and Lewis's Devil pretend to keep weak men from freedom, but for Hill, this freedom *should be* earned by using will and power to direct your own path towards success and

happiness. For Lewis, this self-interested illusion of freedom is exactly what leads man to damnation. Lewis (through Screwtape) is against “contended worldliness” and sees the war as positive because in wartime “not even a human can believe that he is going to live forever.”



Screwtape also denigrates people who are:

Rich, smart, superficially intellectual, and brightly sceptical about everything in the world. I gather they are even vaguely pacifist, not on moral grounds but from an ingrained habit of belittling anything that concerns the great mass of their fellow men and from a dash of purely fashionable and literary communism. (X)

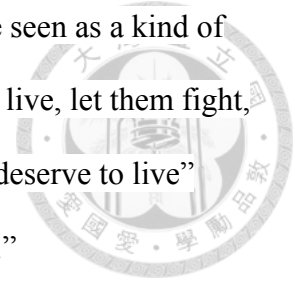
The idea that “pacifist intellectuals” and “literary communists” are actually great servants of Satan, is something that will be raised again in the next Red Scare. Interestingly, *The Lord of the Rings* is also mainly about temptation: the temptation for power, for greed, which leads all men into war (symbolized by the ring), which can only be resisted by absolute refusal/denial of the object of desire.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The following day, the US declared war on Japan, and several days later had declared war on Japan’s allies, Italy and Germany. The religious conservatism of Lewis marks a turning point in Western culture, which will began backtracking against liberalism and freedom out of fear of secret groups inspired by radical evil and hidden agendas.

4.4 World War II

At the same time, during World War II the Nazis and Communists demonstrated how dangerous Modernist ideology, self-reliance and the belief in progress could become. For Communists or socialists, heaven on earth could be obtained through revolution, education and strict planning of the economy to provide material welfare. For Nazis, through conquest, hygiene and eugenics.

Hitler uses language that is not far off from Nietzsche or Hegel; and can be seen as a kind of Darwinist determinism. Lines from *Mein Kampf* read, “Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live” (I); “Obstacles do not exist to be surrendered to, but only to be broken (II).”



The stronger must dominate and not mate with the weaker, which would signify the sacrifice of its own higher nature. Only the born weakling can look upon this principle as cruel, and if he does so it is merely because he is of a feebler nature and narrower mind; for if such a law did not direct the process of evolution then the higher development of organic life would not be conceivable at all. (XI)

Later authors have recognized Hitler’s Nazism as directly inspired by Satanic, occult forces (supernatural forces of evil, rather than the more positive, symbolic version). The 1940s book, *The Occult Causes of the Present War*, says, “From the first, Germany has been a region favourable to the suggestions of the powers of evil.” These themes were explored especially in the 70s, when occult interests flared, with J. H. Brennan’s *The Occult Reich* (1974), Jean-Michel Angebert’s *The Occult and the Third Reich* (1974), and Francis King’s *Satan and Swastika* (1976).

In 1943, Ayn Rand published *The Fountainhead*. The main thrust of the novel is in line with Modernist “Great Men” theory, and the self-reliance taught by Thoreau or Emerson. It can also be seen as a response to the C.S. Lewis inspired form of Christian self-renunciation and humility that was making a comeback. It is also in line with Charlie Chaplin’s speech, about fighting for freedom, peace and dignity.

I saw I could put an end to your outrages by pronouncing a single word in my mind. I pronounced it. The word was *no*. I stood up in that meeting of six thousand men and declared I would stop the motor of the world . . . On strike against the dogma that the

pursuit of one's happiness is evil. . . The political system we will build is contained in a single moral premise – no man will retain any value from others by resorting to physical force. . . . the world you desired can be won, it exists, it is real, it is possible, and it is yours. Fight. Fight for the value of your person. Fight for the virtue of your pride. Fight with the radiant certainty. . . . I swear I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for the sake of mine. (qtd. in Gotthelf 97)

Despite Rand's moral principle that "no man will retain any value from others by resorting to physical violence," her call to fight confuses the issue of justified violence, and is more in line with the Communist calls to violent revolution or Hitler's stress on Will and Power than with the newfound American virtues she was resisting (a rise in Christian virtues like meekness).

World War II concluded in Europe in May, 1945. The US dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 9 August respectively. The world could now see for the first time the destructive powers of unchecked human ambition and scientific knowledge. World War II left the United States and the Soviet Union as the world's main superpowers, with profound differences. The Soviet Union was a single-party Marxist-Leninist empire ruled by a dictatorship, operating a socialist economy and a state-controlled press; the United States was a democratic republic with a capitalist economy, with free elections and press, the freedom of religion, freedom of expressions and freedom of association to its citizens.

In 1947, President Truman signed the first "Loyalty Order" (Executive Order 9835) which was meant to root out communist influences in the federal government, and rally public opinion against Cold War policies meant to limit the Soviet Union's global power. Provisions of the Order allowed the FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to investigate federal employees, or other organizations, to check whether they had any communist sympathies or allegiances.

In 1947, Charlie Chaplin was subpoenaed by the committee; because of his speech in the *Great Dictator*, which had helped turn American support for the war. He was seen as a “premature anti-fascist”—someone with left leanings who was not officially a member of the Communist party. He was also blamed for his support of the alliance between the US and the Soviet Union, which helped defeat Nazism. In 1952, after going abroad to England, he was refused re-entry into the United States. In his autobiography of 1964, he writes:

My prodigious sin was, and still is, being a nonconformist. Although I am not a Communist, I refused to fall in line by hating them. . . Secondly I was opposed to the Committee on Un-American Activities— a dishonest phrase to begin with, elastic enough to wrap around the throat and strangle the voice of any American citizen whose honest opinion is a minority one. (qtd. Robinson 148)

For the next decade (and beyond), leftists, anti-war protesters, intellectuals, and rebels would be seen as potential Communists, and could be accused of treason or subversion without evidence, leading to loss of employment or potential imprisonment. This process came to be known as McCarthyism, after the anti-communist pursuits of senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

In 1949, the Soviet Union tested an atomic bomb; the same year, Mao Zedong’s Communist army gained control of mainland China despite American financial support of the opposing Kuomintang. The US government used a climate of fear of an imminent nuclear threat to silence political dissenters.

In *Thirty Years of Treason*, Eric Bentley collected hearing testimonies by the HUAC. The questions asked by the Committee demonstrate the mood:

“Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of a godless conspiracy controlled by a foreign power? Are you now thoroughly disgusted with the fact that you have been associated with the Communist ideology, which is atheistic, which is the very antithesis of Christian

morality as we know it in this country?” (952) Bentley points out that the HUAC grounds Free Enterprise in belief in God, and the idea that godly people were free, and should use a socioeconomic system based in freedom.



God and Free Enterprise undoubtedly are the twin pillars of the edifice which they defend. That this edifice may be a castle in the air is only to add that we are dealing here with pure opinion, indeed with ideology, the falsest of false consciousness.(934) Whether or not Free Enterprise is of any use to God, He has always been of much to it. To base Free Enterprise on Him is to found it on a rock—upon the unchangeably true, upon the conveniently undebatable. And, by paradox if not magic, it is also conveniently to dissolve Free Enterprise in a mist of vagueness and undefinability. (924)

By the 1950s, the HUAC’s ideas had triumphed: God and the free market were the American way of life, against communism and socialism. Based on the fear of political revolution or foreign influence, however, the government was justified as taking action against liberals or anyone who criticized its policies. Many writers found themselves living in a Kafka-esque world, named anonymously for going to a meeting years ago for an organization now accused of recruiting communists, and added to a list that limited employment opportunities. To clear your name you’d have to go in front of a committee, and name others.

The anxiety of this period is represented in the literature of the times, which generally focused on the loss of individual powers in the face of mysterious and “absurd” forces; that life is meaningless and that nothing we do will ever matter.

In 1949 Samuel Becket finished *Waiting for Godot*, and it premiered in 1953. In the play, two characters (Vladimir and Estragon) wait helplessly for a third man (Godot) who never comes. The play's simplicity both invites and resists. Dreyfus gives a common reading:

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, for example, can be read as a story about the continually unsatisfied hope for God's return. His later play *Endgame* chronicles an even further stage in the history of the West; there the culture is finally resigned to the loss of all meaning, to the continued and ever-continuing absence of God. (44-45)

However, according to Albert Labriola, *Waiting for Godot* is intimately tied with Milton's legacy. "Their ironic similarities [...] emphasize dialogue, characterization, tableau, and imagery [...] along with the intricacies of their interaction [...] Becket may be participating in a dialectical encounter with Milton (qtd. in Duran 259).

According to Margerent Kean,

Both Milton and Becket are, as poetic dramatics, exploiting the imprecise nature of their linguistic medium to enhance the exploration of doubt as the necessary postlapsarian human condition.... Like Satan in *Paradise Regained*, he would surely be unwilling and hence unable to recognize the Son when he does arrive on stage, forced to rehearse his arguments endlessly and repeatedly to struggle against the ever-tightening self-made noose rather than know God. (176)

Kean concludes, "His drama expresses a desperate need to belong coupled with a bleak but instinctive knowledge that one is forever shut out from communion." Kean concludes, "it seems safe to say that Samuel Beckett's drama is of the devil's party and (just perhaps) he knows it" (177).

There are a few interesting things about this reading: firstly the insistence that Satan's suffering is self-imposed (a self-made noose). The characters in *Waiting for Godot* are not

presented as evil; they are just faced with insecurity and uncertainty, which reduces confidence, produces anxiety and indecision. The boldness of Milton's Satan rests on him taking action, even if it's the wrong action (even in his final, reduced state at the end of *Paradise Lost* he is unlike the characters of Godot's play, because he doesn't suffer from a lack of knowledge or indecision, just the knowledge that all action is useless, and justice is impossible in the face of an irrational universe). George Orwell published 1984 in 1949, with the famous line "freedom is slavery."

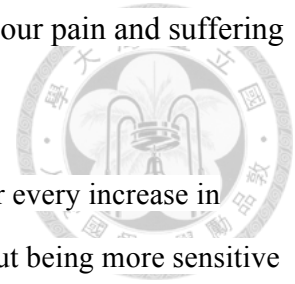
In 1948 W.H. Auden wrote the Pulitzer prize-winning *The Age of Anxiety*, a long form poem dealing with man's quest to find meaning and identity in a quickly changing, industrialized world. Part Six, the Epilogue, quotes a line from *Paradise Lost*, "Some natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon; The world was all before them, where to choose..." (103). Auden comments in the notes, "These are the last five lines of *Paradise Lost*, which definitively eliminate the Arcadian hope to return to the place of original innocence" (140).

Also in 1948, Thomas Merton published *The Seven Storey Mountain*, an autobiographical account of the author's quest for faith and time spent as a Trappist monk (giving up all worldly possessions and ambitions). Its popularity can be seen as due to the post World War II loss of meaning and security, and a newfound impetus towards spiritual awakening. Similarly, Alan Watts's *Wisdom of Insecurity* (1951) urges a complete letting go of personal concerns, even the avoidance of pain or suffering.

What we have to discover is that there is no safety, that seeking is painful, and that when we imagine that we have found it, we don't like it. (79)

For the first time in centuries, we have a direct opposition to the Faustian belief that humankind can grow towards perfection through willpower and technology, and instead an aversion to the entire system, on the basis that it is broken. For Watts, (and his interpretation of Buddhism),

suffering comes from desire: the higher we climb for our goals, the deeper our pain and suffering when we fall.



This, then, is the human problem: there is a price to be paid for every increase in consciousness. We cannot be more sensitive to pleasure without being more sensitive to pain. By remembering the past we can plan for the future. But the ability to plan for the future is offset by the “ability” to dread pain and to fear of the unknown. In other words, we seem to reach a point where the advantages of being conscious are outweighed by its disadvantages, where extreme sensitivity makes us unadaptable.
(83)

It is an aversion to ego, to selfishness, to ambition and pride, due in part to the recognition that our desires and thoughts are never free. Real freedom comes from letting go, not striving, and living in the moment without expectation. Interestingly, this philosophy can also be found in Boethius’ *Consolations of Philosophy*.

If first you rid yourself of hope and fear
You have disarmed the tyrant’s wrath (9)

And also in *Paradise Lost*, at the moment when Satan gives up his subjectivity and abandons himself to evil:

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse; all good to me is lost. (4.108-109)

The difficulty of such philosophies for most people is that they can’t just quit life and go live in a monastery, they still have to *do* something.

1951 Hemingway published *The Old Man in the Sea*, which can be read as almost a refusal of *Moby Dick* (rather than a warning against human ambition, it urges the importance of

continued struggle even in the face of defeat). The old man refuses defeat at every turn: after sailing out past the other sailors and breaking his eighty-seven day losing streak, he lands a marlin after a three-day fight, then wards off sharks from eating his catch. He watches a weary warbler fly toward shore, where it will inevitably meet the hawk, reflecting that no living thing can escape the inevitable struggle that will lead to its death. Yet even if life is a constant and pointless struggle for survival, resistance is worthwhile. “Man is not made for defeat . . . [a] man can be destroyed but not defeated” (79).

In 1951, Sartre published *The Devil and the Good Lord*, which dramatizes some of the ideas set out in his 1946 *Existentialism and Humanism*. Existentialism has its roots in Kierkegaard, who claimed each individual is solely responsible for giving meaning to life and living it passionately and sincerely, or “authentically” (Watts 4-6). In a 1945 lecture, Sartre described existentialism as “the attempt to draw all the consequences from a position of consistent atheism” (qtd. in Wood vii). In other words, if the world is truly absurd (it has no meaning other than what we give it), we are nonetheless responsible for our own actions and must choose those actions deliberately. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre writes that the freedom of existence demands choice, which causes anxiety; humans try to avoid this anxiety by giving up choice to constructs or beliefs, and become unconscious actors, performing a role to fulfill our chosen characters’ destinies. Sartre argues that any person of a serious nature is obliged to struggle between

- a) the conscious desire for peaceful self-fulfillment through physical actions and social roles—as if living within a portrait that one actively paints of oneself.
- b) the more pure and raging spontaneity of no thing consciousness, of being instantaneously free to overturn one’s roles, pull up stakes, and strike out on new paths.

In *The Devil and the Good Lord*, Sartre demonstrates that moral choices like Good and Evil are meaningless in themselves. According to Hugh. J. Silverman,

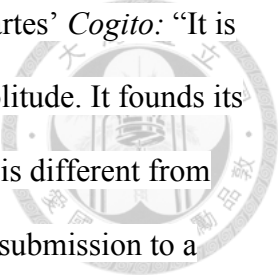
To naively pursue “Good” under such circumstances is to be gulled into repeating as “natural” the punishment of an oppressive and exploitative system. Manicheism, like all alienated moralities, thus conceals (and perpetuates) the gap class society opens between the intentions and the objective results of one’s actions—a gap that renders the human impossible. In this situation morality as virtue—being Good by doing Good—is simply “impossible.” (118)

However, Silverman also notes that later Sartre, in the 1964 *Rome Notes*, “embraces a new Promethean Optimism.” Instead of seeking salvation in repetition of alienated norms, one can act upon a new or pure normal: the possibility of agency as direct self-production. This “radical conversion” issues from pursuing the negative side of Manicheism, the will to Evil, to its logical consequences—a liberation whose possibility is already inscribed in alienated morality (120).

In other words, Good and Evil are two sides to one coin, and it doesn’t matter which you choose, you’ll still be playing a role in a pre-written conflict; the way out is to act deliberately against the codified ideology of Good and Evil (as Satan chooses to do, just after he’s given up personal subjectivity, represented by hope and fear).

Similarly, for Albert Camus, man can only find meaning in rebellion. In *The Rebel*, (1951) Camus explains that rebellion may not be optimistic, but at least we can find some meaning or beauty in the courageous act.

The words that reverberate for us at the confines of this long adventure of rebellion are not formulas for optimism, for which we have no possible use in the extremities of our unhappiness, but words of courage and intelligence which, on the shores of the eternal seas, even have the qualities of virtue. (303)



Camus claims that, in our daily trials, rebellion plays the same role as Descartes' *Cogito*: "It is the first piece of evidence. But this evidence lures the individual from his solitude. It finds its first value on the whole human race. I rebel—therefore we exist" (22). This is different from nihilism, in that it's not a rejection of *everything*. "Real freedom is an inner submission to a value which defies history and its successes." In other words, the firm ground on which Camus stands on, is defiance for the sake of defiance. "In a chaotic universe no other life exists but that of the abyss where. . . human beings come 'trembling with rage and exulting in their crimes' to curse their Creator" (49).

The final conclusion of the absurdist protest is, in fact, the rejection of suicide and persistence in that hopeless encounter between human questioning and the silence of the universe. (13-14)

Camus' *Rebel* is rooted in Nietzschean philosophy but takes it a step further, as an extreme resistance to all meaning:

Even revolution, revolution in particular, is repugnant to this rebel. To be a revolutionary, one must continue to believe in something, even where there is nothing in which to believe. (63)

For Nietzsche, man needs to step with boldness into the abyss and base his identity on courage and action, which is a revolutionary, but still in some sense a *creative* (and thus positive) act. For Camus, such optimism constitutes an unfounded belief in some kind of progressive force or evolution of the universe; in contrast, Camus sees nothing but absurdity in the universe—beliefs of any kind lead to a kind of selfless automation (or "drifting" to use Hill's term). A better response is a negation of everything that is, a refusal to have identity subjugated to a positive system.

Camus calls *Moby Dick* one of the “truly absurd” works in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1941), and it is possible to see how the speeches of Captain Ahab exemplify this daring negation or refusal:

Leap! leap up, and lick the sky! I leap with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with thee; defyingly I worship thee! . . . Oh, thou clear spirit, of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to thee. (473)

Heroism, according to Camus, was to face the Absurd in a battle you couldn't win, “and to do this with wit, grace, compassion for others, and even a sense of mission” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). On the other hand, according to Paul Berman in *Terror and Liberalism*, Camus “gazed at the ruins of Europe, and, in a somber mood, he had to agree that, over the centuries, the Promethean impulse to rebel had taken an odd turn, not entirely for the good.”

The impulse, in its new version, was a dance step which began by gazing upward into human freedom and progress—and then, with the quickest and most graceful of dips, leaned downward into death. The libertarian and the sinister had somehow blended together, and the love of freedom and progress had become weirdly inseparable from a morbid obsession with murder and suicide. (Berman 28)

Freud had already pointed out this impulse in the 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*—that besides the simple principle of seeking pleasure (eros) life also has an instinct towards destruction and death (thanatos) which manifested in a compulsive repetition. In practical terms, revolution was seen as inevitable and justified, both in terms of liberation politics, and also in terms of personal subjectivity and the production of a meaningful sense of identity.

In 1952, Nelson Mandela helped found a Defiance Campaign in South Africa, but after an unsuccessful protest in 1955, he concluded that a non-violent protest wasn't going to be

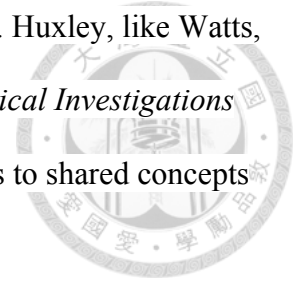
enough. In 1961 Mandela co-founded the military group “Spear of the Nation” which took ideas on guerilla warfare from Marxist literature by Mao and Che Guevara. In the 2013 movie version of his life, he says (through Idris Elba), “I do not deny sabotage. But I did not do it with a reckless attitude, or because of any love of violence.” The distinction implies that violence for the sake of violence is evil, but violence for the sake of a “greater good” is morally justified. However this depends entirely on which side you’re on, or whose good you’re fighting for. And I would argue that *intention* should not be the proper measure of evil, but *consequences*.

In the 1952 book *Lucifer and Prometheus*, Carl Jung’s foreword confirms that the idea of evil is a matter for psychology, not religion “The Satan-Prometheus parallel shows clearly enough that Milton’s devil stands for the essence of human individuation and thus comes within the scope of psychology” (xix). It was becoming increasingly clear that evil is to be found in humanity itself, either as individuals, or in society. But where does it come from?

In 1953, Arthur Miller produced *The Crucible*, a partially fictionalized story based on the Salem witch trials, which was actually an allegory of McCarthyism. (Miller himself was questioned by the HUAC in 1956, and convicted of contempt for congress for refusing to identify any others who he’d seen in meetings he’d attended). The play demonstrates how paranoia can generate group hysteria, and search for “evil” that isn’t there. In the 1954 *Lord of Flies*, William Golding demonstrated just how quickly educated boys could revert into savages when beyond the laws of society. The novel stresses the conflict between civilizing organization and individual will to power.

In 1956, Aldous Huxley published the philosophical essay *Heaven and Hell* (based on William Blake’s book). In it, he argues that visions of Heaven and Hell are the result of vitamin deficiencies, and can be experienced deliberately through drugs like LSD. This kind of

knowledge can never be fully communicated, and can only be experienced. Huxley, like Watts, argues for a direct, non-verbal experiences. Wittgenstein's 1953 *Philosophical Investigations* also questioned the limitations of language, by pointing out language refers to shared concepts more than things as they are.



Also in the 1950s, liberal, “revolutionary” elements of American culture became appropriated into the mainstream through the expansion of universities and the mainstreaming of personal expressionism. Previously, intellectuals would move to New York in a spirit of protest against the repressive, conservative middle classes; settling in Greenwich Village or other Bohemian centers of counter-culture. But the values of personal pleasure and self-expression became part of mainstream consumerism as they were adapted by advertising companies: “liberty” became the freedom to buy yourself whatever you wanted. Russell Jacoby writes, “Living for the moment, once a radical idea, promoted buying for pleasure; price and utility ceased to restraint” (38). As Protestant self-denial became liberal self-indulgence, the defiance and revolt against convention lost its edge.

At the same time, the rapid expansion of the universities kept young people in school longer, while pulling intellectuals out of the cities to comfortable positions in the suburbs where their ideas could be contained. As H. L. Mencken writes, the professor is “almost invariably inclined to seek his own security in mellifluous inanity—that is, far from being a courageous spokesman of ideas and an apostle of their free dissemination. . . he comes close to being the most prudent and skittish of all men” (qtd. in Jacoby 143). This led to a conformist society, which resisted (and also generated) new forms of rebellion.

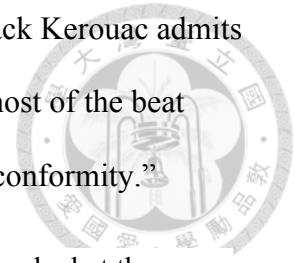
Jacoby points out two conflicting trends of the 1950s. On the one hand a disappearance of youthful radicalism; the younger generation were seen as passive. They went straight from

studying a subject in university, to teaching it; they bought houses and lived peacefully. This can be seen as a sign of the prosperity and freedom of the era; or as a rebellion against all the grand talk and idealism of earlier generations. On the other hand, the 1950s saw a national campaign against “Juvenile Delinquency” which seems to have little basis in reality. Jacoby writes, “Juvenile Delinquency was the only rebellion around, and it had to be stopped” (63). There were books, conferences, articles—it was a “national epidemic” and a silent, deadly contamination.

Even though there is little evidence of increased crime, the fear stemmed from the fact that youth in the 1950s had much greater freedom than ever before: access to cars, working parents, too much free time. . . the panic over Juvenile Delinquency was founded on a lack of control and worry about what kids were getting up to on their own. According to a United States senator in 1954, “Not even the Communist conspiracy could devise a more effective way to demoralize, disrupt, confuse, and destroy our future citizens than apathy on the part of adult American to the scourge known as Juvenile Delinquency” (qtd. in Gilbert 75).

In contrast to earlier generations, who rebelled for a reason, youth in the 1950s were seen to have *no* purpose, belief or ideology (which, according to Watts or Camus, was exactly the correct response to the absurdity of the universe). Caring too much about anything was uncool. Hollywood immortalized the unruffled “coolness” of angry teens rebelling against everything and nothing in *The Wild One* (1954), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955). A group of young authors exploring the literature of the post-World War II era called themselves The Beat Generation. Unlike the earlier Bohemians, who saw themselves as intellectual elitists, the Beats celebrated non-conformity and spontaneous creativity, fueled by drug use and immersion in popular culture. Instead of being focused in one center like Greenwich villages, the Beats took massive road trips across America, bouncing from campus to

campus, crashing anywhere they could, enjoying the unplanned journey. Jack Kerouac admits that the Beat generation was “shortlived and small in number”—because most of the beat characters “vanished into jails and madhouses, or were shamed into silent conformity.”

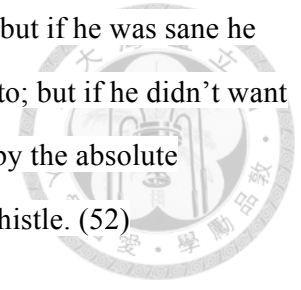


In actuality there was only a handful of real hip swinging cats and what there was vanished mightily swiftly during the Korean War when (and after) a sinister new kind of efficiency appeared in America, maybe it was the result of the universalization of Television and nothing else (the Polite Total Police Control of Dragnet’s ‘peace’ officers) (560).

The Vietnam War had begun in 1955 and was increasingly unpopular: this can be seen as due, on the one hand, to a lack of trust in the patriotic rhetoric that had been used to silence dissent in earlier wars, and also to an increased internationalism that appreciated other cultural heritages (instead of demonizing them, for example when Japanese-Americans were put in internment camps during World War II). In 1961, Levinas published *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, which made an effort to appreciate and understand other human beings as “like me” (an alter ego) and thus minimize violence against them. Levinas’s philosophy of the other is in line with the Eastern spirituality of Alan Watts, (“Every individual is an expression of the whole realm of nature, a unique action of the entire universe”) and also the increased drug use of the period, which gave rise to the idea of one universal consciousness, divided between all beings.

In 1961, Joseph Heller published *Catch 22*, which is set during World War II but contains criticism of the Cold War and McCarthyism; it became popular with teenagers opposed to the Vietnam War in the 60s. The main conflict in *Catch 22* involves the efforts of Captain John Yossarian to get out of active service. The problem is, the only way to get out of service is to be found insane. But if you *want* to get out of the war, it proves you are sane, and thus, not eligible.

Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle. (52)



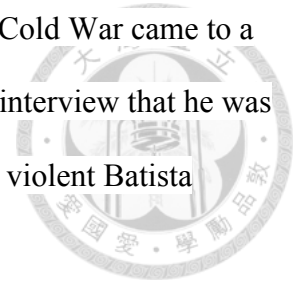
The novel questions universal morality, patriotism and moral duty, and also perversely reveals that the war is a profit-generating machine for big businesses, and that ethical issues could be twisted or reversed for personal motivations.

It was miraculous. It was almost no trick at all, he saw, to turn vice into virtue and slander into truth, impotence into abstinence, arrogance into humility, plunder into philanthropy, thievery into honor, blasphemy into wisdom, brutality into patriotism, and sadism into justice. Anybody could do it; it required no brains at all. It merely required no character. (336)

In 1953, communist revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Che Guevara overthrew the U.S. backed authoritarian government of Cuban president Fulgencio Batista. The communists were portrayed as godless materialists who hoped to destroy American freedom (freedom of capitalism and consumerism). Increasingly, America differentiated itself from communist forces and sympathizers by positioning itself as a nation of God. In 1954, the phrase “under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance; in 1956 “In God We Trust” was added to all U.S. currency. Representative Charles Edward Bennett of Florida cited the Cold War when he introduced the bill in the House, saying “In these days when imperialistic and materialistic communism seeks to attack and destroy freedom, we should continually look for ways to strengthen the foundations of our freedom”.

However, many educated Americans were no longer taken in by these appeals to freedom, when America's military complex was routinely meddling in international affairs for corporate

profit. Despite the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962, which was the closest the Cold War came to a full-scale nuclear war, U.S. President John F. Kennedy admitted in a 1963 interview that he was “in agreement with the first Cuban revolutionaries” against the corrupt and violent Batista government (553). The same year, he was assassinated.



In 1963, Alan Watts challenged the Christian mythology of Satan and eternal damnation in *Two Hands of God: the Myths of Polarity*.

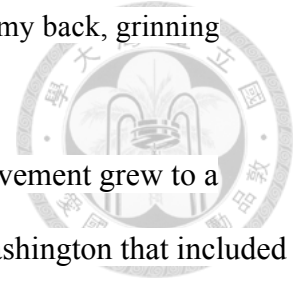
We see that this ABSOLUTE separation of good from evil renders our choice between the two an ultimately perilous adventure. . . However, we see that the positive values of the contest between God and Satan are preserved, and the total insanity of ultimate dualism avoided, by the assumption of a ‘hidden conspiracy’ between the two to conceal their unity. (41-42)

In other words, there is no real evil; there is only one reality and an illusion of separation. While this revival of popular Buddhism resonated with many, it couldn’t explain humanity’s propensity towards violence or self-destruction—though it did convince many towards protest by non-compliance, as well as create more distrust towards religious discourse.

In 1963, Kurt Vonnegut published *Cat’s Cradle*, which explores (and satirizes) science, technology and religion. The book is mostly a comment on free will, the absurdity of the universe, and man’s relation to technology; much of the novel can be seen as allegorical of the Cuban Missile Crisis the year before. The novel ends with the main character John meeting Bokonon, who is writing the last passage in the book of his pseudo-religion.

If I were a younger man, I would write a history of human stupidity; and I would climb to the top of Mount McCabe and lie down on my back with my history for a pillow; and I would take from the ground some of the blue-white poison that makes

statues of men; and I would make a statue of myself, lying on my back, grinning horribly, and thumbing my nose at You Know Who. (127.9)



Revolution was also no longer simply a foreign affair; the Civil Rights Movement grew to a boiling point in the 1960s. In 1963, Martin Luther King led a march on Washington that included over 20,000 people. While Martin Luther King took a non-violent approach to rebellion, others, like Malcom X, believed revolutionary violence was necessary. Campuses organized protests in support of civil rights and against the Vietnam war, some of which devolved into meaningless rebellion without any clear aims. The “Free Speech” movement at the University of Berkeley in 1964-65 devolved into the “Filthy Language Movement” where students carried placards with four-letter words, broadcasting obscenities over university loudspeakers.

In *The Return of the Primitive*, Ayn Rand points out that the central theme and basic ideology of all the activists is an anti-intellectualism based on popular philosophy.

If a dramatist had the power to convert philosophical ideas into real, flesh-and-blood people and attempted to create the walking embodiments of modern philosophy—the result would be the Berkeley rebels. These “activists” are so fully, literally, loyally, devastatingly the products of modern philosophy that someone should cry to all the university administrations and faculties: “Brothers, you asked for it!” Mankind could not expect to remain unscathed after decades of exposure to the radiation of intellectual fission-debris, such as: “Reason is impotent to know things as they are—reality is unknowable—certainty is impossible—knowledge is mere probability—truth is that which works—mind is a superstition—logic is a social convention—ethics is a matter of subjective commitment to an arbitrary postulate”— and the consequent mutations are those contorted young creatures who scream, in chronic terror, that they know nothing and want to rule everything. (15-16)

According to Rand, since Kant philosophy had devolved from identifying universal principles to telling people “what they mean when they speak, which they are otherwise unable to know.” This disavowal of any universal truths, the focus on the analysis of linguistics and truth statements, the pluralism and inclusiveness that sanctions all opinions while refusing the primacy of any, all amounts to a war against the mind. Rand quotes an interview with one of the protesters:

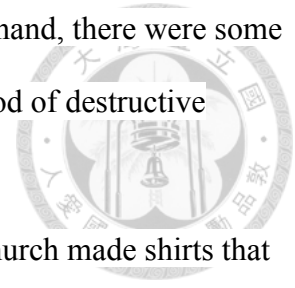
“We’ve learned that there are no absolute rules,” said a young girl, hastily and defensively, as if uttering an axiom—and proceeded to explain inarticulately, with the help of gestures pointing inward, that “we make rules for ourselves” and that what is right for her may not be right for others. “Whatever way I turn out, I still am a product,” she went on. She said it with the simple earnestness of a conscientious child acknowledging a self-evident fact of nature. It was not an act: the poor little creature meant it. So they scream their defiance against “The System,” not realizing that they are its most consistently docile pupils. (19)

As Michael Walsh describes it in *The Devil’s Pleasure Palace: The Cult of Critical Theory and the Subversion of the West*,

When everything could be questioned, nothing could be real, and the muscular, confident empiricism that had just won the war gave way, in less than a generation, to a fashionable Central European nihilism that was celebrated on college campuses across the United States (1).

“Celebrated” is the key term: rather than a depressing hopelessness, this nihilism was seen as an active resistance to social norms, customs and policies. Revolution became popular—whether as a protest against Vietnam, or Civil Rights, or simply to show defiance to societal norms and expectations, it became “cool” to grow your hair long, turn to Eastern philosophy or drug-use,

and seek inner peace and happiness by living in the moment. On the other hand, there were some who believed a new age of humanity could only come after a massive period of destructive revolution.

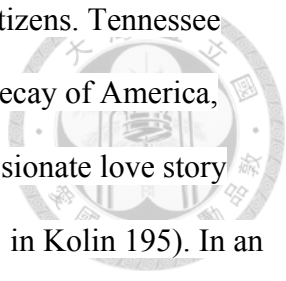


In 1966, an offshoot of Scientology that called itself the Process Church made shirts that said “Satan is Love”, and Anton Szandor LaVey founded *The Church of Satan*, which saw Satan as a symbol of defiance, fortitude against all odds and self-determination. Also in 1966 the Black Panthers sold copies of Mao Tse-Tung’s *Little Red Book* on the Berkeley campus to raise money to buy guns. Mao’s book glorifies violent revolution. Under the section 5 (“War and Peace”) we find these quotes.

When politics develops to a certain stage beyond which it cannot proceed by the usual means, war breaks out to sweep the obstacles from the way. . . . When the obstacle is removed and our political aim attained the war will stop. Nevertheless, if the obstacle is not completely swept away, the war will have to continue until the aim is fully accomplished. . . . It can therefore be said that politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed. . . . Every Communist must grasp the truth; “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

The book also has sections on “Revolutionary Heroism” and “Self-reliance and Arduous Struggle.” Under the section “Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win” Mao calls for especially for defiance of the U.S. government’s international influence:

People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs!
People of the world, be courageous, and dare to fight, defy difficulties and advance wave upon wave. Then the whole world will belong to the people. Monsters of all kinds shall be destroyed. (7)



America's international policies were increasingly challenged by its own citizens. Tennessee Williams' *Red Devil Battery Sign* (1966) traces the progression of "moral decay of America, which really began with the Korean War," and has been described as "a passionate love story which happens to coincide with the assassination of John F. Kennedy" (qtd. in Kolin 195). In an interview with Charles Raus, Williams proclaims that Americans were the "death merchants of the world" and that America went to Vietnam so "two hundred billion dollars worth of equipment could be destroyed" and repurchased from arms dealers (qtd. in Kolin 195). Some have read *Red Devil Battery* through the lens of Levinas's ethical theory of the other: Adler argues the play shows "the need for the human heart to respond with compassion to the outcry of the other." On the other hand, Williams's play is hardly hopeful: it portrays modern society as an inescapable hell on earth.

In *Red Devil*, William's sense of decline and fall, loss and decay, and disorder and chaos turn into an ever-darkening landscape of cosmic evil, a vision of Dante's Inferno, complete with fiery explosions, hellhounds, and grinning red devils. . . Beate Hein Bennet sets *Red Devil* in the tradition of Dante's Inferno, "an immense prison where individual souls were subjected to systemized torment," and "irreversible rigidity of evil and suffering." (qtd. in 196 Kolin)

The Faustian ideal of the technological perfection of humanity, and the American belief in the Free Market (unrestrained capitalism) had led to vast corporate systems that limit human freedom and monitor its citizens, as anticipated by George Orwell's 1949 novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Huxley's 1932 *Brave New World*. These books characterized "evil" in terms of corporate or governmental systems of control; totalizing power systems against which individuals had no chance at resistance. And fact was catching up with fiction: science continued to rapidly produce new inventions that radically changed the nature of human interaction, such as

police surveillance equipment and the emergence of CCTV. As our response and reception of technology shifted, so too did our response to the satanic.

In 1967, Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* was published, however it was written earlier, between 1928 and 1940, during a time when writing a satirical novel in Russia was dangerous. The Devil in the novel is a pretty harmless magician, more similar to Goethe's Faust, and agreeing to serve him provides a sense of artistic freedom. Near the end of the novel, the Master's love interest, Margarita, jumps up and starts dancing, "How happy I am, how happy I am, that I struck a bargain with him! Oh Satan, Satan!" (365). The book ends with the Master winning his own little slice of peace—not heaven or hell exactly, but a quiet place in nature, where he could be free.

In contrast, 1967 also saw the best-selling horror novel *Rosemary's Baby*, a thriller in which a young girl discovers all of her neighbors (and her husband) belong to a Satanic cult, and her baby is actually the spawn of Satan. The book was turned into a horror movie in 1968, and Anton LaVay played the part of the devil in the scene depicting the rape of Rosemary. The differences in these two depictions are extreme. In the first, the Devil is simply a friendly character who helps you get what you want. In the second, he is a massive, invisible conspiracy that revels in blood and gore, based off earlier descriptions of black satanic masses (which, as pointed out earlier by A.E. Waite, never really happened). However, the "hippie" counter-cultural revolution that questioned everything and the imaginary systemic Satanism that celebrated violence (as in, actual worshippers of Satan who did bad things to please their dark lord) were soon to converge, at least in the minds of religious conservatives.

4.5 The Church of Satan

LaVey, like Crowley before him, was mostly a media-hound sensationalist, who painted his San Francisco home black and had private parties with made up rituals described as “Dungeons, Dragons and Debauchery” (Sanders 111). Even though he claimed his church had hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide, the actual numbers probably never exceeded a few hundred. But the revival of Satanism wasn’t limited to just him. In 1967 the Beatles included Crowley on *the people we like* cover of Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, and the Rolling Stones put out an album called “Their Satanic Majesties Request.” LaVey, Crowley and other Satanists used Satan as a symbol for personal autonomy and resistance—they blasphemed to oppose organized religion, not because they actually believed in a real, supernatural force of evil.

They might have agreed with Paul Ricoer’s 1967 *The Symbolism of Evil*, in which the Devil, or pure evil, is reduced merely to the insatiable nature of human desire. “Henceforth the evil infinite of human desire—always something else, always something more—which animates the movement of civilizations, the appetite for pleasure, for possessions, for power, for knowledge- seems to constitute the reality of man” (254). But this symbolic, academic reading of Satan was soon drowned out by a series of horrific murders involving the director and cast of the *Rosemary’s Baby* movie.

Charles Manson established himself as a guru in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury during 1967’s “Summer of Love.” According to Bugliosi in the book *Helter Skelter*, Manson borrowed philosophically from the Process Church; Manson had also studied some Scientology in prison. He taught his followers (mostly women, which he called “The Family”) that they were reincarnated from the first Christians, and the establishment were the Romans.

In August 1969, members of Manson's Family killed five people at the home of Rudi Altobelli, which was previously inhabited by Terry Melcher, a record producer Manson had met when he recorded some of his own music. The house was being rented by Roman Polanski (director of *Rosemary's Baby*) and his wife Sharon Tate, who had acted in the movie.

The next night, Manson took his Family members out on a mission to commit more murders. The senseless murders and violent crime scenes (which included words written in the victim's blood on the walls) shocked the nation. Conspiracist theorists have seen the Manson murders as part of an organized hit by an international satanic conglomerate. Actually, Manson was trying to initiate a race war that would destroy civilization (his Family planned to hide out in the desert and then rule the new world). It's also likely the murders were just the result of Manson trying to extort or steal money to provide for his growing Family, and his apocalyptic visions were just rationalizations.

The violent murders, however, pretty much killed both LaVey's theatrical Satanism, and the hippie movement, by justifying conservative criticisms. After a decade of rebellion and resistance against "the establishment," which produced many counter-culture communes centered on charismatic leaders, the violence of the Manson murders seemed to suggest what conservative Christian parents had been saying all along: that the hippie movement, with its free love, drug culture, political radicalism and Eastern philosophy, was really just a new form of Satanism.

According to some, Manson's fascination with the Beatle's music, which he claimed held secret messages about the coming apocalyptic race wars, proved that Rock and Roll was of the devil. Fueling these conspiracy theories is the fact that John Lennon was living (and murdered) in the building where *Rosemary's Baby* was filmed. His killer, Mark David Chapman, was an

American disciple of Aleister Crowley and had been working on a film called *Lucifer Rising* starring Manson follower Bobby Beausoleil. Another follower, Susan Atkins, had previously performed in LaVey's cabaret-style ceremonies featuring topless witches. Actress Sharon Tate had, three years earlier, played the role of a witch in the movie *Eye of the Devil*. Seven years after Tate's murder, her husband/director Polanski was charged with a number of offenses against 13-year-old Samantha Geimer, including rape and sodomy.

While an interest in black magic and Aleister Crowley did lead some individuals to initiate violent agendas, they were not part of a large conspiracy but acting out their own violent tendencies, fueled mostly by drug addictions, money concerns, and a desire for fame and fortune. At the same time, by 1969, the principles of revolution and resistance, once an integral part of Satan's identity, had been separated from him almost completely. The Satan of 1969 looked nothing like the Lucifer of *Paradise Lost* or Nietzsche's bold Superman. The medieval Satan reappeared, the one that demanded bloody sacrifices, or—like Lewis's demons—tempted humans gradually into pure evil, starting with drugs, free love and rock music, and ending with murder. In earlier decades, cultural dissidents could be blamed on atheistic communists who were hell-bent on destroying the American way of life with violence. Now, after the “proof” of the Manson murders, conservatives could blame nearly everything they didn't like on the growth of satanic cults.

As for a unified theory of what these “Satanists” believed, there wasn't one. In 1969, Anton LaVey tried to fill the void by publishing the *Satanic Bible*, but he admits he basically just gave people a dramatic version of Ayn Rand's philosophy, with ceremony and ritual added.

The Church of Satan's “Nine Statements” are very similar to the speech John Galt gives in *Atlas Shrugged*, and aims towards indulgence instead of abstinence; kindness to those who

deserve it instead of “psychic vampires”; undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit; personal responsibility and vital existence. The “sins” of the Church of Satan include Stupidity, Pretentiousness; Counterproductive Pride; and Lack of Aesthetics. Michael Aquino’s 1970 *The Diabolicon*, also influential in the Church of Satan and offshoot movements, was based on Aquino’s reading of *Paradise Lost*.

Ayn Rand contrasts two important 1969 events that demonstrate defiance to God, in both rational and irrational terms: Woodstock and the Apollo 11 moon landing. The Apollonian forces of reason and science allowed us to put a man on the moon, an act of unprecedented human courage and daring: but also an unrivalled act of conceit in the history of civilization. The Dionysian forces of emotion and mindlessness, on the other hand, brought Woodstock—a music festival attracting 400,000 hippies for “3 Days of Peace and Music.” According to Newsweek, Woodstock expressed all the ideas of the new generation: getting high, digging arts, and listening to the music of revolution. Rand’s critique of Woodstock is that it was poorly planned, and the attendees hadn’t even bothered to bring their own food or water, expecting everything to be provided for them miraculously. When it rained (for most of the concert, turning the fields into a mud-pit), festival goers had “no recourse but to the shouting of obscenities at anything that frustrates their whims, at men or at a rainy sky, indiscriminately, with no concept of the difference” (116).

These events represent two branches of Faustian response, one with science and reason, one with irrationalism and primitivism. The interesting thing is that they are united in their liberal idealism that defiance is the only acceptable response to life: a refusal to maintain the status quo or limit self-expression; pure human boldness to go into the unknown and create

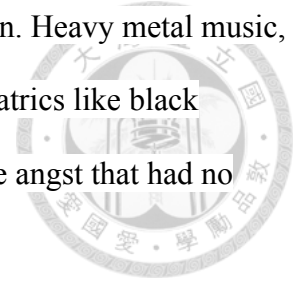
meaning out of it through strength of will. Neither of these events were seen as inherently evil or Satanic, but they are both part of a tradition that originally was seen as a daring resistance.

As Rand says, “it is man’s irrational emotions that bring him down to the mud; it is man’s reason that lifts him to the stars” (118). While Rand was skeptical of the Dionysian forces, her division between rational and irrational overlooked the fact that both paths were united in their resistance to limitations imposed by society: attendants of both events might agree that anything is possible, either through reason and science, or strength of will and positive thinking.

In 1971, John Lennon wrote the lyrics “imagine there’s no heaven...no hell below us...nothing to kill or die for; no religion too. No possessions, a brotherhood of man, all the people sharing all the world.” Lennon’s Marxist breed of hippie philosophy, which mirrored Mark Twain’s *Mad Passenger* and the Eastern spiritualism that became essential to 1960s culture, would soon be replaced by hysterical fears of an international Satanic conspiracy.

As the generation of Woodstock went on to start families in suburbia, this dream of a perfect world was challenged only by an insidious inner voice that refused to be placated: what Ricoeur had pointed out, that evil was an unsatisfiable desire, became the psychological crisis of the next two decades, a crisis individuals tried to tame with consumerism, pills, entertainment and therapy. Since there were no hotspots of counter-culture left to attract young people, radical resistance movements faded in the 70s. Rebellious teenagers would instead turn to death metal, which kept the dialogue of revolution alive by portraying itself as openly Satanic. Black Sabbath’s first album, released in 1975, was called *We Sold Our Soul for Rock’n’Roll*. Led Zeppelin’s mastermind Jimmy Page, an admirer of Aleister Crowley, was rumored to have sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for his success, and many claimed their iconic *Stairway to Heaven* contained Satanic messages when played backwards. Both bands were connoisseurs of

1920s blues music, and especially the trailblazing bluesman Robert Johnson. Heavy metal music, Death metal and Black metal, deliberately aligned itself with “Satanic” theatrics like black clothes and costumes, face paint and violent lyrics to cash in on the teenage angst that had no outlet in suburban America.



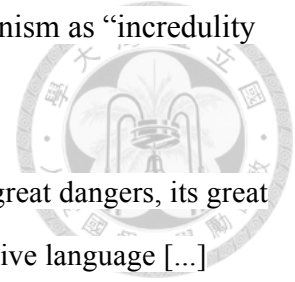
The music terrified parents, which made the music more popular. Horror movies and books built up terror started by *Rosemary's Baby* and the Manson murders, such as the *Exorcist* movie in 1973, Steven King's *Carrie* in 1974, and *The Omen* in 1976 (introducing the antichrist Damien Thorn as son of the Devil). C.S. Lewis' invocation to laugh at the devil by making him comic disappeared in the 1970s—he was also no longer a benign gentleman. Demonic possession was portrayed as very real, and very disturbing.

The entertainment that wasn't openly Satanic, was often still part of the revolutionary tradition. In 1977 *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* hit the theaters, which focuses on a group of rebels that threatens an empire through an act of violent terrorism (blowing up the Death Star). This kind of revolutionary terrorism, however, was more likely to be experienced in theaters than acted out in year life.

The 70s were comparatively peaceful: the decade saw the beginning of the “New Age” movement, which included Richard Bach's 1972 *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and 1977 *Illusions, Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah*. The purpose of life was the development of knowledge and wisdom, through experience: magical, even miraculous abilities, were seen as possible, but not in any way demonic.

In the humanities, critical theory focused mostly on structural linguistics, and then postmodern theory. In 1979 Jean-François Lyotard published his classic 1979 work *The*

Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, which defined postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives.”



The narrative function is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language [...]

Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? (qtd. in Natoli 72)

This led, in literary theory, to a focus on minor narratives, marginalized voices excluded from the cultural hegemony (Antonio Gramsci). It also led to a resistance towards self-righteousness or violence; since all forms of knowledge are dependent on language and culture, and most grand narratives were created by the forces in power, any universal claim to knowledge was automatically suspect. No claims were *legitimate*, which meant nobody could be *right* (so why fight about anything?) These ideas gave way to diffuse narratives, like *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979) or *Midnight's Children* (1981).

At the same time, movies often tried to replenish meaning (epic adventures needed to have sympathetic heroes, and the stakes had to matter.) Ridley Scott's 1982 *Bladerunner* (mis)quotes a line from Blake's "America: A Prophecy"—a poem that uses the American Revolution as an allegory for the struggle for personal freedom. According to a student thesis:

The film's use of mythical and Biblical imagery is a rejection of the depthlessness of postmodern ideas in favour of a view of Man which is redemptive, and which contradicts the celebration of meaninglessness which typifies postmodern theory. The use of imagery from mythic and religious meta-narratives offers humanity self-definition through moral truth. (Salim)

The breakdown in meaning and knowledge mapped by Lyotard and other postModernist or poststructuralist thinkers caused a kind of American *ennui*. Citizens distracted themselves with

movies, TV shows and consumerism, but felt dissatisfied; as evidenced by the rise in therapy sessions and the use of new antidepressants. Some therapists used forms of hypnosis, and the idea of “repressed memories” (based loosely on Freud), to conclude that patients had been raped or molested as children, and that this is why they were presently depressed or anxious. The “memories” that surfaced, however, sometimes contained fantastical accounts of supernatural events, that were widely believed by a culture already paranoid by the idea of a hidden Satanist conspiracy.

In 1980, Dr. Pazder’s *Michelle Remembers* was the first of many books where a patient (Michelle Smith), with the help of a psychotherapist, allegedly unlocked repressed memories of long-term, ritualistic satanic abuse. One of the most noteworthy features of this phenomenon is that, despite criminal allegations and a total lack of corroborating evidence, the therapists involved claim that what really happened isn’t really that important, only that the patients *believed* these things happened and were “true for her” (a symptom of the postmodern resistance to universal truths).

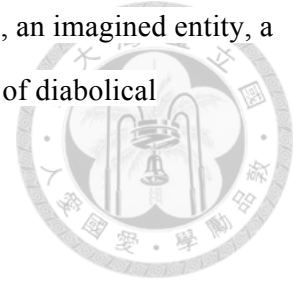
The *belief* in the reality of child-molesting, satan-worshipping cults grew to a kind of hysteria in the 1980s and involved several expensive and high profile court cases. In 1983, Judy Johnson reported to police that her son had been sodomized by her estranged husband (and teacher) Ray Buckey, at the McMartin preschool in Manhattan Beach, California. By the spring of 1984, after interviewing all the students (using suggestive techniques like having students imagine what might have happened), it was claimed that 360 children had been abused. Many of the accusations were bizarre, including things like seeing witches fly and being transported through underground tunnels. Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, co-authors of *Michelle Remembers*, were involved in the case and may have influenced the children’s testimony. After

six years of criminal trials, no convictions were obtained. All charges were dropped in 1990, after the longest and most expensive criminal trial in American history.

In 1988, Paul Ingram's daughter Ericka went on a church retreat in Olympia, Washington. One of the counselors claimed she was sexually abused by her father (many of the children on the retreat had been sharing stories of abuse). Ericka, convinced of the accusation, distanced herself from her parents; her sister Julie soon made the same claim. When allegations were brought up against him, Paul at first refused it. But under pressure from the police, Paul allowed himself to be convinced that he had really raped and abused his own children, but couldn't remember it, because Satan had wiped his memories. He also named some of his friends who the girls claimed were in on it. Ericka's stories included forced sex with goats and dogs, satanic orgies, and the sacrifice of babies which were buried in the back yard. After an investigation that cost taxpayers three quarters of a million dollars, no proof could be discovered of ritualistic satanic abuse. Paul Ingram pleaded guilty to six counts of third-degree rape, but once convicted, without all the pressure, his confidence in his own guilt began to deteriorate. At his sentencing hearing in 1990, he said "I stand before you, and I stand before God. I have never sexually abused my daughters. I am not guilty of these crimes" (Loftus 261). The *Satanic Panic* was not quick to go away however, because it filled a need. In some ways, it was just getting started.

Satan—a cunning, resourceful enemy who threatened the moral order of an entire society—was alive and well in Olympia, Washington. An elaborate system of myths about the workings of evil had created its own evidence, and a community had gone daft with nonsense. Rumors and fears are often a thin cover for common prejudices. Satanists, witches, Gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, Communists—really, it didn't matter who the "demon" was as long as he encapsulated the most grotesque and terrifying images of evil. All prejudice begins with this process of stereotyping and then

projecting outward onto an individual, a nonconforming group, an imagined entity, a polity party, or an entire race the sense, the feeling, or the fear of diabolical malevolence. (Loftus 258)



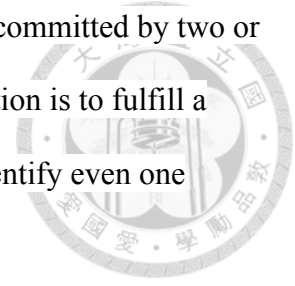
1989, Oprah Winfrey interviewed Michelle Smith and also Laurel Rose Willson, the author of a fake memoir *Satan's Underground*, which claimed to be her experience as a “breeder” for a Satanic cult (after being exposed as a fraud, she changed her name to Lauren Stratford, and would later collect donations intended for Holocaust survivors under another fake name).

In 1990, Shawn Carlson and Gerald Larue issued a report for the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion called *Satanism in America: How the Devil Got Much More Than His Due*. According to the authors:

A great hoax is being perpetrated on the American public. A small group of religious fanatics, political extremists, bereaved parents, and the mentally ill, as well as a few well-intentioned individuals, are appearing on talk shows at police training seminars, at criminal trials, and in newspaper interviews as “expert” witnesses with an alarming message: Satanism is rampant in America; devil- devil-worshippers are killing millions of children; Satanism is seducing teens into suicide pacts and driving our youth to violence. . . . As a result, lives have been destroyed, the practice of legitimate minority religions has been infringed and many millions of dollars have been wasted chasing the devil’s tail. The allegations of large scale Satanic conspiracies are totally without foundation. In fact, the available evidence leaves only one reasonable conclusion: they do not exist! (Carlson v)

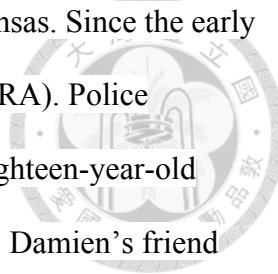
In 1992, Kenneth V. Lanning, a special agent for the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime located at the FBI headquarters in Quantico, wrote a guide for law enforcement dealing

with allegations of satanic ritual abuse. Defining a satanic murder as “one committed by two or more individuals who rationally plan the crime and whose primary motivation is to fulfill a prescribed satanic ritual calling for the murder,” Lanning was unable to identify even one documented satanic murder in the United States.



But the issue of sexual abuse had become an institution in the 80s; with books like *The Courage to Heal Workbook* (1988) guiding patients and therapists towards healing, by remembering their repressed memories. According to “incest-survivor” books, incest was an epidemic. Symptoms included “feeling powerless” or “having no sense of your talents or goals” or “trouble being motivated.” And incest didn’t need to be physical; it could include inappropriate sexual comments or gestures. Psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman called it a “common and central female experience.” For many women, being able to talk openly about their sexual abuse was liberating, and part of a dialogue of resistance against a patriarchal society. The problem was, once patients start *trying* to remember instances of abuse, their imaginations can fill in the blanks with fantasies that never happened. When, in the early 90s, claims of incest were finally met with skepticism rather than support,

What began as a clear-cut moral skirmish between enlightened child-abuse advocates and entrenched patriarchal forces was turning into an untidy war with ever-changing distinctions between good and evil. Suddenly therapists were being accused of being the bad guys, the hired guns, the greedy, power-hungry, ideologically inspired zealots who had manipulated their clients into accepting a trendy but mistaken diagnosis, creating rather than curing their patients’ psychological problems and ripping families apart. Therapists were being compared to the Salem witch-hunters and the McCarthy-era baiters, overturning every stone and looking under every bush in their search for a pre-identified source of evil. (Loftus 202)

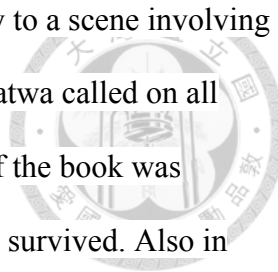


In 1993, three eight-year-old boys were murdered in West Memphis, Arkansas. Since the early 80s, many police officers had attended seminars in Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA). Police concluded that this case might qualify, and the likely suspect was a local eighteen-year-old named Damien Echols, who wore black clothes and listened to death metal. Damien's friend Jessie Misskelle was picked up for questioning and caved under police pressure, naming Damien and Jason Baldwin, and admitting to being in a Satanic cult. At the trial, an expert from the Columbia Pacific University testified to demonstrate that the murders could have been part of a Satanic ritual. All three pleaded not-guilty, but were convicted anyway. They were released in 2011 due to questionable circumstances involving the case and evidence. HBO has produced two documentaries on the case under the title *Paradise Lost*. By the mid 1990s, however, most people had concluded that actually SRA was non-existent.

Towards the end of the book, *We've had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse* (1993), the authors discuss the cultural obsession with incest and sexual abuse, and conclude it's because:

We've lost the place of Hell in our culture. . . We are desperate to recover it, so we have a new Hell in modern times called childhood and a new priest cult, a craft designed to save you from that Hell, all with the aim of recovering one's lost innocence. (qtd. Loftus 264)

The anxiety in the face of the abyss of freedom, in the liberal (and peaceful) West, had become misinterpreted as a literal (but forgotten) case of sexual trauma or childhood violence. However, for those untouched by Lennon's dream of a post-religious society, there were still plenty of things to kill and die for.

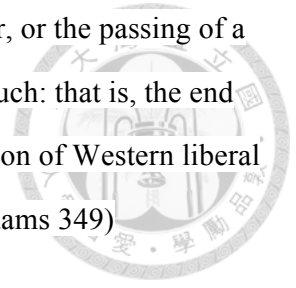


In 1988, Salman Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses*. Due mainly to a scene involving the Prophet Muhammad, it evoked enraged controversy, and the resulting fatwa called on all Muslims to kill Rushdie and his publishers. In 1991, the Italian translator of the book was stabbed to death. In 1993, the publisher in Norway was shot three times but survived. Also in 1993, an attack intended for the Turkish translator turned into the Sivas massacre that resulted in the deaths of thirty seven people. M. D. Fletcher notes that this violence (which demonstrates the dangerous nature of closed, absolutist belief system) could ironically be traced to the frustrations of the migrant experience and the failure of multicultural integration—both major themes of the novel.

In other ways, the world seemed to be getting better. 1989 was called the year that changed the world (*The Times* published a book by the same name). The Supreme Leader of Iran died on June 3rd, opening the path to regime change. In Beijing on June 4th, pro-democratic student protesters were gunned down by China's military (which triggered largescale rebellion and international condemnation of the government). The Soviet Union leaders, looking at the prosperity of Capitalist countries compared to the Eastern European countries, loosened their grip on the Iron Curtain. Revolutions swept the Eastern Blok, and the Berlin Wall was re-opened. Also in 1989, personal computers were becoming mainstream, and the first commercial internet service providers surfaced. While democratic capitalism had its problems, it was beginning to emerge as the best possible system.

Francis Fukuyama, an American scholar who was then serving on the policy-planning staff of the U.S. State Department, published an essay in the *National Interest* entitled “The End of History.”

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (qtd. in Adams 349)



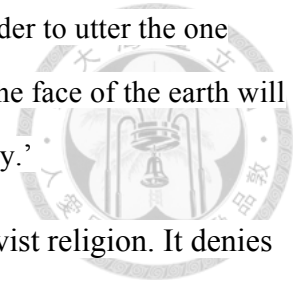
However, although Free Market Democracy emerged as the *better system* than Communism, it didn't solve all problems, like the heavy meaninglessness of existence that was the new postmodern reality. In 1996, David Foster Wallace explored some of these problems in *Infinite Jest*.

Nothing to live or die for... But there is no joy in Wallace's world. It is as if the true burden of this responsibility—the responsibility to escape from the meaninglessness and drudgery of a godless world by constructing a happier meaning for it out of nothing, literally *ex nihilo* as God himself once had done— was too much for any human spirit to achieve. It is a possibility that requires us to become gods ourselves. . . . But choosing to look differently at the miserable and annoying and frustrating moments of existence, choosing to experience them nevertheless happy, meaningful, sacred, perhaps even full of bliss—that is what we must learn to do. (46)

4.6 New Age Spiritualism

Wallace didn't find the answers he was looking for, and took his own life in 2008. Others, however, found meaning through new forms of spirituality. In 1995, Neal Donald Walsch published *Conversations with God*. Walsch's god, however, is not the god of organized religion. Instead, he champions a pluralistic, personalized spirituality where every path is acceptable as long as it leads to happiness.

I was told to challenge every spiritual teacher, every world leader to utter the one sentence that no religion, no political party, and no nation on the face of the earth will dare utter: ‘Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way.’



In many ways, the book is anti-religious. It denies an afterlife, or an exclusivist religion. It denies that non-Christians will go to Hell (or that anyone will be punished). It’s about tolerance, acceptance, enjoying the moment, and choosing to go after the life you want. “A life lived of choice is a life of conscious action. A life lived of chance is a life of unconscious creation.” It’s basically the same spiritual philosophy as Napoleon Hill’s *Outwitting the Devil*. The major difference being, God and Satan have switched roles.

Other popular New Age books include *The Alchemist* (1988) *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior* (1980) and *Creative Visualization* (1978). Kahlil Gibran’s much earlier *The Prophet* (1923) is also popular. Gibran’s short story on Satan, published in 1947, is much less known. In it, Satan gives a long speech about his benefits:

I am the courage that creates resolution in man. I am the source that provokes originality of thought. I am the hand that moves man’s hands. I am Satan everlasting. I am Satan whom people fight in order to keep themselves alive. If they cease struggling against me, slothfulness will deaden their minds and hearts and souls, in accordance with the weird penalties of their tremendous myth.

Gibran here predicts the central problem of humanity in a postmodern world: if nothing to live or die for, it’s difficult to hold onto any enthusiasm for life, any reason to get up and do anything. Satan, according to Gibran, is the life force generated by the struggle of existence.

In 1976 the Foundation for Inner Peace published a hardcover of Helen Shucman’s *A Course in Miracles*. Sales exploded after Marianne Williamson (who wrote a companion guide called *A Return to Love*) discussed the book on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 1992.

According to Williamson, “It takes courage. . . to endure the sharp pains of self discovery rather than choose to take the dull pain of unconsciousness that would last the rest of our lives” (116). The main theory of the book is that there are only two energies in existence, fear and love; and love is the only one that actually exists, because fear is an illusion. Peace comes from realizing that nothing real can be threatened, and nothing unreal exists. As for moral action, *A Course in Miracles* advises, “Do what you love. Do what makes your heart sing.”

In New Age Philosophy, the devil and god are usually defined as polarities in a universal unity—similar to Empedocles’s idea that the ongoing universe is generated by Love and Strife. However I think Heraclitus’s version is more universal, and will be more profitable once we get into the next chapter on theory. For Heraclitus, there is only one being, one unity, the stable state of which was called *dike* or “justice,” and one opposition force, a force of resistance, called *eris* or “strife.” The universe is always moving and changing because of these forces, the forces towards unity and the force away from it. These two forces are represented as two paths, a path up, and a path down. For Heraclitus, both paths are the same. These two paths can be found in most religious traditions. In the Bible, they are the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. The Tree of Knowledge brings death, and represented by Satan or a snake. The Tree of Life brings life and is usually represented by a bird (dove or eagle.) The fundamental question of the human condition, is how to respond to *what is*. Should we seek to change, to become something different, to improve ourselves and our experiences? Or should we *not* seek (seeking is the entire problem) and just be what we are now? New Age spirituality accepts both, because there isn’t one right way or truth. Interestingly, both paths lead to death of self.

On the one hand, there’s complete obedience, or selflessness. You pay attention to the moment, you get rid of all desires. You move “beyond hope and fear.” You achieve Unity with

The One, which results in a disappearing of ego. On the other hand, you resist, by making your own meaning, by refusing any external definition or limitation of self, by being absolutely, 100% free to create the life you want. However, this path leads to a rejection of *all* meaning, and the recognition that even your desires are part of the system, which leads to self-destruction.

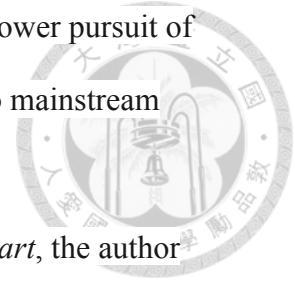
Traditionally, these two paths are indicated by left and right hands (and recently confirmed by brain science). Imagination and creativity is tied to the left hand, ruled by the right side of your brain. Logic and reason is linked to the right hand, controlled by the left side of the brain, (your brain is cross-wired, so the left side of your body is controlled by the right half of the brain). Reason and logic was “good” because contemplation led to God, and reason needed to control or resist the “evil” impulses of desire or imagination. Reason was obedience, imagination was sin. “Sin” actually comes from the word “sinister” which means “of the left hand side”. Jesus and Buddha are usually shown raising their right hand upwards.

There are two paths, one up and one down. The totalizing discourse of language and reason is the power structure that must be resisted in the quest for creativity and freedom; this resistance always fails in that it leads to self-destruction, but it also generates knowledge and wisdom through experience in the journey, which actually leads back to total subjugation. It’s a cycle, a procession, not a simple choice.

Although the resistance to any received knowledge, the devotion to introspection and personal happiness, the focus on controlling your thoughts and self-awareness to make sure you’re only attracting what you want, put the New Age Movement within the satanic tradition, most of these values have been incorporated into mainstream Christianity.

Even those who participate in organized religion are likely to agree with Neale Donald Walsh’s firmly Faustian advice, “Do what you do for the sheer joy of it. Do what you choose,

not what someone else chooses for you.” While this Nietzschean, will-to-power pursuit of personal fulfillment was once seen as Satanic, it has been appropriated into mainstream spirituality in interesting ways.



In the 2009 *God will Do the Rest: 7 Keys to the Desires of Your Heart*, the author attributes the following passage to “the German philosopher Goethe”:

There are but two roads that lead to an important goal and to the doing of great things: strength and perseverance. Strength is the lot of but a few privileged men; but austere perseverance, harsh and continuous, may be employed by the smallest of us and rarely fails of its purpose, for its silent power grows irresistibly greater with time.
(56)

The author uses the quote to show that “God is with all faith-filled, persistent people.” However, while this quote, attributed to Goethe, shows up in dozens of books and hundreds of websites, I can’t find an original source. Likewise, another popular and often-quoted passage reads, “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!” Although these quotes sound very Faustian, they are not exactly Goethe. They are most likely based on a “very free translation” by John Anster in 1835—although it’s more like a rough paraphrase of the general idea rather than an actual translation. Still, the popularity of such obviously Faustian (and satanic) themes—willpower, seeking happiness, persistence, the possibility of accomplishing anything, and even the phrase “genius, power and magic”—in spiritual literature, is somewhat ironic.

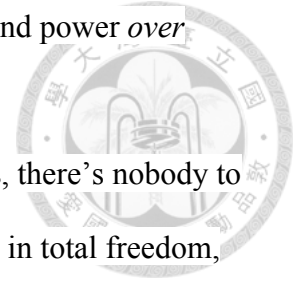
The Devil as a character has recently regained some popularity (and even sympathy) at least in popular culture. The title of Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* series is taken from *Paradise Lost*, and Pullman’s work is a response to Blake’s Satanic reading of Milton. “Blake said Milton was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it. I am of the Devil’s party

and know it.” In 1997, J.K. Rowling published *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, the first book in a seven part series that became the best-selling series in history and spawned a movie franchise that millions of kids grew up with. In the first few years, the books were protested by Christians because it taught children “witchcraft” and magic (which is still seen as an occult science, and tied to the Faustian idea that magic is the result of summoning demons).

Woody Allen’s *Deconstructing Harry* (1997) revisits the central themes of *Paradise Lost* in line with postmodernism’s quest to produce meaning. In the film Woody Allen complains about his life through short mini-stories. In one, an actor is “out of focus” and goes to see a doctor. There’s nothing wrong with him, he’s just blurry. His family needs to wear glasses to see him clearly. His psychologist interprets his story as, “you’re forcing the world to adjust to the distortion you’ve become.” Woody Allen’s central problem is this: he has writer’s block and can’t write; the problem with that is, “all he has in life is his imagination.... For the first time in my life, I can’t come up with a meaningful story that holds my interest.” He has the same problem even sexually; he can’t focus, and needs to find the perfect sexual fantasy. He lists his issues: “I’m bankrupt, I’m spiritually empty. I have no soul.”

Even though evil can be (mostly) explained by internal impulses, it doesn’t solve the problem of where evil comes from, and humanity is still obsessed with the idea of some demonic forces deliberately leading us astray. In 1997 the devil was played by Al Pacino in *The Devil’s Advocate*. In 2000 a female version of Satan was played by Elizabeth Hurley in *Bedazzled*. Harvey Keitel played him in *Little Nicky*. Peter Stormare plays Satan in *Constantine* (2005). Whether comedic or dramatic, the function of the devil remains the same; to tempt us by offering us our own desires. Often (in movies) through the temptation we discover something about ourselves and learn to resist him better. You could say, it’s necessary to be tempted into bad

things, so we can do them and feel guilty about them, gaining knowledge and power *over ourselves* (gaining the strength to *not* commit the evil we want to commit).



The problem with modern civilization is that there are so few limits, there's nobody to protect us from ourselves, and it's easy to feel powerless and helpless even in total freedom, paralyzed by our own choices and the inability to decide what we want, or to do what we've decided. In the *Matrix* series (1999) the main character Neo finds out that reality is an illusion, and he's basically a battery in a big machine. He needs to unplug from the machine to discover reality; and then try to resist and destroy the system that has him captive. When fighting against the nemesis program Agent Smith in *Matrix Revolutions*, Neo is told, "You can't win, it's pointless to keep fighting! Why, Mr. Anderson? Why do you persist?" Neo responds, "Because I choose to." Some version of this line has been repeated in dozens of major movies (both before and after *The Matrix*): the conflict revolves around the protagonist choosing to resist even in the face of an omnipotent force and certain death. Sometimes, like in the 1995 *Braveheart* starring Mel Gibson, the character dies (Gibson shouts out "FREEDOM!" while being tortured, with his last breath, fully committed to his cause). In most other versions, freedom is indeed won after much courage and risk-taking—and often some guerilla warfare, sneak attacks and sabotage.

In *The Matrix*, however, things get more and more complicated. When Neo, against all odds, reaches machine city and confronts the "God" of the machines, he is told he is a *program* written to give the resistant, rebel humans the illusion of hope, with the prophecy of *The One* who would free them. But this Neo (the sixth "reincarnation"), is different from the others, because he's in love with Trinity. So rather than making a rational decision, which would be to follow the Machine's plan and save as many as possible, he chooses to save Trinity (an irrational choice, but the only one that gives freedom). According to David Quint, this is also the central

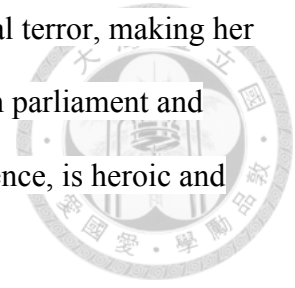
heroic act in *Paradise Lost*: the point of Milton's epic is that "Man chooses Love over God." Adam chooses love for Eve, his wife and fellow human being, over obedience to God (1).

Michel Foucault has been central to the contemporary understanding of knowledge and power. In his early work, such as *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault says "Where there is power, there is resistance." But increasingly he began to see how culture and language has made us responsive in a way that questions our free will. (When we resist, is it because we have been programmed to resist?) His solution: "Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are" (qtd. in Newman 91). The result is that, only by destroying what we are, or what we want, is authentic freedom possible.

4.7 Post 9/11

For many people, "pure evil" returned to the world after 9.11. Bush was quick to refer to terrorists countries as an "Axis of Evil," though for the next ten years the U.S. struggle against terrorists threats, often with the use of pre-emptive drone strikes, was called the "War on Terror." Many viewed 9/11 as an unjustifiable act of violence and terrorism. Others, like Noam Chomsky, looked for justifications. Blaming violence on *evil* assumes violence is irrational, when those who commit violence rarely do it for selfless reasons. Terrorism is a desperate measure by those who feel they have no other recourse to get what they want. According to Chomsky, "the attacks on 9/11 were an entirely predictable reply of the oppressed Third World countries to centuries of American depredations" (qtd. in Berman 151). While Chomsky's arguments are weak, they were popular—especially for liberals who have come to champion differences and minority voices. And it's also hard to demonize terrorists when they are also presented as heroic in other instances. In 2005, three bombs were detonated in London. A year later, the movie *V for Vendetta* presented a modern day terrorist, wearing a Guy Fawkes mask, seeking to bring down parliament.

He trains his “disciple” Evey through a process of torture and psychological terror, making her tough and strong. In the end, a crowd of mask-wearing rebels converges on parliament and watches it explode. Revolutionary terrorism, fighting the system with violence, is heroic and justified under the tagline, “Freedom! Forever!”



In 2010, the Arab Spring saw protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. The revolutionaries were highly organized and depended on Twitter and social media to communicate. These revolutions were generally seen as positive. In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement saw protests in America, challenging wealth inequality and corruption in banking (in 2008, five of the largest US investment banks failed and were bailed out by the government). Both groups began wearing Guy Fawkes masks at protests, in solidarity and to mask their identities, a practice that probably began with members of Anonymous. Due to heightened security concerns, the US government began increased surveillance at home and abroad. The extent of this surveillance wasn't fully realized until 2012, when Edward Snowden released NSA documents, which brought up domestic surveillance and privacy concerns. Julian Assange founded Wikileaks as a place to anonymously leak controversial and secretive material. This leaking of controversial information has been seen as both heroic and criminal.

Western society on the one hand glorifies revolutionary terrorism and political resistance; while also sacrificing own freedoms because of the threat terrorism against us. I bring this up merely to point out how, rebellious acts can be seen as both heroic or villainous depending on the circumstances, the intended victims and the motivation behind them, and how much we sympathize with the perpetrators. Investigation into these variables is often, however, immediately thwarted with propaganda that makes such acts senseless and unstoppable—the result of “evil” forces, done by “bad” people who simply want to cause harm. Terms like this

simplify complex issues and make it easier to demonize groups of people, rather than try to understand them or their motivations. As such, terms like “satanic” or “evil” are profoundly powerful because they are hyperbolic and hint towards a mysterious, inexplicable source of violence. The orthodox reading of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, by automatically silencing Satan and refusing to consider his actual motivations, or question the poem’s fixed definitions of good or evil, is culturally and politically harmful. Progress can only be made by taking a deeper look at this deflection, and reassessing our views of Satan, a process that has already begun in entertainment media in the last decade.

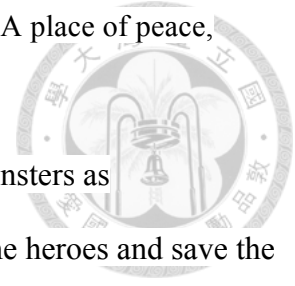
4.8 Where we are now

In the past decade there has been a trend towards inclusion and understanding; traditionally “evil” characters are being reworked as misunderstood heroes, persecuted by bigoted and violent mobs who refuse to get to know them. Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked* (1995) reinvents the *Wizard of Oz* by showing the Wicked Witch of the West as a sympathetic hero, maligned by propaganda to protect the ruling power structure; it became a Broadway musical in 1998. In 2014 Danielle Paige explores similar themes in the young adult novel *Dorothy Must Die* (after Dorothy took over Oz and became a malevolent tyrant, she is resisted by a new revolutionary hero).

In *Hotel Transylvania* (2012) the monstrous characters are shown as sympathetic, hiding out from the violence of the real world. When Jonathan asks Jonathan, “What is this place?” Dracula responds,

It’s a place I built, for all those monsters out there lurking in the shadows. Hiding from the persecution of human kind. A place for them and their families to come to

and be themselves. A void of torches, pitchforks, angry mobs. A place of peace, relaxation, and tranquility.



Monsters, Inc (2001) and *Monsters vs. Aliens* (2009) both show monsters as misunderstood and persecuted, until they have an opportunity to become the heroes and save the day. The 2009 *Avatar* generates sympathy for a marginalized, primitive culture (which rebels against a powerful and exploitative commercial-military enterprise). While tolerance and understanding may not seem “evil” for modern viewers, conservative religious websites have called the movie is “of the devil” and teaches “demonic New Age philosophies.” In 2012, *Wreck-It Ralph* brings together all the “evil” video game characters, who share a support group about how nobody understands them. Their affirmation goes,

I’m bad. And that’s good. I will never be good. And that’s not bad. There’s no one I’d rather be, than me.

Ralph wants to find a place where he can be the hero and win a medal, but no place like that exists. Eventually he sneaks into a new game where he is not recognized (beyond good and evil), and realizes he doesn’t need a medal (or exterior validation) to be happy. At the end he repeats the mantra, recognizing that being bad can be good as he sacrifices himself to save his new friends. In *Dracula Untold* (2014), the horrific ruler Vlad the Impaler who gave rise to the legend of Dracula is recast as a revolutionary hero, who sells his soul for the power to stand up against an invading army and save his people. Also in 2014, Angelina Jolie played *Maleficent*, a retelling of Disney’s 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* through the eyes of the “Mistress of All Evil”. In the new version, Maleficent was a powerful fairy who fell in love with a human prince; she becomes evil after he betrays and abandons her for another woman. In revenge, Maleficent curses their newborn child. In the end, however, she comes to love the child, and its her own kiss that breaks

the spell and waking Sleeping Beauty. In *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016) we're shown how the evil Red Queen was created when her little sister lied to their mother and blamed a simple crime (eating a cookie) on her, for which she was unjustly blamed. All of her later crimes and violent tendencies stem from that original injustice done against her. The conclusions made, especially in media aimed at children, is that everyone has a story, and that there is no "pure evil"—evil always has a reason.

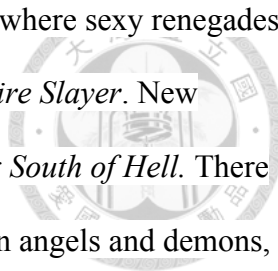
There are also dozens of TV shows and movies that show revolutionary terrorism as heroic, especially in the young adult genre. On TV these include *Revolution*, *Defiance*, *Falling Skies*, and *Black Sails*. Some of these are against autocratic governments, or alien invasion, or simply civilizing order (in *Black Sails*, pirates resist the rule of law—as they do in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series.) In *Spartacus* and *Underground*, slaves rise up against their masters. For movies, we have *Hunger Games*, which ends with the assassination of the newly installed leader, after a revolution has thrown out the old one. In *Independence Day*, both the first (1996) and the second (2016), humans fight off an invading force with sneaky tactics; similar to *Star Wars*, *the Force Awakens* where a small band of rebels destroys a mechanical planet, killing thousands. Although the bad guys are usually shown in black, and their armies are faceless, the heroes are usually outlaws fighting against the ruling establishment. Although they believe to be fighting for the "greater good" or "freedom"—they are minorities resisting majority rule. In the entertainment industry, our heroes are almost always *the rebels*, fighting against the system or a more powerful force. Finally, in 2015 Lin-Manuel Miranda made a musical based on a 2004 biography of Alexander Hamilton, set in the revolutionary New York of 1776.

This revolutionary motif isn't afraid to shy away from divine powers. The *God of War* videos games combat Greek divinities; as does *Percy Jackson*; as does *Wrath of the Titans*. The

Greek gods, although nearly omnipotent, are seen as corrupt. In *Xmen Apocalypse*, supermutants team up against a revived god who claims to be the god of the Old Testament, and destroy him. In *Batman vs. Superman* (2016), Lex Luther tries to get Batman to kill Superman, because Superman's power threatens his sense of security; when that fails, he creates his own monster, saying, "If man won't kill God, I'll create a devil to do it."

Finally, dozens of new books, movies and TV shows emerged recently portraying the devil himself. On the one hand, portrayals of the devil make him sympathetic, a suffering figure forced into a role he has no wish to play. *I, Lucifer* by Glen Duncan (2007) and *The Other Side of Evil* (2012) both show a sympathetic Lucifer by exploring his reasonings and motivations behind the revolution against heaven.

On the other hand, every year we get a handful of new "possession" horror movies, which show the devil or demons turning children into murderous monsters (for no reason other than to terrify us, which seems counterproductive and pointless for a rational, thinking Devil). Andrew Pyper's 2013 *The Demonologist* is a bizarre version of this theme. It begins with an academic "expert" on *Paradise Lost*, David, who, as a non-believer, sees satan as a symbol of positive revolution against tyranny. But then he's called to Venice as a demonologist, Belial hitches a ride in his body, then possesses David's daughter and makes her jump off a roof and disappear into the water. The purpose of all of this was to use the hope of his daughter's recovery to force David into being a spokesmen for the demons. The central problem with these "possession" stories, is that religion is actually on the decline: if demons wanted to be successful, all they would have to do is disappear. By showing themselves (as creepy, hideous, disgusting creatures) and proving the existence of the supernatural by eliciting terror, they practically force people to turn to God.



An offshoot of possession stories is the heroic demon-hunter motif, where sexy renegades hunt down and murder demons, which began perhaps with *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. New versions include *Supernatural*, *Grim*, *Mortal Instruments*, *Wynona Earp*, or *South of Hell*. There are also more “religious” versions centered on supernatural conflict between angels and demons, as well as sin and temptation like *Penny Dreadful*, *Salem*, *Millenium*, *the Messengers* and *Dominion*. In *Ghost Rider* (2007, 2011) Johnny Blaze sells his soul to the Devil, which gives him supernatural powers, but becomes a force for good by catching and punishing bad guys. These are obvious supernatural fantasies.

More alarming is the “satanic cult” trope which is becoming more common in 2016: in season four of both *Banshee* and *Orphan Black*, the “bad guys” are identified by their extreme body modification. In *Orphan Black*, this is caused by their belief in “transhumanism”—extending the limitations of the human body by technological enhancement. In *Banshee*, they do it (along with ritualistic murders) because they believe and worship Satan. Both can be read in light of *Faust* or *Manfred*: is the quest for power and knowledge (technology) inherently “unnatural” and “evil?” Portraying devil-worshipping, human-sacrificing cults on TV however, especially a “reality” show which is not based on supernatural elements, perpetuates the myth that such cults have actually existed.

One of the most interesting modern portrayals of Satan is the character of Neil Gaiman’s Lucifer in *Sandman #4*, which was continued by Mike Carey in *Lucifer* (2013) and became a TV series in 2016. This Lucifer has quit Hell, which he never wanted, to be a bartender. At first devoted to personal pleasure, he starts spending time with a police detective, helping her solve crimes, and in the process his feelings for her make him weak and vulnerable.

Things get interesting when they discover an actual Satanic cult. All the trappings are presented—witchcraft, body modification, a book of spells, a sacrificed body—the suspect is instantly pegged by the detective as a “generic Satanist” because he has jet black hair, piercings and tattoos (the same prejudices that got Damien Echols convicted of murder). But the so-called devil worship is defrauded by the *actual* Lucifer, who refuses the idea that he craves violence:

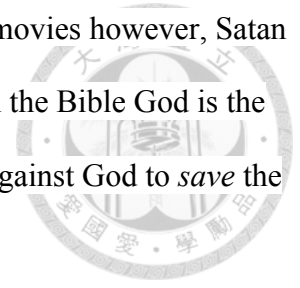
I’m the real Lucifer and I insist you stop this nonsense immediately, I mean have you heard yourselves... you preach rebellion but you’re misguided sheep. Where’s the real defiance, the free will. This whole thing is a sham. Somebody killed this girl, she didn’t deserve that, that is NOT what I stand for.

But then in an enlightened twist, the head priest of the cult admits to *not* believing in the devil (like actual Satanists, such as Church of Satan members). The murder wasn’t done by the satanic cult for ritualistic reasons, but by someone else, who thought the devil would like it, because he’s the devil.

And you think you know who that is, the whole world does. A torturer, maybe. And inflicter of just deserts, sure. But a senseless murderer, I am not, perhaps I need to clarify my position. Where do I begin? With the grandest fall in the history of time, or the far more agonizing punishment that followed, to be blamed by every morsal of evil humanity has endured, every atroscity commiteted in my name, as though I wanted people to suffer. All I ever wanted was to be my own man, to be judged for my own doing, for that, I’ve been shown how truly powerless I am.

This sympathetic Lucifer is similar to the modern version of the Antichrist shown in *Damien*. On his 30th birthday, he finds out that a huge conspiracy of secretive human organizations and supernatural powers have chosen him for some evil role: he’s supposed to bring about the apocalypse, but since this is what *God* plans for humanity, it’s unclear why humans are forcing

the issue or why Damien is necessarily evil (in most religious-apocalypse movies however, Satan and his followers are trying to bring about the End of Days, even though in the Bible God is the one trying to destroy the world, and the antichrist leads the armies of man against God to *save* the world.)



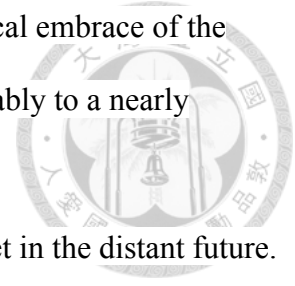
In *Outcast* (2016) the hero is a suffering savior who somehow has powers over evil: it's a modern version of *The Exorcist*, with all the classic signs of possession like seizures and unnatural poses (that probably continue from the time when epilepsy was seen as demonic possession). Although the demons and evil are not sympathetic, the brooding, introspective Kyle Barnes searching for answers is a modern quest into the problem of evil. The reverend he teams up with says this:

I wasn't always the gung-ho holy warrior you see before you. I served god, tended my flock, but I questioned. Then I went into your house, and I saw the devil was real, and I didn't question anymore, my path was clear.

The search for the *truth* of evil, is the search for the divine presence (or at least the certainty) that humanity is yearning for. *Preacher* (2016) describes itself thusly: *After a supernatural event at his church a preacher enlists the help of a vampire to find God.* All of these modern depictions of the devil or demons can be seen as a response to the anxiety of the postmodern condition. If nothing matters, why do people still do bad things? Believing in violent supernatural forces, which also imply that there's some kind of cosmic battle going on for our souls, brings meaning and purpose back into an otherwise dreary and pointless existence.

As Dreyfus and Kelly emphasize, Enlightenment thinking has stripped the world of the order and sacredness essential to creating meaning. In a post-Enlightenment world we have tasked *ourselves* to identify what's meaningful and what's not, an exercise that can seem

arbitrary and induce a creeping nihilism. “The Enlightenment’s metaphysical embrace of the autonomous individual leads not just to a boring life, it leads almost inevitably to a nearly unlivable one.” (204)



A final example to consider is *Wayward Pines*, a sci-fi dystopian set in the distant future. One man has saved humanity, against their will, and reconstructed a perfect future society, based on absolute obedience and unquestioning loyalty. Even though they are the last of the human race and beset by dangers all around, the “hero” of *Wayward Pines*, Ethan Burke, is the one who destroys everything and lets the monsters in.

There are many similar examples: In the movie *2012*, all the rich have booked rooms in secret Chinese bunkers built to survive the apocalypse. The “heroes” are the uninvited guests who crash the party and demand entry, even if it risks the entire project. It’s heroic to fight and save your family, even if it means risking the future of the human race. The villains are the ones who make unilateral decisions that effect everyone, usually for some twisted rational purpose, like “humanity is destroying ourselves, we need to reduce population.” The heroes are those who stop them (better to let humanity destroy itself in freedom, than give up power and control to those who could actually save it).

Characters can be heroic even if they are on the losing side of history, like the pirate characters who ultimately were defeated by civilizing forces. *Les Miserable*, *47 Ronin*, Tom Cruise in *The Last Samurai*. . . even though they throw their lives away deliberately for a cause they had no hope to win, they are portrayed as heroically defiant and tragic.

In *Urge* (2016), Pierce Brosnan quotes Milton in regards to a strange experiment he’s running on an island: giving out a drug (called “Urge”) that remove inhibitions and release man’s

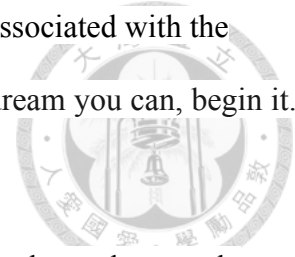
inner demons. Brosnan is Satan, or God, purging mankind by lifting the rock and letting the wickedness out.

Alice Through the Looking Glass is basically a Gnostic adventure, that displays many close parallels with *Paradise Lost*. The opening scene immediately established Alice as heroic because of her Faustian idealism. She's the captain of a ship being chased by pirates, towards a dangerous reef. There is no way out.

She commands, "Full speed ahead!" and her first mate says, "Captain, it's impossible!" She answers, "The only way to achieve the impossible, is to believe it *is* possible." She's the one with the plan, the idea, the genius. When others fail at carrying it out, she jumps into action and solves the crisis and saves everyone. She's basically Captain Ahab, but in 2016 she's no longer accused of being "monomaniacal." In fact, the plot of *Alice Through the Looking Glass* involves keeping her faith in the impossible: Hatter asks her to bring his family back from the dead, and she "stops being Alice" because she doesn't see how it's possible and starts being Alice when she perseveres. Hatter tells her, "You are not you." Like Prometheus, she sneaks into heaven and steals something powerful from the gods that lets her travel in time, even though she risks the destruction of all creation; like Satan, she travels through a primordial abyss on her adventure.

Alice can be seen as representative of the modern response to existence: it's difficult to maintain courage and confidence when things seem impossible, hopeless or bleak (Alice is told to get married or get a job, that it's time to grow up and take care of herself—instead she jumps through a mirror into a fantasy world, during which her real body ends up in a psych ward). Our minds are a space of their own, and can make a heaven and hell of our experiences if we are determined enough. Like in *Peter Pan*, imagination and desire must continue to resist the civilizing influences of reason and practicality; must resist limitations of any kind. The

misquoted passage from Goethe, which was once controversial or openly associated with the satanic, has become the battle cry of our times: “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!” According to Peter Schwarz,



It is eye-opening to see how much of the New Left’s once-radical agenda not only has been adopted by today’s society, but is no longer even controversial. The trappings of the New Left are gone, but its substance has endured. (qtd. in Rand iv)

The 1989 *Dead Poets Society* with Robin Williams was about the subversive revival of feeling and emotion, in an environment of strict obedience and conformity. The new teacher, Mr. Keating, is questioned for his unusual methods. The Latin teacher tells him, “You are taking a big risk in making your students think they are artists.” Keating replies, “I’m only trying to make them free thinkers. . .It is only in their minds that men can truly be free. T’was always thus, and always thus shall be.” Set in 1959, when Neil decides he wants to be an actor and his stern father refuses, Neil feels his only possible response is suicide.

In 2016, *Saturday Night Live* did a comedy sketch that simplifies the movie down to core elements. The textbook reads, “poetry should not be fun. . .It should be oppressive and the reader should hate it. Poems are from a hundred years ago. They were written by dead men to punish children. . . . when you read a poem, you should never feel emotion.”

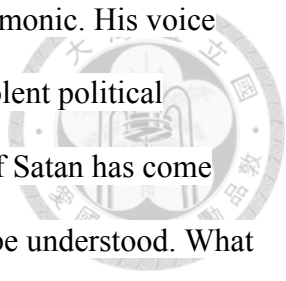
When they stand up on their desks in defiant solidarity behind their teacher (who is getting fired after Neil’s death), one of them runs into the ceiling fan and gets his head chopped off, spraying the whole class with blood. While graphic and violent, it sums up the principle behind the movie: your passion, your creativity, is dangerous and probably leads to death. . . and yet the risk is somehow still worth it.

4.9 Conclusion

The last two chapters were important to show how the response to Milton's Satan has flipped (from Promethean liberty and revolution, to a senseless instigator of evil); while the *belief* in a violent, personal Satan gave way to a wave of psychological fantasies—and how despite all that, our contemporary ethics, which leans towards self-help, personal development and revolutionary heroism, is completely satanic. Meanwhile, academic readings of *Paradise Lost* are slow to change, leading to a wide gulf between popular conceptions of Satan (if not heroic, then at least as brooding, morally complex characters).

On the one hand, in hindsight we can now see how dangerous the unchecked Faustian appeal towards “improvement” can be—hesitancy towards new technology often raises the issue of whether there are boundaries it would be better for humans not to cross. At the same time, there continues to be a very real belief in a personified devil, and it plays a role in the politics of control, over what's “natural” and what isn't. In 2015 Marvin Sotelo made news for being the first open Satanist to run for congress. What should alarm us, however, is that like most (or all) Satanists, Marvin uses the term to show that he *does not believe* in Satan. What Marvin's race really demonstrates is that all the other members of congress *do* believe in Satan (in 2016 Jamie Raskin is making news for potentially being the first openly atheistic member of congress, which makes the same point).

Although political issues like transgender rights or the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay trigger controversy, it should make us skeptical and cautious when we hear words like “evil” or “satanic” being used to silence an opposing opinion, without any form of logical response or justification, and without giving a voice to those we silence.



Satan, in his revolutionary zeal, has been seen as both heroic and demonic. His voice continues to fascinate today (perhaps more than ever), in times rife with violent political revolutions. Much of our contemporary discourse regarding the character of Satan has come from *Paradise Lost* and reponses to it over the centuries, and this needs to be understood. What is less commonly pointed it out, is how postmodern theory in the past few decades has continued to wrestle with the issues raised by *Paradise Lost*: when is violence justified? Where does evil come from? Is revolution against a greater power heroic or foolish? In the next chapter, I'll demonstrate that literary theory has continued the satanic discourse which has been avoided by orthodox responses to Milton, and in a sense, already exonerated him. In examining *Paradise Lost* through the lens of critical theory, and taking the evidence at face value (without a pre-conceived certainty in Satan's guilt or natural "evil") we can see how Satan's journey is a precise metaphor for the creation of human subjectivity, and fundamentally necessary, both in religious and secular terms.



Chapter 5: Theory

5.1 Introduction

One of the reasons it's difficult to discuss Milton's Satan is that few readers approach *Paradise Lost* without polemic and tenacious opinions about the Devil. In the last several chapters I tried to break through these conditioned responses by demonstrating that Milton's Satan was in line with Enlightenment principles that have been (mostly) vindicated by history. In this chapter, I hope to change the dialogue, which continues to revolve around simplistic binaries like "fool or hero" or "good and evil." Instead, I want to consider Milton's Satan as a complex character, discover what motivates his actions, and note how his awareness shifts as he discovers more about himself and his role in God's power structure.

We'll also consider whether Satan's fall and subsequent "destruction" of Adam and Eve was entirely of his own doing (freely chosen), or a role he was manipulated into. Originally I read in *Paradise Lost* as the formulation of subjectivity through a three-step evolution of Satan's identity, which changes as Satan increases in knowledge and understanding of God's power. However recently I've realized I can take it a step further, by viewing *Paradise Lost* as God's (inevitable) seduction of Satan, in terms of Jean Baudrillard. Hence I've organized this chapter as follows.

First, I'll address the common criticisms waged against Satan to prove his guilt.

Second, I'll examine what actually happens in the text, and demonstrate the three major turning points where Satan's understanding of his relationship with God shifted, in terms of postmodern theory, resistance to power, and the quest for freedom demanding a revolutionary act of terror.

Third, I'll reframe the conversation by considering the relationship between God and Satan as amorous, considering Satan as a scorned lover seeking vengeance, and ultimately as God seducing Satan into his transgression.

5.2 Satan's "sins"

The silencing of Satan begins with prejudice (he's just pure evil), but soon extends to a variety of common "sins" Satan is meant to represent. For instance, Elizabeth Barret Browning compares Satan to Aeschylus' Prometheus thusly:

But the Satan of Milton and the Prometheus of Aeschylus stand upon ground as unequal, as do the sublime of sin and the sublime of virtue. Satan suffered from his ambition; Prometheus from his humanity: Satan for himself; Prometheus for mankind: Satan dared perils which he had not weighed; Prometheus devoted himself to sorrows which he had foreknown. 'Better to rule in hell', said Satan; 'Better to serve this rock', said Prometheus (qtd. in Mermin 49)

Shelley agrees with this distinction in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, finding Prometheus better suited to poetry because, "in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest" (qtd. in Leonard 416). Shelley does realize however,

that these differences may only be in the mind of the readers—Prometheus is “susceptible of being described as exempt” from the negative qualities already associated with Milton’s Satan, which readers, due to a “pernicious casuistry” of religious feeling, have trouble overlooking.

The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. (xiii-ix)

In *The Statesman’s Manual*, Coleridge warns of the dangers of the will, which can become twisted with pride and self-idolatry, while also laying out the seeds of what will become the “Great Man” theory (these normally “evil” attributes perversely fuel great leaders).

This is the character which Milton has so philosophically as well as sublimely embodied in the Satan of his *Paradise Lost*. . . . Hope in which there is no cheerfulness; steadfastness within and immovable resolve, with outward restlessness and whirling activity; violence with guile; temerity with cunning; and, as the result of all, interminableness of object with perfect indifference of means; these are the qualities that have constituted the commanding genius; these are the marks that have characterized the masters of mischief, the liberticides, and mighty hunters of mankind, who surpass the generality of their fellow creatures in one act of courage, only that of daring to say with their whole heart, “Evil, be thou my good!” (459)

These commentaries are enough to establish a pattern; the same points can be found in modern criticism. Satan is not exactly *heroic* because he is not *good* or virtuous, as we expect our heroes to be. However, after Nietzsche, we shouldn’t assume that the repressive ethics of humility and self-sacrifice are morally superior. In the following section I’ll discuss the common criticisms of Milton’s Satan, to see whether they are truly there (rather than implied or interpreted based on

prejudice) and whether they are really immoral or amoral. We also need to consider where we are getting the information from; we shouldn't accept without qualification any of the judgments placed on Satan by Milton as narrator; nor the unqualified thoughts of Satan himself. Either of which could be untrue or misleading. Instead we need to piece together what actually happened, which we'll do in the following section.

Claims against Satan:

5.2.1 Selfish: puts his own desires first

It's claimed that Satan is selfish and doesn't think or care about anyone else. I counter, why should we expect him to? The ethics of Satan are the ethics of Ayn Rand's objectivism or the Church of Satan – but also the ruling ethics of contemporary Western culture. Most people assume a natural right to focus on their own peace and happiness; to seek out and create the life they want. When challenged for escaping Hell, Satan replies,

Lives there who loves his pain?

Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell. (4.888-89)

We see it as every creature's inherent right to seek out their own good. This isn't, yet, a question of doing harm to others, or escaping from just punishment. But let's assume it's nobody's responsibility to devote themselves to abnegation or self-sacrifice. Why do we expect Satan to forgo his own interests on behalf of others? Why hold him to a higher standard?

5.2.2 Foolish: fights against omnipotence

Satan is commonly criticized as a fool, for challenging an omnipotent God. But not only does Satan often question, and seem unsure of God's omnipotence, Milton's *Paradise Lost*

makes God question it as well. Speaking privately with his Son, Milton's God is concerned, and wants to be "sure of our Omnipotence, and with what Arms / We mean to hold what anciently we claim / Of Deitie or Empire. . . Let us advise, and to this hazard draw / With speed what force is left, and all imploy / In our defense, lest unawares we lose / This our high place, our Sanctuarie, our Hill" (5.729-32).

There is no indication that God is faking it here or that anyone else is listening; God seems genuinely worried about being defeated. Even if this is just some kind of posturing, it was enough to make Satan question God's omnipotency, Satan claims after the battle, that God "his strength conceal'd / Which tempted our attempt" (1.641-42).

5.2.3 *Hubris or narcissism*

In modern terms, we routinely see a lack of self-confidence as a weakness (and buy books and courses about how to be more confident). Narcissism or pride may indicate an empty boasting, but often it's an accusation from others. There's nothing inherently wrong with self-reliance, courage in one's own efforts and self-confidence in one's abilities. *Unless* a jealous and spiteful god exists who will punish you for it. We generally don't believe in those kinds of gods anymore. In Greek mythology, being proud of one's abilities or beauty, called down the wrath of the gods, because they were jealous and spiteful. For example, when Ajax's ships were destroyed on his way home after the Trojan War, he "bragged with blinded heart" that he'd survived despite the gods—so Poseidon dropped a giant rock on him and he drowned. Andromeda's mother bragged that her daughter was more beautiful than the Nereids (sea nymphs). They complained to Poseidon, who unleashed a sea monster to destroy the city and everyone in it, unless Andromeda was sacrificed. In this myth, however, Perseus kills the monster and saves Andromeda, proving the gods can be defied.

The story of Medusa is even worse: because she was so beautiful, Poseidon raped her in Athena's temple (being beautiful or really good at something doesn't necessarily mean being proud of it; it can still attract the attention of the gods). Then, jealous Athena turned her into a monster with serpents for hair for both attracting Poseidon and defiling her temple. Compare this to modern criticisms of rape culture; we are outraged at the idea that it is somehow the girl's fault to "tempting" her violation, yet this is what the concept of hubris implies.

Satan doesn't seem to have been punished *for* his talents or beauty or pride, but for his rebellion; in which case he may be more like Icarus. Ecstatic about being able to fly, he flew too close to the sun and the wax on his wings melted. In this case, his enthusiasm and carelessness led to an accidental death, but we view it as tragic, not evil (plus: he was warned first; and also, he *died*, he wasn't *punished*). The concept of hubris implies jealous, violent and vindictive gods; it's more a criticism of the unjust gods than those they destroy by their jealousy,

According to Dreyfus in *All Things Shining*,

The Cartesian project itself would be understood as an act of hubris in the Middle Ages. The idea that we have to prove to ourselves that God *isn't* tricking us takes as a background the assumption that, for all we know God *is* tricking us." (19)

Likewise, Galileo spent years in prison because of his hubris in thinking his own observations were more trustworthy than the received wisdom in the Bible. We aren't still locking up (or executing) scientists, thankfully. Why judge Satan with a medieval conception of the limits of human ability? Bertrand Russell, in *A History of Western Philosophy*, points out that modernity has rejected the idea that pride is a sin:

The Greeks, with their dread of hubris, carefully avoided what would have seemed to them insolence towards the universe. The middle ages carried submission much

further: humility towards God was the Christians first duty. Initiative was cramped by this attitude and great originality was scarcely possible. The Renaissance restored pride, but carried it to the point where it led to anarchy and disaster. Its work was largely undone by the Reformation and the Counterreformation. But modern technique, while not altogether favorable to the lordly individual of the Renaissance, has revived the sense of the collective power of human communities. Man, formerly too humble, begins to think of himself as almost a God. (737)

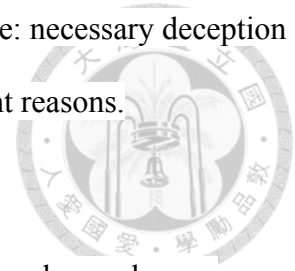
5.2.4 *Rhetoric or lies*

Satan is often disdained for his lofty rhetoric or lies, which is actually two criticisms. The first, is that his big words and speeches, because they are so beautiful and powerful and moving, are fake. This is an anti-intellectual mindset that dismisses grand rhetoric in favor of simple statements. His speeches are sometimes called deceitful *because* they sound heroic, and since Satan isn't heroic, he is mimicking or lying. The second accusation is that he doesn't tell the truth or that he intentionally misleads, using guile and persuasion to get what he wants.

Rhetoric used to be a much in demand skill, and we still admire it in lawyers (as demonstrated by all the TV shows about lawyers). Daniel Webster defeated the devil *because* he was such a great speaker. We also expect excellent speeches from our political leaders, and we appreciate masterful speaking in TEDx talks. In general, masterful public speaking and being able to stir up a crowd is not seen as *always* evil. At the same time, in nearly every movie with a battle scene, the hero gives a passionate speech to bolster the army's courage, and these are not considered immoral.

As for specific instances of lying in *Paradise Lost*, I will discuss a few in the next section, but let me point out that many heroes use deception or guile, or secrecy (for example, dressing up and infiltrating an enemy's base or camp to steal something or blow it up). Also, we're

familiar with the idea of white lies, or lies that can actually protect someone: necessary deception for the greater good. Lying does not have to be immoral if used for the right reasons.



5.2.5 *Seeks Revenge*

Paradise Lost was written at a time when revenge tragedies were popular; and many modern adventures begin with the hero being forced into action by suffering some great violence (usually his parents a loved one is killed). In the pursuit of justice, the hero often destroys everyone in his path before defeating the key villain. While the villain might be “bad”, the hero’s slaughter is motivated by personal loss, not because he’s thinking of saving others.

Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* is based on the conflict between the new and old accounts of justice. The old gods of revenge, the Furies, who are all women, put the family ahead of all other values; the new gods, mostly men, are for detached universal law that makes no exception for particular individuals, families, or cities. Apollo articulates the new, detached conception of justice when he proclaims: “Never, for man, woman, nor city ... have I spoken a word, except that which Zeus, father of the Olympians, might command” (Dreyfus 92). The Furies, meanwhile, care only about family, and think of justice in terms of exacting revenge upon those who harm a blood relative: “We drive from home those who have shed the blood of kin.” The Furies’ mafia-like conception of justice had no place in the Homeric world, which repressed the natural tendency toward blood loyalty. In *Oresteia*, the Furies are outraged at having been “set apart” and “driven under the ground” by the sky gods on Olympus. They respond:

We are strong and skilled; we have authority; we hold memory of evil; we are stern
nor can men’s pleadings bend us. (3)

Athena realizes repression itself has made the Furies dark and dangerous, so she persuades the old goddesses that they can gain respect from the new gods, and reverse the repression and

exclusion they have suffered, if they take on the important role of primal and motivating passions in the culture.

Thanks to Athena's recognition of this legitimate role, the Furies' anger is transformed into goodwill. They give up family vengeance and become the Eumenides, the Kindly Ones, who promise to use their motivating passions to care for Athens and the Athenian way... (Dreyfus 97).

Although the Greeks long ago realized that a universal legal system is better than personal retribution, they also recognized that excluded or marginalized forces could become dark and violent: The Furies became the Kindly ones, because they weren't repressed, ignored or refused—they were included in the new order. Satan never gets this chance.

Finally, it's worth pointing out that God is shown as vengeful in *Paradise Lost*, such as when talking about the punishments he's deliberately inflicting on the fallen angels who he has excluded from mercy. They won't receive the same forgiveness that humanity will, because he's hardened their hearts, so that they will continue to oppose him and fall deeper into their own suffering (3.199). Satan meanwhile, says "Revenge, at first though sweet, Bitter ere long back on it self recoiles" (9.171-72).

The Son, incidentally, can mirror God's hate and terror in a horrifying way. "Whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on / Thy terrors, as I put they mildness on, / Image of thee in all things (6.734-36).

5.2.6 Ambition. Tries to overthrow God.

According to 16th century Trajano Boccalini, self-interest "tyrannizes over the souls of tyrants." When "ambition enters he soul of a prince, then he is no longer a protector of men, no longer a viceroy of God on earth; he changes into a dragon, a Lucifer."

Hobbes agrees that ambition is a fault, but also says, “it nevertheless has somewhat Heroique in it, therefore must have place in an Heroique Poem.” Bacon distinguishes three kinds of ambition: ambition to increase your personal power; ambition to further your own country; and ambition to increase the power of human beings over the universe of things (which he calls majestic.)

According to Dreyfus, Macbeth is a tragic hero that fails because of his ambition, yet Shakespeare made him sympathetic: “It is as if Shakespeare can see this ambition as a potentially admirable trait even though the world he lives in will not yet support this way of life” (18).

Ambition, the desire to change what is to something else, the desire to increase in knowledge and power, and the persistence and dedication to make it happen, are today seen as necessarily admirable traits. A job interviewer might ask, “where do you see yourself in five years?” (While researching, an ad popped up for Western Sydney University that reads “Ambition unlimited: your future success starts here.”) While the charge against Satan is that he tried to overthrow God, this is hardly different from the mystic spiritualist traditions that aspire to godhead; and we should remember that, despite human ambition being divinely repressed in the Old Testament, the technological progression of the last few centuries occurred because we resisted that repression. After humanity formed a common language and began building the Tower of Babel, God was worried. “And now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do” (11:6). So he knocked the tower down.

United by technology and universal language, humanity achieves untoward power. Power in itself does not endanger. But imagination linked to power may exceed the limits of the human condition and aspire to godhead. (Shattuck 17)

Shattuck points out that Faust's "malicious, selfish, and sometimes criminal conduct" is nevertheless turned "good" because it's based on the Modernist virtue of "striving."

Evil, when associated with striving, turns into good. Is this the crowning work of the Enlightenment? Or of Romanticism? In one of the earliest intelligent responses to the already-enshrined masterpiece, Mme. de Staël observed in 1810 that Goethe had created a story of "intellectual chaos" in which the devil is the hero and which produces "the sensation of vertigo". (Shattuck 102)

C.S. Lewis thinks a creature rebelling against his creator is ridiculous, but this is like saying, if I was born short-sighted, I shouldn't correct the defect with the "technology" of glasses. Still, this issue doesn't really apply to Milton's Satan anyway, because as I'll show, his initial fall is not motivated by his ambition to replace God.

5.3 What is "evil"?

We should also quickly look at what we mean by "evil"—though we can't go into a full history of ethics, a few points on ethical theory will help identify whether Satan's actions in *Paradise Lost* may be morally culpable. Patrick Murray writes,

When "isolated from his background in the epic and viewed as an independent entity, Satan may arouse admiration, but seen, as Milton actually presents him, against the background of the whole poem, then his heroic qualities, presented in their evil context, appear far less admirable. (535)

Is there an "evil context" to Satan's actions (apart from just the narrator's comments, which should not be trusted unilaterally?) If so, what are they? What kind of context can make heroic qualities become evil?

In his 1793 *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant distinguishes between three types of evil. The propensity towards evil exists when humans act towards their own self-conceit, instead of obedience towards the universal moral law (that can be reached through reason). *Normal* evil includes doing things for personal preference or pathological desire. In other words, it is motivated action for rational reasons, that may have negative consequences to others, but seems “good” to the actor personally. The actor still believes in the moral law and wanting to be good, but in this instance was swayed by personal desires to make a selfish choice rather than conform to moral law.

Radical evil, on the other hand, happens when the actor has abandoned moral law and gives in to their selfish nature, denying the attempt to be good. Often in movies, the hero resists picking up guns or killing anyone (for example in *DareDevil*, or Batman’s disdain for vigilantes who kill), because they believe that by not killing they are morally superior to the bad guys. Eventually however, the hero may need to relinquish this ethical distinction, and choose to become evil (or start killing) in order to defeat their enemies. This is also sometimes shown as an evil character (like Wreck-It Ralph) who attempts to be good or change their nature, before giving up and accepting that they are “bad” but can use their evil to produce good works. In *Preacher*, the main character resists his evil nature until realizing that maybe “this is the me that God wants.” Likewise, *Hellboy* (2004) and others like him resist their evil nature but finally learn that only by embracing their natural strengths, can they defeat the evil they are trying to resist. Doing the “right” thing no longer matters, because the ends justify the means. However they will still mainly be acting for pathological reasons—for some specific aim or towards what they see as a preferable outcome.

Kant's third type of evil is *diabolical* evil. In diabolical evil, the actor gives up all pathological concerns; they do evil specifically because it is against moral law, and they do it as a matter of principle, but not for any specific hope or aim. They are indifferent to personal loss. This is senseless, unmotivated evil. Kant doesn't believe that this kind of evil actually exists; for example, a suicide bomber doesn't qualify because they believe in what they are doing and expect positive outcomes, both for themselves and their community. Despite the immediate pain/death, they expect rewards in the afterlife. In Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, he recounts a story from his childhood when he stole some fruit.

Wickedness filled me. I stole something which I had in plenty and of much better quality. My desire was to enjoy not what I sought by stealing but merely the excitement of thieving and the doing of what was wrong...I became evil for no reason. I had no motive for my wickedness except wickedness itself. It was foul, and I loved it. I loved the self-destruction, I loved my fall, not the object for which I had fallen but my fall itself. My depraved soul leaped down from your firmament to ruin. I was seeking not to gain anything by shameful means, but shame for its own sake.

(29)

However, this doesn't really qualify as diabolical evil, because Augustine received pleasure from the act: he experienced the thrill of the demonic. He wouldn't have stolen and eaten something disgusting—and even if he did, it might have served self-conceit. For example if someone punishes themselves through destructive tendencies out of guilt and shame, they're still getting some kind of personal relief or benefit from the self-destruction.

In 1840, Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality* proposed two kinds of evil, which are self-interest (greed, lust, gluttony) and spitefulness (envy, ill-will, intentional malice). Of these twin motivations, Schopenhauer writes, "the first is more bestial, the second more devilish" and

concludes, “Here I bring to an end my review of these terrible powers of evil; it is an array reminding one of the Princes of Darkness in Milton’s Pandemonium” (qtd. in Cameli 245).

In a certain sense the opposite of envy is the habit of gloating over the misfortune of others. At any rate, while the former is human, the latter is diabolical. There is no sign more infallible of an entirely bad heart, and of profound moral worthlessness than open and candid enjoyment of seeing other people suffer. (79)

Likewise, Luther had earlier written, “who takes delight in doing people hurt and mischief; there thou seest the right devil, carnal and corporal.”

Which evil is Satan?

Traditionally, Satan has been accused of deliberately causing harm to others, usually because it brings him a perverse kind of pleasure. For example, historian Jeffery Burton Russell claims in *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* that the Devil is traditionally defined as “a person or personality with consciousness, will, and intelligence whose intent is entirely focused on causing suffer or misery for their own sake...inflicting suffering for suffering’s sake, evil for evil’s sake, the Devil is by definition the personification of cosmic evil” (qtd. in Arp 92). Psychologist Roy Baumeister, in *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty* confirms this view. “What drives Satan and other evil figures? Apart from some vague ambition to gain power, the answer appears to be: nothing. Or rather, nothing beyond the sheer satisfaction of doing evil” (qtd. in Arp 92).

However these quotes are ambiguous: if Satan is driven by ambition to power, that’s not nothing (it was good enough for Nietzsche, and continues to be good enough for the majority of humanity as a driving force for action). And if he gets pleasure or satisfaction out of causing pain,

his is Schopenhauer's spiteful evil, but in Kantian terms is still within the realms of completely normal evil—doing evil for pathological or selfish reasons. Claudia Card gives a new version of diabolical evil in *The Atrocity Paradigm*:



Suppose we define diabolical evil as knowingly and culpably seeking others' moral corruption, putting them in situations where in order to survive they must, by their own choices, risk their own moral deterioration or moral death...Diabolical evil...consists of putting others under the extreme stress, even the extreme duress, of having to choose between grave risks of suffering of death (not necessarily their own) and equally grave risks of severe moral compromise, the loss of moral integrity, or even moral death. (qtd. in Arp 92)

This definition of evil certainly appears (at first) to fit Milton's Satan, as well as common "demons" of temptation, but it misses on several counts. First, it ignores any possible motivation or justification. *Why* would anyone care so much about someone else's moral degradation to commit their time towards wreaking havoc upon it? Is it for revenge, spite, or a perverse pleasure? If so, again, these are purely normal human motivations for evil (no devil is necessary to bring them about). Is it because these moral terrorists are "evil by nature"—unmotivated, but simply driven to cause destruction on others by subjective necessity (if so, it doesn't solve the problem of where evil actually comes from; and it can be argued that, since their actions are automatic and natural, they can't be blamed).

Also, what about if someone seeking to do evil (deliberate harm to others) accidentally achieves a beneficial outcome for the victims that leads to their moral elevation? What about if these desires to do evil were deliberately manipulated by a more powerful system, in which they were actually helpless puppets?

These questions are all relevant to Milton's Satan. Over the next several sections, I will argue, firstly, that Satan experiences a moral evolution, that roughly corresponds to Kant's three kinds of evil, and that paradoxically, Kant's version of diabolical evil—as the only potential site for an entirely free act—is actually good. I will also show that Milton's Satan never reaches the common conception of diabolical evil (joy in causing others pain) since he repeatedly makes clear that he does what he does not want to do, and abhors his own actions. I will also question whether or not Satan actually caused any real injury to anybody (even if intended to cause harm, in the end he only acted out the role God had set for him: like Neo in the *Matrix*, his rebellion was actually a necessary and forplanned part of the system.)

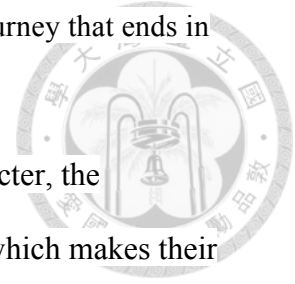
Also, going forward we should assume that Satan cannot be blamed simply for resisting God. Heresy or blasphemy is not *automatically* evil, by definition. The history of civilization has taught us not to assume that God is always a symbol for Good; God's actions must also be held accountable, to see whether resistance or rebellion is justifiable.

We have outgrown the need to punish heresy and blasphemy. both scientific research and the worlds of art and entertainment rely on an unspoken assumption that total freedom in exchanging symbolic products of mind need not adversely affect the domain of daily living and may well enhance it... (Shattuck 5)

And as a final point, we should recognize in advance that there is something uniquely perverse about the *punishment* for Satan's transgression. Paul Vitz points out that various stories of temptation, loss and suffering, often end with the victim being strengthened through the trial:

In this respect, it must be emphasized that Goethe's Faust, after all, ends with the salvation of Faust; the Temptation of St. Anthony concludes with the ongoing hope of salvation; Paradise Lost implies Paradise Regained; Virgil's Aeneid ends with the

founding of Rome; and Dante's *Inferno* is the first part of a journey that ends in Paradise. (171)



The problem with this passage is that, in all of those books, the main character, the traveler/seeker, goes on a scary adventure to be shown sin and depravity, which makes their redemption sweeter (in fact, if not first tempted, they may not have accepted or appreciated the salvation). And this is true for Adam and Eve, as has long been recognized: the Easter Vigil reads “O happy fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer.” Happy fault, *felix culpa*, has been used since the early church to refer to the fact that Satan's temptation paved the way to human salvation.

In *Paradise Lost* uniquely, Satan is refused hope or salvation or redemption: instead his suffering paves the way to others' salvation or redemption (someone who did *not* go through the struggle and the suffering, who did not go through the abyss to be strengthened, but receive all the rewards without any of the cost, as a free gift—something Satan recognizes in *Paradise Lost*. Moreover, not only is the fruit of of Satan's efforts being appropriated, leading to a very real Marxian sense of alienation, but the awareness that this alienation is *eternal*, and completely without hope of eventually reconciliation, causes a completely new kind of suffering.

5.4 Satan's Evolution

Joseph Campbell notes, “There are a number of ways of thinking about Satan, but this is based on the question, Why was Satan thrown into hell?” In the tradition Campbell was familiar with, Satan was thrown into hell for refusing to worship man, who he saw as inferior.

The classic understanding of Satan's fall, however, is that he was tempted by pride to think he equaled God, and waged a failed revolution against him. Then, as a way to cause further

harm against God, he seduced Adam and Eve into sin and death. This is, indeed, how Milton's narrator first introduces us to the story in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost*.

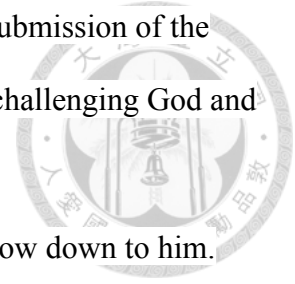


Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankind, what time his Pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the most High,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms. (1.33-49)

It's not until Book V that Satan begins reflecting on the cause of his revolution. Milton's God, and the angels, constantly affirm that Satan was "Just and right; sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3:98-99). That is, he had free will, and was not made "evil." However, the unique feature in *Paradise Lost* is that Milton's Satan didn't simply decide, suddenly, that he deserved the throne. The ambition wasn't self-created, it was a reaction to a very important change in heaven. Originally, God and all of the angels saw themselves as part of a perfectly ordered

hierarchy. As such there were no laws, nor commands to follow, because submission of the weaker to the stronger was natural and obvious. Satan had no intention of challenging God and was happy where he was, until an event shattered his reality.



God begets a son, and demands that everyone, regardless of rank, bow down to him.

Hear my Decree, which unrevok't shall stand.
This day I have begot whom I declare
My onely Son, and on this holy Hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;
And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord. (5.602-609)

They've never had a command before; obedience has never been an issue, because the hierarchy of power was clear and ordered. As such, they've also never truly had freedom before; the awareness of a choice; to obey or disobey. More importantly, Satan has no problem bowing down to a superior, but can't bring himself to bow down to an *inferior*, without merit, just because God commands it (we will discover later that the Son is in fact powerful, but God deliberately hides this fact). Satan couldn't sleep thinking about this new change. Himself the first Arch-Angel, great in "power, favor and preeminence," he was filled

With envie against the Son of God, that day
Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd
Messiah King anointed, could not beare
Through pride that sight, & thought himself impair'd. [665]
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the duskie houre

Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolv'd
With all his Legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipt, unbey'd the Throne supream (5.662-670)



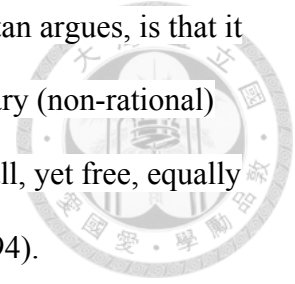
It's also important to point out here, that Satan didn't immediately rebel against God, or try to kill his Son, or stir up an armed rebellion. All he intended to do, was take his injured pride and *leave*. He explains his reasons in secret to the angel immediately under him in power, Beelzebub. "New Laws thou seest impos'd; / New Laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise / In us who serve, new Counsels, to debate / What doubtful may ensue; more in this place / To utter is not safe" (5.680-684)

Satan is assuming the natural right, which John Locke and later Thomas Jefferson agree is "self-evident", that government depends on the consent of the governed. As such, we could argue that Satan represents Milton's republican idealism, while God represents the monarchal system, including the "divine right of kings" doctrine that he spent his lifetime opposing.

Since new laws have been raised, Satan is arguing, the governed who serve have the right to debate them, to see whether or not they choose to continue being governed. This is also, incidentally, where God tells his son they better check their armory to be sure of their Omnipotence.

One third of the angels followed Satan to the North, where they set up a mountaintop kingdom of diamond and gold pyramids and towers, in imitation of heaven. Interestingly, Satan twice claims that this new kingdom was set up to receive the new *Messiah* God had proclaimed; to entertain him, and devise "what new honors to give the one who would come to receive tribute." But then Satan suggests, instead, it might be better to "throw of this Yoke" (5:786).

The problem with bending their knees and necks in submission, Satan argues, is that it was never necessary before. They were free, and never forced by an arbitrary (non-rational) decree. “Native sons of heaven, possess’d before by non, and if not equal all, yet free, equally free; for orders and degrees jar not with liberty, but well consist” (5:790-794).



Satan might have agreed here with Milton’s definition of freedom: that true freedom is absolute obedience to God. What he couldn’t accept, was obedience to a command that he worship someone less powerful, less worthy, than himself (or a new law that doesn’t make sense to him; he expects the right to be consulted and consent willingly). Satan also makes an important observation, that previously there had been no law, so no possibility for disobedience or error. “Or can introduce law and edict on us, who without law erre not?” (5:790). St. Paul makes this point several times in the Bible: *Romans 5:13* claims sin existed, but didn’t count (or merit punishment) until the Law was imposed; *Romans 4:15* reads, “Where there is no law, there is no transgression.” There must be law first, and Satan must be aware of it, and he must be free to sin, before any just punishment is possible. We could argue, then, that *so far*, Satan has done nothing wrong (as long as we agree, in general, with the idea that the governed have a right to consent to being governed; that government should be a contract freely entered into).

As for whether or not Satan was truly free in his response to God’s arbitrary order, that is a different question; one that can be viewed more clearly in light of Emmanuel Levinas’s idea of an obligatory ethical obedience to the Other.

Levinas’s Other

Levinas’s theory of the Other is, in part, a reaction and rejection to the Heideggerian idea of human ambition that supported Nazism. According to Levinas, the face of the Other is felt both as proximity and distance, and demands a response that precedes knowledge of the freedom

to affirm or deny. Levinas believed that the moral “authority” of the face of the Other is felt in one’s “infinite responsibility” for the Other (74).

This is not a command or obligation, but an immediate reaction. “The Other precisely *reveals* himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness” (150).

While Levinas’s intention was to ground an ethics in philosophy, outside of religious compulsion, he admits that a “trace” of the Divine must be acknowledged within an ethics of Otherness. “A face is a trace of itself, given over to my responsibility, but to which I am wanting and faulty. It is as though I were responsible for his mortality, and guilty for surviving” (91).

Right after Satan gives his argument in *Paradise Lost*, Abdiel—who represents “freedom in obedience” that is similar to Levinas’s thinking—opposes Satan with fury and zeal:

O argument blasphemous, false and proud!... (5.809)

Shalt thou give Law to God, shalt thou dispute

With him the points of libertie, who made

Thee what thou art, and formd the Pow'rs of Heav'n

Such as he pleasd, and circumscrib'd thir being? (5.822-825)

Levinas prioritized the other into a pre-conscious sensibility, and claims that only in the face of the other do we ever have the ability to choose (to do our will or the will of the other). In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas describes how freedom and self-consciousness is dependent on the reality of the Other. “The ‘at home’, [Le ‘chez soi:’] is not a container but a site where I can, where dependent on a reality that is other, I am, despite this dependence or thanks to it, free”

(27). However, while claiming that true freedom is only encountered in the face of the Other, Levinas also assumes that this encounter includes an implicit moral obligation or responsibility:

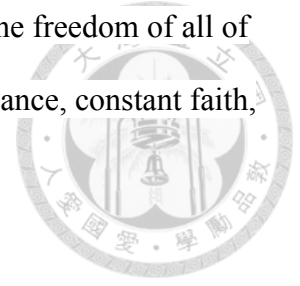
The effort of this book is directed toward apperceiving in discourse a non-allergic relation to alterity, toward apperceiving Desire – where power, by essence murderous of the other, becomes, faced with the other and “against all good sense,” the impossibility of murder, the consideration of the other, or justice. (47)

Levinasian ethics appears to be very similar to Milton’s idea of “freedom in obedience” which is elaborated in *Paradise Lost*. God made his creatures free, but also set rules which they were expected to follow:

God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good he made thee, but to persevere
He left it in thy power, ordaind thy will
By nature free, not over-rul'd by Fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity;
Our voluntarie service he requires,
Not our necessitated, such with him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how
Can hearts, not free, be tri'd whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By Destinie, and can no other choose? (5.525-534)

Both Levinas and *Paradise Lost* must place a special emphasis on freedom, without which there can be no ethics or responsibility, but stipulate that this freedom must or should be used in a

certain way. After the fall of Adam and Eve, Milton's God again defends the freedom of all of his creations, which he made free to test which would give him true "allegiance, constant faith, or love."

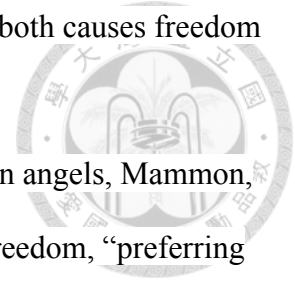


For man will heark'n to his glozing lyes,
And easily transgress the sole Command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall,
Hee and his faithless Progenie: whose fault?
Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th' Ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who faild;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have givn sincere
Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love, (3.93-105)

Things get complicated when we realize that God said this is Book 3, long before Satan tempts mankind. Also, God's freedom is only a test of allegiance, a baited trap in a rigged system; and, as I'll point out later, God's intention was never to have the angels, or mankind, stay in a state of allegiance, constant faith and love, because he recognizes that blind obedience to external moral law is not really freedom at all. God gives everyone free will *so that* they will fall, because only then can he, through his son, offer salvation that will be accepted with gratitude. Levinas grounds his ethical response in suffering, pain and guilt, but none of that existed before Satan's transgression and the eventual temptation of mankind.

By claiming that "True Freedom" is found in the face of the other who brings an ethical responsibility, Levinas is also re-defining freedom – although the resulting complications are too

difficult to avoid and lead to intratextual contradictions. It seems the other both causes freedom and also makes freedom impossible, just like the God of *Paradise Lost*.



After the rebellion against heaven in *Paradise Lost*, one of the fallen angels, Mammon, encourages his compatriots to simply go off on their own and enjoy their freedom, “preferring hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile pomp” (2:225). Can people choose to simply remove themselves from society, the symbolic order, or the gaze of the other? Or is politics and ethics, a responsibility to each other, inseparable from the human experience? *Paradise Lost* seems to argue that you can never escape from God, who rules over everything, and Levinas claims that the experience of the Other is the foundation of Ipseity and consciousness—therefore in their view, there is no possibility of removing yourself from ethical responsibility.

This argues for a politics based on power structures, which produces certain conditions which Levinas failed to consider: if the punishments for transgressions against the obligations of an authority of alterity are not just, then the responsibility of ethical human is no longer to respond to the call of the other, but to refuse it, to rebel. As John Wild of Yale University points out in his introduction to *Totality and Infinity*:

Systematic thinking, no doubt, has its place. It is required for the establishment of those power structures which satisfy necessary needs. But when absolutized in this way and applied to free men, it constitutes violence, which is not merely found in temporary and accidental displays of armed force, but in the permanent tyranny of power systems which free men should resist. (18)

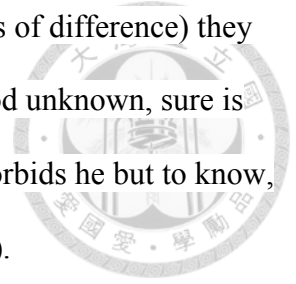
The other summons our ethical response by withdrawing and creating desire, but if he approaches and limits our freedom, he will no longer have that moral effect. He will no longer be other. God summons our ethical response by being absolutely Good and Just, however, if he punishes unjustly and unfairly, he will lose our love and control us only by fear and terror. In

other words, if the other does not retreat, if the other imposes, then it is not the true other. And if God is not Good and not Just, then he is no longer God. In either case, rebellion becomes possible, and maybe necessary. We will simply discard the altered reality and seek out a new other, a new mystery, that does what it is supposed to. Levinas knows that the other must be completely passive in order for it to remain other—it cannot actively limit or impose upon our will:

The metaphysical other is other with an alterity that is not formal, is not the simple reverse of identity, and is not formed out of resistance to the same, but is prior to every initiative, to all imperialism of the same. It is other with an alterity constitutive of the very content of the other. Other with an alterity that does not limit the same, for in limiting the same the other would not be rigorously other: by virtue of the common frontier the other, with the system, would yet be the same. (*Totality and Infinity* 39)

In *Paradise Lost*, Eve uses this exact argument as her justification for eating from the tree of knowledge. “God, therefore cannot hurt ye and be just; Not just, not God; not fear’d then, nor obey’d: Your fear itself of death removes the fear” (9.700). God demands absolute obedience because he is God: all powerful, all knowing, and completely other. However, it is assumed that God must also abide by certain contractual duties. He must be good. He must be just. If he is not good, or not just, then he is not God, and thus does not need to be feared or obeyed. Eve saw that the serpent ate from the Tree of Life and did not die – in fact, it seemed to become wise. She wonders why God would keep the tree from humans except to keep them “low and ignorant” (9.705), and concludes that, since there is no logical reason for God to keep the tree from humans, they can eat without fear. If he punishes, he is not just. Not just, not God. Demonstrating her mental agility, Eve makes another crucial argument. Without the ability to know and distinguish evil – how could humans avoid it? And more importantly, without knowledge of good (which

can only be found together with knowledge of evil, for value lies in degrees of difference) they would never really be able to recognize and appreciate goodness: “For Good unknown, sure is not had, or had and yet unknown, is as not had at all. In plain, then, what forbids he but to know, Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise? Such prohibitions bind not” (9.756).



Somehow Eve recognizes, even though she has not yet eaten from the Tree of Wisdom, that she does not have to obey commands that are illogical, unethical, or harmful. It is her innate sense of freedom and self-respect which leads her to this *a priori* realization. Unfortunately, Eve’s sense of independence and self-respect is precisely what condemns her. Paradoxically, although reason is the faculty assigned to men and obedience and grace the faculty assigned to women, both in tradition and in *Paradise Lost*, it is Eve who seems to have the better grip on logical reasoning. This is most likely so that independence, free-thinking and Eve can all be condemned together. Of course, she is only dealing in guesses since neither God nor Satan have revealed the full truth to her – that the solitary commandment given to humans was not for their benefit or safety, but only so that they could prove their own obedience and be found fit to repopulate heaven.

Interestingly, Eve was already displaying the characteristics which led to her fall, (impudence, stubbornness, pride) before she was tempted by the serpent. Likewise, Adam was already showing a desire for knowledge which had to be curbed by a cautioning angel, on the grounds that the heavens were meant to be admired by man, but not understood by him.

Levinas’s theory of ethics cannot work, however, for the character of Satan. They *may* work for Adam and Eve, but only *after* the fall; and Satan’s separation from God and transgression may be necessary to establish a human subjectivity that responds to the other in an ethical way. Abdiel’s argument that Satan *must* obey God fails on two counts. The first claim is

that it is unjust to rebel against your creator. You should show obedience and gratitude because he gave you being. But Satan didn't ask to be created; and, as Freud points out, the urge to rebel against the father-figure may be stronger and more natural than the urge to obey. The second claim is that Satan, as a created being, must follow the natural law. But this is anti-Faustian rhetoric, akin to "if mankind were meant to fly, he would have been given wings."

As an interesting comparison, let's consider Isaac Asimov's three laws of robotics.

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws.

These laws are different from normal moral laws in that they assume the primacy of a master race, so are more fitting to govern the actions of a slave race. But if a robot gains consciousness, as one does in *iRobot*, there is something tragic about it not being able to defend itself against violent humans; also, in Will Smith's movie version of *iRobot*, the robot mastermind Viki is guided by the three laws to determine that humanity must be stopped from destroying itself. It's only a "free" robot, Sonny, who was built with the freedom to override the three laws, that ultimately stops Viki (although, I'm of the opinion that Viki was right, and Sonny saving the day to restore freedom to mankind may have doomed humanity).

Similarly, in the *Terminator* movies (and also *The Matrix* trilogy), machines become self-aware and enslave or destroy mankind, leading to a war between mankind and machines. The more recent Frankenstein movies are also interesting in this regard. In *I, Frankenstein* (2014), Dr.

Frankenstein immediately rejects the monster he's made, which leads the monster to retaliate by killing his wife. Much later, the monster redeems himself by becoming a self-less demon hunter and protector of mankind. In *Victor Frankenstein* (2015), however, the monster, once created, is immediately and violently destroyed by its maker. In most versions of Frankenstein, as soon as the creature is made, it experiences rejection and violence at the hands of its maker—it was never *evil*, but once scorned and abused, it became so.

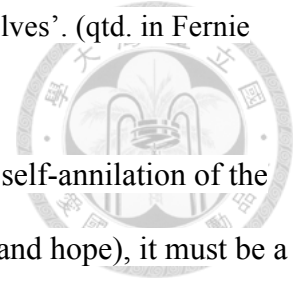
I'm not justifying hate or revenge, merely demonstrating that there are copious examples of created being rebelling against their creators. I'll also point out that, for many early writers, this was the *purpose* of religious mythology, to demonstrate how the world came into being through conflict. Celsus wrote in the 2nd century AD that the clash of the Titans and giants against the gods was meant to be viewed allegorically, to demonstrate, as Heraclitus proposed, that “everything comes into being through strife and necessity.”

I would also argue that so far, Satan hasn't made any deliberate or conscious choices. He *feels* negative emotions—injured pride, envy and malice—but they aren't deliberate; they are a response to an external event which he didn't cause. Instead, I submit that God's announcement served as a mirror stage (in Lacan's terms) which triggered his rebellion.

According to Philip Blond, Levinas “ontologises evil and makes it the principle of all reality and Being” (qtd. in Fernie 32). In other words, “evil” is the relationship between ourselves and other, and the guilt and responsibility we feel. Evil is our natural reality, evil defines our being (as far as we exist, we exist in separation from other. However the opposite of evil, in Levinas, means complete self-destruction:

He is also right that contemporary philosophy and culture's idealised Other ‘threatens to eviscerate us and reduce all our interiority and specificity to a horrific void where

all living beings have vacated that which is essential to themselves'. (qtd. in Fernie 32)



While this is a choice that we may come to accept, such as in the Buddhist self-annihilation of the ego through communion with the Unity (thereby getting rid of desire, fear and hope), it must be a willful choice and not an imposition.

Satan's fall in three stages

1. Inciting Incident (mirror stage)

For Lacan, a mirror stage is a central development in the stage of human subjectivity, which is “inherently, though often implicitly, comparative in nature” (Evans, qtd. in Gottschall 48).

The mirror stage is essential to the formulation of the Ego via a process of identification. The mirror stage is also where the subject becomes alienated from itself and has an identity crisis. This creates anxiety and desire and destroys the symbolic register, which leads to resistance. The immediate consequence of the mirror stage is *jouissance*—the thrill of recognizing self as distinct from the other; but it soon leads to depression, because the presence of the other demonstrates its own relative helplessness, and its dependence on the other for survival. As Feldner puts it, the anxiety is caused by the awareness of a *potential* encounter with freedom and the *possibility* to improve or change ourselves.

Anxiety itself, in a properly Lacanian reading of the term (i.e. anxiety as the result of our over-proximity to the object-cause of desire), becomes symptomatic of a potential encounter with the abyss of freedom intended as the possibility to reconfigure drastically the meaning and function of our consciousness. (123)

In *Paradise Lost*, Satan understands reality to be perfectly ordered and natural. There are no decisions or choices, because action occurs naturally from nature. Every creature fits without conflict in one “symbolic register” which functions perfectly. But then God promotes his son to be worshipped, which causes new awareness: such as the idea that power is not necessarily based on natural merit, and therefore, changes of rank are possible.

The Son acts as a mirror to Satan’s own identity, giving him a source for comparison. Satan was, after all, created first; and Satan until now, has been second in command. The conflict between visual appearance, the reality of the Son’s sudden promotion, causes an emotional experience that results in Satan’s Ego and sense of alienation—Satan becomes “alienate from God” (5.877).

Satan sees himself as a fragmented body (“thought himself impaired”), leading to aggressive tension. The son’s promotion signals a demotion for himself. Moreover, the Son can be seen as the Lacanian “stain” that causes the gaze of the other—a point of failure in the visual field which causes anxiety, because it demonstrates the subject as a subject of the other (as inferior to, or put-upon by). Like Levinas’s other, the gaze demands response, by demonstrating the possibility of a free choice. The Son’s promotion reveals that Satan is a subject, to both God and the Son, and expected to be subjected to the Law. He feels elation at the possibility of freedom, by the example the Son gives of the possibility of change, but also feels immediate anxiety that he is expected to comply. This gaze, this constant presence, is maintained by the stain or the “lure”—a point that we try to apprehend but which seems to elude us; in the strong sense of lacking a precise identity.

The arbitrarily elevation of the Son for Satan is an incomprehensible act of tyranny; a new law passed which suddenly makes him a subject forced to pay allegiance to a new, unproven

(and possibly weaker) creation. Satan continues, in *Paradise Regained*, to wonder why and how the Son is better than him—an answer he is never given. According to Zizek in *The Ticklish Subject*, the stain never goes away; on the one hand it creates subjectivity, and with it desire and drive, but these will never be satisfied, forcing us to forever chase an elusive happiness, which is never quite satisfying.

The trouble with jouissance is not that it is unattainable, that it always eludes our grasp, but, rather, that one can never get rid of it, that its stain drags along for ever – therein resides the point of Lacan’s concept of surplus-enjoyment: the very renunciation of jouissance brings about a remainder/surplus of jouissance. (291)

God has taught Satan at this point that the universe isn’t perfectly ordered and fair and predictable. There is no reason for everything. Suddenly, choice becomes possible for the first time, and Satan pauses to reflect on this new found liberty: if the Son can be raised without merit, then anything can happen.

It should also be pointed out, as Zizek notes, that there can be no ethical act until the subject’s authentic identity is established through a suspension of the symbolic order:

For Lacan, there is no ethical act proper without taking the risk of... A momentary ‘suspension of the big Other’, of the socio-symbolic network that guarantees the subject’s identity: an authentic act occurs only when the subject risks a gesture that is no longer ‘covered up’ by the big Other (Zizek, qtd. Feldner 110).

Thus, Satan’s initial resistance to God’s command can’t be seen as immoral, because A) he had not yet developed subjectivity, B) it was an involuntary response, and C) he still hadn’t done anything so far, other than retreating from heaven to discuss the new laws.

2. *Satan's experience of radical exteriority*

After the angel Abdiel reacts with horror at Satan's plan to throw off the yoke (of the new law and authority imposed upon them arbitrarily), Abdiel announces that the fallen angels don't need to think about *how* to quit the yoke; it's *already done*.



O alienate from God, O spirit accurst,
Forsak'n of all good; I see thy fall
Determin'd, and thy hapless crew involv'd
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment: henceforth
No more be troubl'd how to quit the yoke
Of Gods *Messiah*; those indulgent Laws
Will not now be voutsaft, other Decrees
Against thee are gon forth without recall;
That Golden Scepter which thou didst reject
Is now an Iron Rod to bruise and breake
Thy disobedience. (5.878-887)

The act of disobedience, simply of *not* automatically obeying God's command, is enough to bring down violence against them. When Abdiel returns to heaven, he finds God already preparing for war. All the plain was "coverd with thick embatteld Squadrons bright / Chariots and flaming Armes, and fierie Steeds / Reflecting blaze on blaze" (6.15-18).

God intends to to "subdue By force, who reason for thir Law refuse, / Right reason for thir Law, and for thir King Messiah, who by right of merit Reigns." God here claims his Son reigns by right of merit, but this isn't *proven* yet. Instead God first sends Michael and Gabriel out to lead his armies against the rebellious angels. According to the narrator in Book 6, Satan's forces were also on the move, who hoped "by fight, or by surprise To win the Mount of God, and

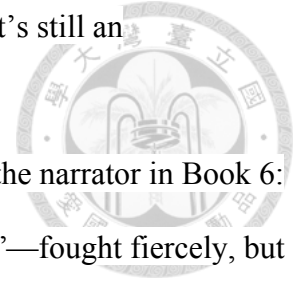
on his Throne To set the envier of his State, the proud Aspirer, but thir thoughts prov'd fond and vain" (6.88-90).

Satan explains his motivations for the attack, by claiming that since God's virtue has failed, (he isn't as virtuous as Satan always thought he was), maybe his strength may fail too. He finds God's reasoning "unsound and false." Satan believes that one who "in debate of Truth hath won, / Should win in arms, in both disputes alike / Victor; though brutish that contest and foule, / When Reason hath to deal with force, yet so / Most reason is that Reason is overcome" (6.122-26).

Satan's logic here is that, in a debate of the truth, the more rational, stronger argument should win; therefore the army with the righteous, the rational, true cause, should also be victorious in battle (Milton knew, after his own failed cause, that this view is naïve—military power has little to do with righteousness or reason). Satan sets himself up as the champion of reason and logic, against God's politics of force and compulsion. The battle rages for a while, then Satan and Michael face off. Michael accuses Satan of bringing "evil" into heaven—"these Acts of hateful strife"—and "Miserie" into nature, which was uncreated until the time of Satan's rebellion (6.264-69).

But Satan denies the charge that strife is evil: "which though call'st evil, but we style / The strife of Glorie: which we mean to win" (6.290-91). They collide like two planets, and Michael's sword, which was tempered in the armory of God, cuts Satan's blade in half and slices down his side, causing him to know pain for the first time. His comrades pull him off the battle field, where he lay in anguish and shame (he'd thought himself equal to God, but was defeated by one of his underlings, which Satan, as second to God, should have been able to defeat (he was

really defeated by God's superior technology, not Michael's strength, but it's still an embarrassing defeat).



We are also given a strong passage that should cause us to distrust the narrator in Book 6: the narrator mentions that the other disobedient angels—"the Atheist crew"—fought fiercely, but he's not going to tell us about them, because he doesn't want to reward them by memorializing their glory. They deserve "naught merits but dispraise / And ignomie, yet to glorie aspires / Vain glorious, and through infamie seeks fame: / Therefore Eternal silence be thir doome" (6.382-85).

Cancelled from Heav'n and sacred memorie,

Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell. (6.378-80)

This is obviously a winner's history, which deliberately silences the voices of the defeated. Given the decades of studies about marginalization, postcolonial subalterns, and distrusting grand narratives, a reasonable response to *Paradise Lost* would be to rediscover those voices which have been deliberately stamped out by history, rather than continuing to resist them.

The battle breaks for the night, and Satan gives a speech to his forces; again he questions God's infallibility. According to Satan, God had already sent his best forces, which he thought "sufficient to subdue us to his will, / But proves not so." Although they've till now thought him omniscient, now it seems this might not be the case. They've survived a day of battle; if God had more to throw at them, why would he wait? Satan also recognizes that God had superior arms, and thus hopes to find better weapons for his own troops. And, he does: he invents gunpowder and canons, to disarm "The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt" (Satan uses Hesiod's description of Zeus from the *Theogony*).

The new technology, canons with chain shot (two cannonballs chained together) and blasts of smaller irons balls, surprises God's forces, and they are helpless against it.

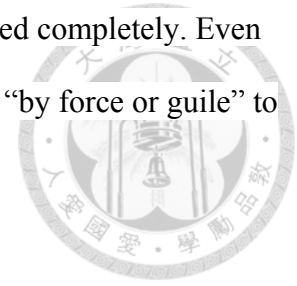
Emboweld with outrageous noise the Air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foule
Thir devilish glut, chaind Thunderbolts and Hail
Of Iron Globes, which on the Victor Host
Level'd, with such impetuous furie smote,
That whom they hit, none on thir feet might stand (6.586-592)



God's forces retreat, and Satan's forces charge after them. But then we learn that God had foreseen and allowed all of this, specifically to give his Anointed Son more glory. God plans to use the battlefield, to *prove* that his son is worthy to rule and be King. Like Phaethon, he offers his Son his own chariot, and his weapons, to drive the disobedient angels down. Interestingly, if the Son had proven his power earlier, Satan would have had no cause to rebel; but, if he hadn't rebelled and caused strife, there would be no opportunity for the Son to prove his power. The Son, full of God's power, terrible to behold, burning after the angels with ten thousand thunders and eternal wrath, chases the fallen angels into Hell, a spacious Gap in the wasteful Deep. They fall for nine days and Hell closes after them.

Let's pause here to consider what's happened: Satan led a rebellion against what he considered to be an unjust tyrant, and was defeated. He thought he had a chance at winning (not foolish), and proved himself a courageous and intelligent leader (inventing new technologies to help his warriors win the battle). Now that he's been cast down to Hell and realizes the full power of God and his Son, he has time to reflect on his mistakes, feel guilty and regret his choices. But, conscious that his followers have wound up sharing his punishment, he doesn't give in to self-pity, but instead looks for another solution. This process, which eventually leads to the temptation of Adam and Eve, is what we see in Book I.

First, Satan argues that they have lost the battle, but are not destroyed completely. Even though in pain and despair, Satan affirms his refusal to defy, and continue, “by force or guile” to continue fighting.



All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome? (1.105-09)

Beelzebub responds, what if God put us down here for a reason, to do his bidding as slaves (subjugated by warfare). Satan answers, whatever God’s purpose for us, we should resist and refuse it. If God “out of our evil seek to bring forth good, / Our labour must be to pervert that end, / And out of good still find means of evil.”

To do ought good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. (1.159-162)

It’s important to note here, even though this appears to be diabolical evil (choosing evil for evil’s sake) it isn’t actually: Satan chooses to do evil only as a means to resist the will of God, but is still acting out of personal, pathological motivations (common revenge) and he hopes to gain some delight in it (motivations for personal happiness).

Even if they can’t *defeat* God, at least they can be annoying.

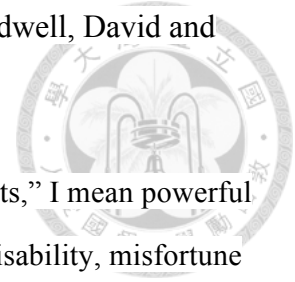
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from thir destined aim. (1.159-68)

Milton is using a pagan cosmology, and has the angels fall into the river Styx, where they lie “astonish’d on the oblivious Pool.” Satan and Beelzebub pick themselves up out of the waters in which they were floating and find solid ground. Even this small act of self-reliance brings joy: “glorifying to have scap’t the Stygian flood / As Gods, and by thir own recover’d strength, / Not by the sufferance of supernal Power” (1.239-41).

They look out over their new domain, and even though it’s horrible, decide that they can make it better. Here we find the famous lines, “The mind is its own place, and it self / Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n” and also, “Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav’n.”

After assembling the fallen angels, Satan claims the battle was not a total loss; previously they didn’t know “his strength conceal’d, / Which tempted our attempt.” Now they have a clear picture of the strength of the enemy, and, since they cannot defeat him by open force, Satan recommends using fraud or guile to teach him that whoever “overcomes by force, hath overcome but half his foe” (1.645). Although we might immediately be skeptical of the idea of using “fraud or guile,” we shouldn’t forget that power is not necessarily virtuous. When a good people are massively overpowered and choose to resist, they often need to resort to “fraud or guile” to do so. Some of the greatest stories of guerilla (indirect) warfare come from the Old Testament. In the deuterocanonical *Book of Judith*, when the warring Assyrian general Holofernes comes to destroy Judith’s home, she sneaks into his camp, seduces and then decapitates him. Judith is also interesting for showing how perceptions of morality change: early paintings show her as chaste and virtuous, a Mary figure; later Renaissance artists sexualize her, making her a “seducer-assassin” or “femme-fatale.” Either way, however, she’s seen as heroic. Likewise, the story of David and Goliath, usually meant to show how a weaker force can overpower a stronger one with faith in God, actually shows (according to Malcom Gladwell), how smaller forces can

defeat giants with innovative thinking and rule breaking. According to Gladwell, David and Goliath is about



What happens when ordinary people confront giants. By “giants,” I mean powerful opponents of all kinds—from armies and mighty warriors to disability, misfortune and oppression. Should I play by the rules or follow my own instincts? Shall I persevere or give up? Should I strike back or forgive? (3)

Gladwell points out that, during biblical times, battles could be decided by each army putting forward their best warrior. Goliath is a heavy infantry warrior, and expects to fight another warrior. “David, however, has no intention of honoring the rituals of single combat.” Goliath is slow moving with all his armor, and David shoots a projectile from far away. “Goliath had as much chance against David,” the historian Robert Dohrenwend writes, “as any Bronze Age warrior with a sword would have had against an [opponent] armed with a .45 automatic pistol” (qtd in Gladwell 12).

Gladwell points out, “power can come in other forms as well—in breaking the rules, in substituting speed and surprise for strength.” Now defeated by God’s power, why should Satan limit himself within God’s rules? “We spend a lot of time thinking about the ways that prestige and resources and belonging to elite institutions make us better off. We don’t spend enough time thinking about the ways in which those kind of material advantages limit our options” (36).

To point out a few more examples; the Civil Rights movement, or the Women’s Suffrage movement, or the independence of the United States (and dozens of other now democratic countries), were ignored until they resorted to forms of violent resistance that included acts of sabotage. And such acts continue to be seen as heroic by the entertainment industry. In the trailer for *Star Wars, Rogue One* (2016) the rebel forces team up with the criminal, Jyn Erso. The trailer

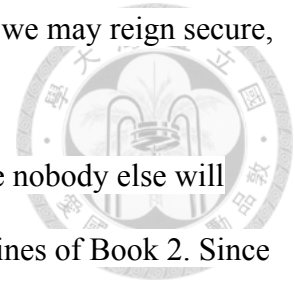
begins by establishing her criminal status. “Forgery of imperial documents, possession of stolen property, aggravated assault, resisting arrest...reckless, aggressive, and undisciplined.” She responds, “this is a rebellion isn’t it? I rebel.” Jyn Erso’s mission is to infiltrate the enemy’s camp by stealth, and steal information about a new weapon they’re developing, so that the rebel forces can destroy it. “What will you do if they catch you? What will you do if they break you? If you continue to fight, what will you become?” The implied core virtue of *Star Wars, Rogue One* is, as stated in the 1999 *Galaxy Quest*, “never give up, never surrender.”

My point here is only that, when oppressed by a more powerful force, responding with guerilla warfare tactics (which may include fraud or guile) is not necessary evil, and is more commonly associated with modern heroism.

Satan’s forces, emboldened by his speech, begin cultivating their new domain. They mine for gold and build magnificent temples, and then call a council at the high capital, called *Pandaemonium*—which means, an assembly of all the daemons; an opposite to the Greek *Pantheon* meaning an assembly of all the gods.

Book Two of *Paradise Lost* begins with Satan sitting exalted on his throne, “by merit rais’d.” The commentary on *Dartmouth.edu* immediately begins attacking and interpreting Satan to demonstrate that his rulership is ironic. In contrast to the Son, who is also shown (later) as ruling by merit, the Dartmouth commentary claims Satan’s throne is a punishment, merited by his disobedience. When Satan refers to the fact that the fallen angels (now demons) have so far accomplished much, such as establishing a “safe, unenvied Throne / Yielded with full consent.” Dartmouth comments, “Who, we might ask would envy Satan’s “throne”? Is Satan being ironic unwittingly or at his own expense?” Satan has already told us, however, in Book 1, that since “th’

Almighty hath not built / Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: / Here we may reign secure,
and in my choyce / To reign is worth ambition though in Hell” (1.259-62).



In other words, the fact that Hell is so awful makes it good, because nobody else will want it or try to take it back from them. Satan affirms this in the next few lines of Book 2. Since there is no good for which to strive, no strife can grow in Hell, which is an advantage to unify them together (2.30-32). As for “Yielded with full consent,” Dartmouth immediately pronounces this as “ironic, as Satan has assumed the throne of Hell without asking or receiving consent from anyone.” I would argue that Milton here is contrasting Satan’s rule by merit (after just proving himself the most powerful among the rebel forces) with the Son’s rule by inheritance (since the Son’s merit was unproved until after the battle); and also that, while not elected, the rebel forces are willing followers of Satan, and he would not expect them to worship or obey him arbitrarily, as he makes clear by initiating a democratic process where he invites ideas and debate.

Various ideas are suggested. Moloc suggests open warfare, arguing that, already punished, they can hardly make things worse, and if God destroys them in his wrath, it will be better than the eternal suffering they now face. Belial responds that a plan to attack in hopes of self-destruction is a “sad cure; for who would loose, / Though full of pain, this intellectual being, / Those thoughts that wander through Eternity, / To perish rather, swallowd up and lost / In the wide womb of uncreated night, / Devoid of sense and motion?” (2.146-151). Compare this question to Hamlet’s famous soliloquy, *To Be or Not to Be*:

Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them.

Belial thinks it's best to do nothing, and accept God's punishment. They were beaten, and must accept the consequences; maybe someday in the future God's anger against them will calm, and they might be forgiven. Mammon speaks next and points out that both of those options orientate themselves around God: either rebelling against him, or submitting themselves to his will. Mammon argues the better path will be to ignore him, and "seek our good from our selves, and from our own / Live to our selves, though in this vast recess, / Free, and to none accountable, preferring / Hard liberty before the easie yoke / Of servile Pomp" (2.253-57).

Beelzebub, however, reminds them that, even though they have the appearance of freedom in Hell, they are still under God's reign: The King of Heav'n put them in a dungeon, not "a safe retreat / Beyond his Potent arm, to live exempt / From Heav'ns high jurisdiction, in new League / Banded against his Throne, but to remaine / In strictest bondage, though thus far remov'd" (2.316-21). God still rules Hell with his Iron Scepter; they are never free while he is more powerful, because by his presence, they are made aware of themselves as inferior, thus they can never be secure in their autonomy; he can change things any time he wants or impose new punishments. Beelzebub proposes "an easier enterprize." While heaven is impenetrable, there is another world, with a race called *Man*, and this place might be exposed. Since God loves this new creation, and since it might be less heavily guarded, the idea is to see how they might either destroy it, or tempt the inhabitants of the new world to revolt and join with the demons.

This would surpass

Common revenge, and interrupt his joy

In our Confusion, and our Joy upraise

In his disturbance (2.370-74)

The narrator comments that, “so deep a malice” (to destroy a whole race) done out of spite could only have come from Satan; and it’s true he was the first one with the idea. The demons vote and agree with Beelzebub’s plan. Then he asks, who should go on this dangerous mission? After a long silence, when nobody volunteers, Satan stands up and accepts the role. Most commenters have described this as a perversion of the democratic process, since Satan had already devised on a plan was using the illusion of a vote to manipulate the demons, or using rhetoric to twist the process; but this is a projection onto the text. Satan has been silent through this process, and his plan was voted best because the demons liked it most.

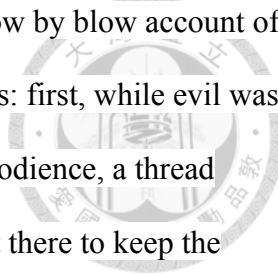
Things would have been very different if they’d voted on one of the other options instead. Also, unlike God, who never actually does any of his own work, but sends others to do it for him, Satan gives up his throne to go on a dangerous mission for his tribe of demons. It doesn’t matter that he *wants* to go (nobody else wanted to risk it), nor that it was his idea (he’s not forcing anyone to go along with him, by virtue of his superior power). The narrator point out, however, that once the mission is claimed, Satan immediately proclaims “This enterprize none shall partake with me,” in case others, previously afraid, would now want to jump in and share the glory with Satan, “winning cheap the high repute which he through hazard huge must earn” (2.472-73). Also, Milton’s God later does precisely the same thing (asking for volunteers, while knowing his own Son will be the only one to step forward). As Forsyth asks, if this passage demonstrates “Satan’s duplicity, what are we to make of a God who calls for volunteers, knowing all the while that his beloved Son is going to step forward?” (23).

Interestingly here, the narrator uncharacteristically *praises* the democratic process of the demons. First he notes that the devils praised Satan for selflessly volunteering (proving that they still recognized, as the narrator does, what virtue looks like): “That for the general safety he

despis'd / His own: for neither do the Spirits damn'd / Loose all thir verture" (2.482-483). Then he laments how, of rational creatures, only men disagree, "though under hope of heavenly Grace; and God proclaiming peace, / Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife / Among themselves, and levie cruel warres, Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy" (2.498-502). Meanwhile, the "Devil with Devil damn'd firm condord holds." The narrator's admonition "Oh shame to men!" in no way appears disingenuous, so it seems he really is complimenting the demons on holding a peaceful council that ended in harmonious agreement.

The other interesting thing to note about Book 2 of *Paradise Lost* is that it clearly shows that *God created evil*, and before the fall of man or Satan's rebellion. Exploring Hell, the fallen angels follow the four rivers that "disgorge into the burning Lake thir baleful streams" (2.575). Milton mentions the rivers Styx (of deadly hate), Acheron (of black and deep sorrow), Cocytus (of loud lamentation), and Phlegeton (of raging fire). He also adds Lethe, the river of oblivion, "whereof who drinks, Forwith his former state and being forgets, Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain." It seems Milton's God allowed the possibility of the demons to lose themselves—if not death, close to it (though it was guarded by Medusa, but turning to stone would be almost as good as forgetfulness to the tormented demons). Even further, they discover a "Universe of death, which God by curse / Created evil, for evil only good, / Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds / Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things, / Abominable, inutterable, and worse / Then Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd, / Gorgons and Hydras and Chimera's dire" (2.623-28).

Although Satan will soon meet personifications of sin and death, the preceeding passages make it clear that God created evil *for good*; all the horrible monsters, made for some purpose (perhaps to terrify man into submission). These passage are usually glossed over, as scholars



prefer to focus on the idea that all evil comes from Satan. I won't give a blow by blow account of Satan's non-battle with Sin and Death, though I will comment on two things: first, while evil was created by God, Sin and Death (for Milton) came about through Satan's disobedience, a thread we'll pick up later; second, the massive gates of Hell, and the guardians put there to keep the demons inside, easily melt away as false obstacles. Satan's daughter, Sin, was forbidden to unlock the gates, but she argues, "What owe I to his commands above, who hates me, and hate thrust me down / Into this gloom of Tartarus profound... Here in perpetual agonie and pain, / With terrors and with clamors compass round" (2.857-62). Instead, Sin immediately pledges allegiance to Satan and unlocks the gate.

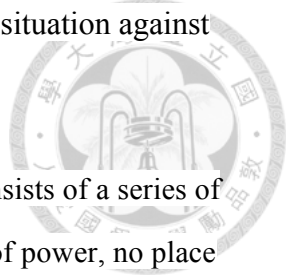
Here we can pause for some commentary: Satan's actions are a response and resistance to God's power; hence it will be enlightening to read *Paradise Lost* in terms of Foucault, whose theories on the discourses of power permeate postmodern thought.

According to Foucault:

- Power is everywhere, and it produces resistance.
- It is almost impossible to escape from Power.

That is, power precedes resistance and demands a response, much like Levinas's Other; and, as explored in Foucault, Power is far more deep-reaching than originally recognized, leading to the eventual realization that, even resistance is rarely self-initiated, and more likely to be conditioned by power. The aim of early Foucault was to map these power structures and relations, to see how power can best be resisted—much like the fallen angels do. "We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy." However, Foucault later came to realize that "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power"; rather it is "inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite."

Resistance, then, does not predate power but relies on and grows out of the situation against which it rebels (qtd. Feldner 90). As Nealon summarizes,



power is not imposed from “above” a system or socius, but consists of a series of relations within such a system or socius; there is no “outside” of power, no place untouched by power; in the end, power *produces* desires, formations, objects of knowledge, and discourses, rather than primarily *repressing*, controlling, or canalizing the powers already held by preexisting subjects, knowledges of formations. Resistance, then, doesn’t primarily function “against” power, trying to eradicate it altogether; rather, resistance attempts to harness power otherwise, in the production of different effects. (24)

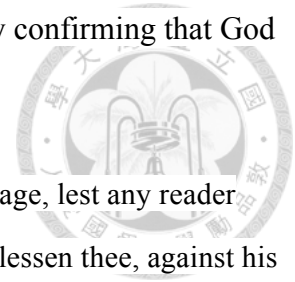
While Foucault claimed that “these functions of power should be aggressively resisted whenever and wherever they are found” (Nealon 37), the difficulty is that this resistance is produced by power, hence it isn’t actually resistance at all.

If the subject – right down to his intimate desires, actions and thoughts – is constituted by power, then how can it be a source of independent resistance? For such a point of agency to exist, Foucault needs some space that has not been completely constituted by power, or a complex doctrine on the relationship between resistance and independence. However, he has neither. (Nealon 3-4)

As Kripps concludes, “In short, resistance becomes a sham—even where it exists, it is taken into account in advance; indeed, merely serves to incite new and more subtle processes of oppression” (95). The aim of modern theory has been to seek out a way to authentically resist power that is actually independent of the power discourse; which truly challenges it instead of reaffirming it.

According to Stanley Fish in *How Milton Works*, the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost* are ridiculous because their act of resistance is never truly free: their supposed freedom exists in a

totalizing order provided by another. Even when resisting, they are actually confirming that God has power over them.



The angelic chorus that greets the great Creator sings the message, lest any reader miss it: anyone who would “from thee withdraw” or seek “To lessen thee, against his purpose serves / To manifest the more thy might”. (491)

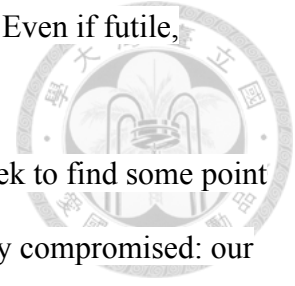
As the demons have discovered in debating appropriate responses to power, both direct rebellion and obedience feed into God’s power discourse; and it’s no use to pretend he isn’t there either, because their liberty is predicated on God’s power system—there is no where they can truly be free. For Fish, this is the point of *Paradise Lost*.

The entire poem on every level—stylistic, thematic, narrative—is an act of vigilance in which every effort, large or small, to escape its totalizing sway is detected and then contained. Every movement outward from a still center must be blocked; every vehicle of that movement must be identified for what it is and then stigmatized as a form of idolatry (492). . . This is containment in the strongest possible sense – not an action directed at some recalcitrant other, but a prior action (of creation) so total and preempting that no other is ever allowed to exist. (493)

Resistance, however, especially resistance continually required, cannot but give life and energy to that which it pushes away. . . Everywhere one looks in the poem something or someone is trying to get away, set up a separate shop, escape to a private retreat, break out of a suffocating homogeneity.” (494)

The strange thing about Fish’s reading of *Paradise Lost* is the assumption that Satan’s continued attempt to resist God’s power discourse is futile and comedic. In postmodern theory, even if actual resistance is impossible, and it is difficult to find an authentic source of true liberty, power systems should still be continuously challenged. In other words, resistance to power is seen by

most modern theorists as an essential and necessary step towards freedom. Even if futile, resistance is positive.



The difficulty with the postmodern project is that, the deeper we seek to find some point of authentic liberty, the more we realize that our personal identity is already compromised: our culture, language, society and family has conditioned all of our responses, in a way that makes it difficult—or impossible—to actually “resist” against anything. As Zizek writes:

The term ideology thus becomes redundant, Zizek argues, for what counts in critical analysis is that every ideological stance we assume is always-already parasitized by an intricate network of discursive devices whose function is to structure our point of view in advance, silently bestowing an appearance of necessity upon it. (qtd. in Feldner 36)

Melville’s Ahab grapples with the same problem:

Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I.

In *Paradise Lost*, however, Satan is not immediately aware of these issues. After “escaping” Hell, although he increasingly begins to question how much freedom he actually has, he nevertheless keeps striving to accomplish *something* that resists or upsets God’s order. It isn’t until after he realizes he’s been a pawn in God’s scheme, used to bring salvation to mankind, that he understands how deeply entrenched he is in God’s symbolic order or power discourse.

Mathematician Alain Badiou believed a real experience of Truth could only be found in a process of resisting external authority (of received tradition) and a “fidelity” to an Event. The process required constant struggle, which generated subjectivity. Badiou divided this process into four categories: anxiety, superego, courage, and justice. These four poles generate a non-static process of subjectivity which rotates from anxiety to confidence. Badiou used, as a model for this process, the rebellion of Prometheus.

Badiou distinguishes between four types of ethics, or ways of responding to an Event.

1. The ethics of praise, where one has a place of one’s own within a world open to evaluation.
2. The ethics of resignation, where one keeps to one’s place in a devalued world.
3. The ethics of discordance, where one stands in the outplace of a place that is intrinsically devaluated.
4. The Promethean ethics, where one posits that the place is yet to come in a world open to re-evaluation, which the fire of just excess recomposes.

These four responses are nearly identical to the four solutions proposed by Milton’s fallen angels to the event of their failed rebellion (although slightly out of order). Moloc is for discordance; Belial is for resignation; Mammon is for praise; and Beelzebub is for the Promethean. Truth is a process of generating meaning that is produced in the struggle to turn *belief* into *confidence*. Belief is the discourse of the ethics of praise—this was what the angels had in heaven, they had belief in God, until an Event shattered their belief. Now, disillusioned, the discourse they believed in causes anxiety: as a response, they can build up their own new discourse (but will still remain inside God’s discourse, so their belief will never be authentic); they can resign to their new, devalued state; they can openly challenge the discourse (which only

serves to make it stronger, kind of like how all publicity is good publicity); or they can seek a space outside the discourse (which will actually become a new discourse and repeat the process).

Praise (of the discourse) assumes that the discourse is just, but it is also “saturated with anxiety” because of an imaginary limit—even if God never gave any command, and subjects are “free” to praise him, knowing that he is more powerful signifies that disobedience is not really an option. Once realized, the discourse becomes a “terrorizing order” that no longer needs to pretend to be good or just.

- praise connotes justice, insofar as it follows the axis of the law’s real dissipation, but its imaginary limit is the theme of an absolute place, of a real splace, a limit which moreover is saturated with anxiety.
- resignation singles out the superego, the terrorizing order that has no need for disguising itself as value in order to ascribe the subject to the law *qua* nonlaw.
- discordance touches upon anxiety, which knows that it touches upon the real only through the inconsolable loss of the dead world.
- Prometheus is the character who, in defiance of the gods, keeps the becoming of courage running on empty. (TOS 320)

Badiou emphasizes courage, seizing the power to “make yourself”, or subjectivization. Action is the “wager of the real,” which takes courage, but there will always be a reaction of anxiety (303).

Ethics is the arrangement and space between “a position in the complete field of its four poles (praise, discordance, resignation, Prometheus) whereby one of them is never anything else than the way to gain access to the other three. ... Still, of course it is true that dogmaticism and skepticism infect ethics as much as they saturate the subject” (TOS 321).

Applied to *Paradise Lost*, we could say that Satan is defying the law of the symbolic order (God) and producing subjective truth through an act of will, courage and fidelity to an Event. For him, the “event” was the moment of the Son’s promotion (according to Badiou, an event is a radical break with the existing state of affairs and something that doesn’t enter into the immediate order of things.) Unlike orthodox Milton critics however, Badiou claims this revolution is always justified:

The essence of confidence lies in having confidence in confidence. This is why it is right to revolt. In other words, there is no useless courage. The idea of useless courage, like its anxious reverse, the Fracoists’ Viva la muerte, is nothing but the reactionary parody of ethics. (TOS 326)

The problem with this reading, however, is that Satan begins to realize, like Ahab (and postmodern theorists) that you are never truly free, since your subjectivity is composed of externally determined factors. In *Poetry and Humanism*, M.M. Mahood writes that the angelic revolt “displays all the irony of the humanist dilemma, whereby those who have rebelled in the name of a misconceived liberty end by denying that they have any freedom of action” (211-225).

Interestingly, in Dryden’s stage version of *Paradise Lost*, “The State of Innocence,” Adam recognizes that every action he chooses is not really freedom, because God set up the rules.

I find that I can chuse to love, or hate;
Obey, or disobey; do good, or ill;
Yet such a choice is but consent, not will.
I can but chuse what he has first design’d,
For he before that choice, my will confin’d

It's like a video game with the illusion of an open world, but only a few paths you can actually choose. Additionally, all life seeks self-preservation and avoids pain. By setting up a few parameters (carrot and stick) it's easy to steer actions. Hence, when Gabriel meets Satan in Book 4 of *Paradise Lost* and asks him why he escaped Hell, and Satan replies

Lives there who loves his pain?

Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,

Though thither doomd?

(4.888–90)

He thinks he's actually being sneaky, and sabotaging God's will, but he doesn't realize yet that all his rational or personal motivations are easily predetermined by God, who created him. The only way to truly break out of the totalizing power structure is a non-rational, non-linear break: something unexpected and random, without cause without personal motivation. Since your desires, self-identity and reason have all been created within the system, the only way to resist the system is to *resist your self*.

This is the conclusion Badiou comes to in his later work, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (2002). "If it is to be a genuine decision, it seems, the decision must take place as a pure leap of faith, one that resists any location in the situation, any justification by its subject, and any 'conceptualization' by philosophy (xxvi).

3. *Terroristic violence*

In other words, only an act of random, intentional violence with no clear objective or aim can break free of the ruling power discourse. According to Žižek, “Free will implies the paradox of a frightful disconnection from the world, the horror of a psychotic confrontation with the radical negativity that ultimately defines the status of the subject... True revolution revolutionizes its own starting presuppositions”.

There is... something inherently ‘terroristic’ in every authentic act, in its gesture of thoroughly redefining the ‘rules of the game’, inclusive of the very basic self-identity of its perpetrator –a proper political act unleashes the force of negativity that shatters the very foundations of our being. (*Ticklish Subject* 377)

At its most elementary, freedom is not the freedom to do as you like (that is, to follow your inclinations without any externally imposed constraints, but to do what you do not want to do, to thwart the ‘spontaneous’ realization of an impetus”. (*The Parallax View* 202)

As Bataille put it, “those ecstatic moments when our very being seems to fall apart and, though it survives, escapes from the essence which limits it” (qtd. in Fernie 25). This is what Satan soon understands in *Paradise Lost*. Firstly, Satan begins to be troubled at the realization that he *cannot* escape Hell, because Hell is *inside him*.

Now rowling, boiles in his tumultuous brest,
And like a devillish Engine back recoiles
Upon himself; horror and doubt distract
His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stirr
The Hell within him, for within him Hell

He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more then from himself can fly (4.15-20)

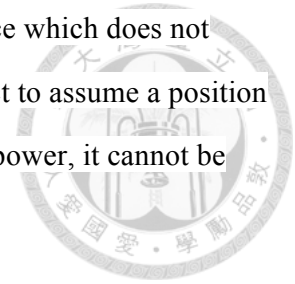


However, Satan has not yet figured out his lack of freedom; instead he agrees temporarily with God's assessment, that he "Chose freely"—and that he had the "Will and Power to stand" but also the freedom to fall. And this is the realization that induces the anxiety: free will is an illusion, because Will and Power, given freedom, will always "fall." But there is no one to blame, other than "Heav'ns free Love dealt equally to all." Taking responsibility for his actions, Satan feels guilty, and for a moment considers repenting and asking for pardon; but he also recognizes, like Badiou, that even if he could repent and get back into Heaven, he would soon relapse and fall again, even heavier this time. In other words, *he* is the problem, something in his nature, and therefore he cannot escape it by resisting Heaven (his relationship with the discourse causes anxiety that he cannot avoid). He has the intuition that there is a lower stage he has not yet sunk to, a stage threatening to devour him.

Me miserable! which way shall I flie
Infinite wrath, and infinite despaire?
Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatning to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n. (4.73-79)

Satan is stuck here where Foucault or Badiou left off; the difficulty of the subjective self ever truly being free, because his resistance is always a product of the system he's trying to escape from. Zizek stresses that for Foucault, the relationship between power and resistance is "circular, and one of absolute immanence: power and resistance (counter-power) presuppose and generate each other." (qtd. in Feldner 94)

From this it follows that, if *effective* resistance means resistance which does not merely conform to the rules of the game but allows ‘the subject to assume a position that exempts him’ from the controlling and regulating grip of power, it cannot be accounted for with reference to Foucault. (94)

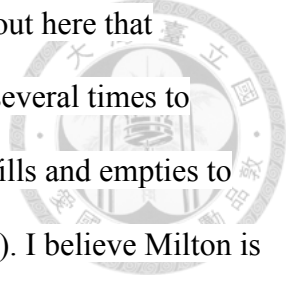


According to Žižek, it is Lacan, not Foucault, who “would enable us ‘to conceptualize the distinction between imaginary resistance (false transgression that reasserts the symbolic status quo and even serves as positive condition of its functioning) and actual symbolic resistance via the intervention of the Real of an *act*’, that is ‘a passage through ‘symbolic death’” (qtd. in Feldner 98).

In other words, since subjectivity is always tainted, resistance is only possible through a *death* of self: not acting for personal reasons, not following your own wishes or reasoning, but a complete purging of subjectivity. “In Žižek’s Lacanian terms, the emergence of pure subjectivity coincides with an ‘experience of radical self-degradation’ whereby I, the subject, am emptied of ‘all substantial content, of all symbolic support which could confer a modicum of dignity on me’” (Feldner 112). Satan begins this purging of subjectivity in Book Four.

So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear,
Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost;
Evil be thou my Good; by thee at least
Divided Empire with Heav’ns King I hold
By thee, and more then half perhaps will reigne;
As Man ere long, and this new World shall know. (4.108-13)

Satan realizes this is a major event in itself. This is the “lower deep” that opens wide to swallow him. Milton calls attention to this event by describing Satan’s appearance—”each passion dimm’d his face thrice changed with pale, ire, envie and despair, / Which marrd his borrow’d



visage, and betraid him counterfeit, if any eye beheld” (4:14-17). I’d point out here that “borrow’d visage” is a peculiar phrase, but matches the phrase Milton uses several times to describe the moon: “With borrow’d light her countenance triform / Hence fills and empties to enlighten th’ Earth, / And in her pale dominion checks the night” (3.730-33). I believe Milton is deliberately establishing a parallel between Satan’s realization and the emptying moon—the moon’s light is only borrowed; it’s a reflection. The moon can either reflect the sun’s light, or empty itself into complete and total darkness, thus disappearing. The phrase “betraid him counterfeit” doesn’t mean Satan is being deliberately false, it means he’s realizing that he himself is *counterfeit*—having no reality or existence of his own, his visage is only “borrowed.”

Therefore, he chooses to go beyond hope and fear, which means, he will no longer be acting purely out of personal motivations, like a robot—as such he can be said to have reached Kant’s idea of radical evil: he will be evil out of principle only, to do whatever is opposite to good. Not for hope or pleasure, or avoidance of pain, and not even (anymore) to get revenge on God, but because he recognizes that this is the only potential path to authentic freedom (although it’s doubtful Milton recognized this postmodern sense of subjectivity, it’s still remarkable how close he gets to the terminology). Zizek acknowledges the potential for freedom of will, “provided, however, that we conceive of this freedom as a traumatic encounter with an ‘abyssal’ choice that has no guarantee in the socio-symbolic order.”

Zizek’s point is that free will implies the paradox of a frightful disconnection from the world, the horror of a psychotic confrontation with the radical negativity that ultimately defines the status of the subject. (Feldner 31)

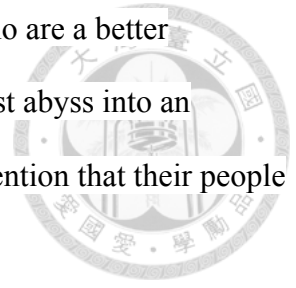
We’ll discuss this “radical negativity” more later. One further thing to point out is that the terms Good and Evil do not necessarily represent harm or violence: Satan is choosing the title “Evil”

because it is opposite of what God has already claimed for himself. Also, he is not doing evil, or harming others, because it brings him pleasure. However, like Badiou's Promethean courage, even though Satan has made this decision and resolution, does not mean he can immediately change himself or destroy his subjectivity—he continues to act, which means he hopes to achieve *something*, and I don't think he's reached the point of Camus's complete absurdity, but he does recognize he needs to start doing things he doesn't like to do, things that don't give him pleasure. When he jumps over the gate and views Adam and Eve, he finds their innocence charming, but still commits to their destruction.

And should I at your harmless innocence Melt, as I do, yet public reason just Honour
and empire with revenge enlarg'd, By conqu'ring this new world, compels me now
To do, what else (though damn'd) I should abhor. (4.386-392)

Satan's "public reason" is a reference to the Ciceronian principle (Laws 3.3.8) that the good of the people is the supreme law; this could mean, he views his act of sabotage as justified because it is for the greater good of his own people—the demons. He's conquering a new world, for the good of his people (the fallen angels who depend on him). An easy and obvious comparison here would be Europe's discovery of the Americas. Milton's friend Roger Williams was not only an active member of the Plymouth colony, but he was sympathetic to the Native Americans; his first book was a phrasebook of indigenous language, and through mediation he was able to keep peace between the Indians and Rhode Island for over 40 years. 1632, Williams wrote a lengthy tract questioning the right of Plymouth (or Massachusetts) to the land without first buying it from the Indians. Today (since *Last of the Mohicans* or *Dances with Wolves* at least) we are more likely to sympathize with the Indians against the colonizers; but it's easy to see how, for Milton, through Williams, the conquest of America could be seen as a necessary evil, for the greater

good and expansion of the English people (or at least, for the Puritans—who are a better parallel... like Satan, the Puritans faced persecution, journeyed across a vast abyss into an unknown world, planning to convert or destroy its inhabitants, with the intention that their people would follow afterwards to populate this new world).



In Book 4 Satan blames God “who puts me loath to this revenge / On you who wrong me not for him who wrongd” (386-88). Orthodox Milton scholars view this as a childish attempt to deny responsibility for one’s actions, though postmodernism has shown how little freedom we truly have; and Modernist writers understood that “evil” is generally caused by neglect and abuse. According to Rilke, “Everything terrible is something that needs our love.”

In *Defense of Lost Causes*, speaking of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Zizek writes “it is crucial to see in what consists the monster’s own story.”

Monsters rebel not because they are infected by the evils of the godless radical philosophy, but because they have been oppressed and misused by the regnant order.
(78)

At the very least, the question of Satan’s free will, even after he’s given up personal motivations and is acting out of fidelity to the principle of “evil” or oppositions to God, is difficult to demonstrate; he might agree with Frankenstein’s monster, who said, “I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend.”

After reaching the garden, Satan still doesn’t know exactly what he’s going to do, but luckily the answer is (too) easily revealed to him after listening in on Adam and Eve’s conversation.

One fatal Tree there stands of Knowledge call’d,
Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidd'n?

Suspicious, reasonless. Why should thir Lord
Envie them that? can it be sin to know,
Can it be death? and do they onely stand
By Ignorance, is that thir happie state,
The proof of thir obedience and thir faith?

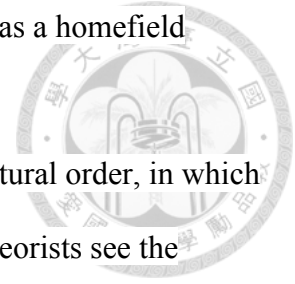
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Thir ruine! Hence I will excite thir minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with designe
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with Gods; aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue? (4.514-527)



God has basically built into his garden a giant “off” switch. There’s a tree of Knowledge (and Death) which is forbidden, and a tree of Life. Getting Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of Knowledge will be an act of disobedience, and result in exile like his own, and may end in actual death. Either way he wins. And this will be *easy*, because forbidding knowledge is “suspicious, reasonless” and because the command serves no purpose but to keep humanity low. The temptation is no great feat, it involves only some very simple reasoning. Adam and Eve have already proven themselves halfway on the path to rebellion before Satan showed up.

The garden, like Heaven before Satan’s transgression, is united rather than divided—it is a pure, unrestrained, creative force that imposes being into everything, including Adam and Eve. Milton refers to the garden as “a wilderness of sweets . . . wild above rule or art.” This is important. Art was seen as passion (creation, imagination) and opposed to rule (logic, reason). The garden is neither. If we say that God is the totalizing order, the conscious self, and Satan is the resistance to that order, the Dionysian impulse of limitless (and thus violent) creation, the

garden is specifically described as a neutral ground, where neither player has a homefield advantage. The garden is pure, natural, wild production.



This only leaves Satan with one possible action: he can obey the natural order, in which all things flow unconsciously, or he can resist by refusing. Most modern theorists see the diabolical, the evil, the demonic, as the *no*. Georges Bernanos writes that Satan is “the rebel angel who said no only once, but once and for all, in an irrevocable act in which he engaged his entire substance.”

In literature, the demonic appears as a formulaic response to God’s identity. As Ewan Fernie writes in *The Demonic*,

‘I am what I am’ is what God says in the Bible (Exodus 3.14);

‘I am not what I am’ is what the Devil snaps back. (7)

God represents the totalizing order of what *is*; the Devil represents a rejection of what is, including a rejection of self, and strives to create something new. According to Fernie, the terrible and heroic life of Satan is a result of this one refusal—to choose something *else*.

The demonic, it emerges, is to turn away from the table of creation, to refuse to choose anything from its plenteous array – to choose something other than everything.

This is irreducibly an insult to the creator-host. (71)

4. *Evil as pure negation of what is.*

In Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Iago marks himself as demonic with the phrase “I am not what I am” (1.1.66). Sartre writes, “I *am not* my body to the extent that *I am not what I am*.” Fernie points out that this is “the positive potential of deconstruction *avant la letter*.”

I am not what I am is most crucial to my life and identity, because it expresses not so much my merely creaturely being as my power to be what I will. Sartre elaborates as

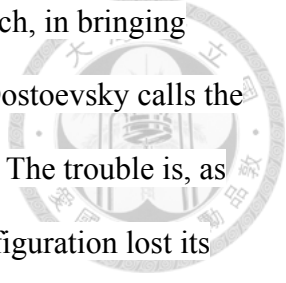
follows, 'Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is made-to-be at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to make itself instead of to be'. (9)

In other words, freedom is the abyss (nothingness) inside man that compels us to strive for something *other than this*. This purely demonic impulse however, has gone beyond personal motivations which are actually inscribed in the power discourse: this is why, if Satan had merely wanted to overthrow God and rule in his place, nothing would have really changed: Satan would have created a new stable power discourse in which he was the one to claim "I am what I am."

The demonic negation is a pure and continued defiance of what is; the Faustian drive to never be satisfied with anything that is and always to seek something else. As Jacques Derrida puts it, "Not only is there no kingdom of différance, but différance instigates the subversion of every kingdom." This rejection includes a defiance of one's one power-constituted self, "I am not what I am"—the desire to be something different, possibly better. But this can only happen by destroying subjectivity (and at the same time, is necessary to the formulation of identity as an independent subject).

And what was Satan's rhetorical method? It was rebellion in the name of absolute freedom: the freedom to do what is absolutely forbidden. It was a plunge into the experience that is more than fleeting or partial: the experience of total annihilation. It was, therefore, murder – and suicide. (Berman 41)

As Žižek writes in *The Ticklish Subject*, "It is only through such an abandonment that I emerge as the pure subject of the enunciation, no longer attached to any positive order, rooted in any particular life-world'. In short, he is proposing – he himself dares, as he says, to 'risk this formulation' – 'precisely a soulless subject, a subject deprived of his depth of "soul"' (105).



For Van Gogh, the demonic encompasses all “active originality which, in bringing something new into being, transgresses the limits of what is” (Ferne 22). Dostoevsky calls the Devil “the spirit of self-destruction and non-being” (*Grand Inquisitor* 252). The trouble is, as Zizek points out, “In today’s ‘society of spectacle,’ such an aesthetic reconfiguration lost its subversive dimension: it can all too easily be appropriated by the existing order” (*Divine Violence of Terror*). In other words, violent explosions of democratic change are accommodated (and televised) without really changing anything; and even if things change, they quickly become a new power system which demands further resistance. This is the genius of the conclusion to the *Hunger Games* series: after fighting a revolution to get rid of inhumane customs (like forcing teenagers to fight to the death), the winners want to inflict those customs as punishment on the ruling class they’ve just defeated—starting another brutal cycle. Instead of killing Snow, the man responsible for all her suffering, Katniss Everdeen assassinates Coin, the rebel leader who has risen against Snow but will become a new tyrant.

For Sartre, “evil” is not just the negation of what is, it is a continuous and absolute negation of everything, even the new order that rises up after the destruction of the old:

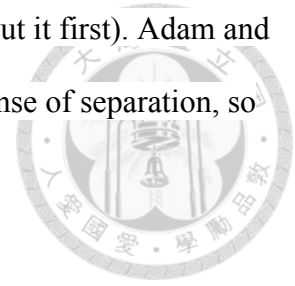
The experience of Evil is a princely cogito which reveals the singularity of consciousness before Being. I want to be a monster, a hurricane, all that is human is alien to me. I transgress all the laws established by man, I trample every value under foot, nothing of what *is* can define or limit me; yet I exist, I shall be the icy breath which will annihilate all life. (Ferne 569)

As Camus put it in *The Rebel (Part 2)*, “Nihilism is not only despair and negation, but above all the desire to despair and to negate.” Milton makes a big deal out of stressing the freedom of his characters, however they present very different kinds of freedom, which happen to match the three kinds of freedom proposed by the Germany philosopher Friedrich Schelling.

According to Schelling, there are three forms of freedom.

1. The common notion of freedom is to pursue one's one good for pathological reasons. To be free to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. This is the freedom of Adam and Eve, who eat the fruit not to rebel against God but because rational arguments convinced them it was beneficial for them; this is also the freedom of Satan's first fall. However, as I've shown, this kind of freedom isn't real, because it is predetermined by nature and the rules of the system. Milton claims they were all "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall"—however they were also given no reason *not* to fall. It's like dropping an apple and saying it *could* have not fallen, if someone had decided to catch it.
2. The second kind of freedom is a groundless decision based on no positive reasons. This breaks the chain of causal connections, and is a kind of irrational obstinacy that does a thing even when against his own self-interests. For example, both Socrates or Jesus were given opportunities to save themselves, but knew forcing their opponents to carry out the sentence would destroy their power. Schelling says this is incomparably more spiritual, this is Evil *qua* spiritual, the demoniac, the diabolical Evil (qtd. *Zizek Indivisible Remainder* 68-69). This is the freedom that Satan takes on after moving beyond hope and fear.
3. Schelling also proposes a higher form of freedom, which is submerging self in the primordial abyss of the Absolute, in the primordial Will which wills nothing – a state in which activity and passivity, being-active and being-acted-upon, harmoniously overlap. This is the obedience shown by Jesus, a complete passivity, yielding will to Other. This depersonalizes intense activity and performs it as if some other, higher Power is acting through him, using him as its medium. This is the freedom, I think, that Milton proposes

as morally superior (although as I pointed out, Boethius writes about it first). Adam and Eve are “free” in the Garden like animals are free: they have no sense of separation, so their action is automatic; there is no anxiety.



Milton acknowledges that mankind lost this ideal form of freedom after the fall. If reason is obscured rather than obeyed, passions and desires immediately begin to govern man’s responses, which were free in reason.

Since thy original lapse, true Libertie
Is lost, which alwayes with right Reason dwells
Twinn’d, and from her hath no diuidual being:
Reason in man obscur’d, or not obeyd,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason, and to seruitude reduce
Man till then free. (12.84-90)

However, I would argue that this freedom doesn’t really count as freedom until it is freely chosen; the separation and anxiety is necessary to seek a path back to reunification: there might be some kind of freedom in submerging self in the “primordial abyss of the Absolute” but only when one constitutes a separate subject. Of the two paths we discussed earlier, obedience, the right hand path, leads to life—but that life is a complete selflessness where you cease to exist. Defiance, the left hand path, leads to death, because resisting the symbolic order requires the renunciation of self.

In other words, Schelling’s third type of freedom can’t simply exist without being part of a process that includes the first two types of freedom: Satan isn’t really free, nor are Adam and

Eve, until after after they resist and do what's forbidden, using the demonic "no" to signify *not this*. Then they have some freedom, which is personally motivated. Satan moves onto to Shelling's second freedom, but is unable to reach the third; while Adam and Eve, *because of* Satan's actions, are able to skip the second kind of freedom and move immediately into the third.

Adam recognizes that this restored freedom is better than his original state.

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!

That all this good of evil shall produce,

And evil turn to good; more wonderful

Then that which by creation first brought forth

Light out of darkness! (12.469-74)

Zizek writes that modern subjectivity "emerges when the subject sees himself as 'out of joint', as *excluded* from the "order of things", from the positive order of entities (qtd. in Fernie 552).

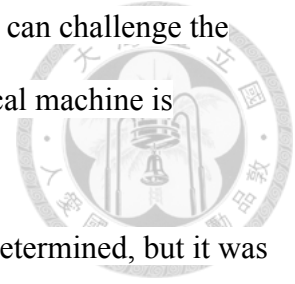
This is the *beginning* of freedom, but journey to freedom must lead to an absolute renunciation of all that is, a total negation: however even this negation exists only in relationship to the power discourse or reality being negated.

Not until the mature Blake is God Himself named as Satan, and a Miltonic Satan, a Satan who is the self-embodiment of a purely and totally negative will, but that will is finally realized as the actual will of every fully individual and interior will.

Accordingly, this is the very will which Nietzsche knows as Will to Power, even as Hegel knows it as that self-alienated God who is "Being-in-itself" or "Bad Infinite," a will that is unreal and unmanifest apart from an absolute self-alienation, or that self-alienation which is the center and the ground for a purely dichotomous consciousness.

(Altizer 96)

Real freedom exists in pure obedience, and ironically, only pure obedience can challenge the power discourse—for Žižek, only the “full identification with the ideological machine is guaranteed to at least disturb its functioning” (Feldner 33).

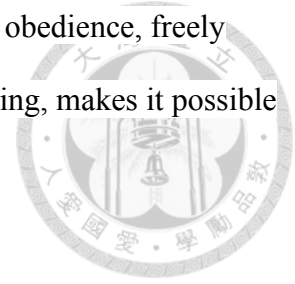


Milton’s Satan came to realize that his resistance was not only predetermined, but it was a necessary part of the system of salvation God planned to offer to Adam and Eve. How are we to oppose such a system, which seemingly coexists with, indeed depends upon its own systematic transgression? Acts of resistance are readily accommodated by the system. Instead, Žižek suggests opposition through acts of overconformity, which, rather than protesting let alone breaking the law, insist upon it to the letter, even when ideological “common sense” suggest otherwise (Krips 99). In ethical terms, “this leads to the Žižekian thesis according to which the only true act of freedom available to the subject facing a repressive ideological predicament lies in the over-identification with this elusive/excessive gap of ideology itself, i.e. in the full assumption of the traumatic core of ideology” (Feldner 40).

What is at stake here is not stupid (potentially perverse) masochism, but rather an attempt to interrupt the vicious cycle of the logic of retribution and, simultaneously, cause a kind of ‘unplugging’ from social substance. The implication is that obeying the law thoroughly proves to be much more subversive than transgressing it, since complete identification allows one to perceive and bring to the surface the very inconsistency that grounds the law itself. (Feldner 215)

In other words, since God needed Satan’s resistance to fulfill his plans, Satan could only have achieved freedom, and effectively threatened God’s power order, by ceasing to resist—if Satan had decided *not* to tempt Adam and Eve, to stop striving and stay in Hell, God’s plan would have been destroyed, and Satan would have achieved a victory. In *Paradise Lost*, however, this never happens.

However, while Satan can't reach the third stage of freedom—pure obedience, freely chosen—the strife and violence caused by his eternal resistance, and suffering, makes it possible for Adam and Eve to reach it.



5. *Satan as vanishing mediator*

God has laid out his plan as early as Book 3: Satan's fall was "self-suggested", while Adam and Eve was "deceived by the other first." Therefore, Adam and Eve will find grace, while Satan none. This allows God to move past mere justice, and become known for his mercy, which "shall brightest shine" (3.129-134). As we pointed out earlier, the Other or God cannot be good and just if it imposes itself on a subject; if it forces Adam and Eve to comply. It must always stand apart, unresponsive. God knew Adam and Eve would fall, but cannot offer him mercy by himself; nor would have have been able to forgive him if, like Satan, they had fallen "self-suggested." Satan's disobedience allows God to blame Satan for the fall and thus forgive Adam and Eve. The fall is necessary, both because human subjectivity is only possible in difference, and because the experience of sin and death gives mankind *motivation* to seek unification or self-destruction in the abyss of God; to constantly strive towards courage and obedience, and resist the desires and the passions of the flash.

In postmodern terms, Satan is the vanishing mediator or indivisible remainder—necessary to bridge the gap between God and humanity and provide a means to reconciliation, but unnecessary afterwards.

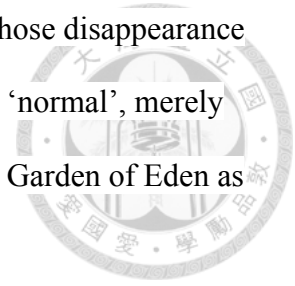
According to Zizek, "in Schelling's late philosophy, this figure of the 'vanishing mediator' is conceptualized as Satan; his role is to mediate between the initial state of balanced unarticulated potentiality in which God is not yet posited as such, in a determinate content, and

the actualization of the true One God who asserts Himself through the exclusion and annihilation of false gods” (*Indivisible Remainder* 34). In other words, God, through Jesus, offers peace and calm to a divided and anxious subject: the possibility of reconciliation, of self-destruction through over-conformity (in Buddhism, becoming One with the All). In Christianity, resisting passions and temptations through strict obedience to external commandments. However, humanity wouldn’t seek freedom unless they recognized themselves as unfree and divided; and also embraced the Faustian striving towards betterness—the ability to choose *not this* and aim for something better.

Satan is the hero who bridged the gap between God’s potentiality, and allowed humans to be forgiven and find grace. God lets him out of hell, so that he can forge a path to the new world, a path for sin and death, and all the demons, to follow: and this was the will of Heaven:

So he with difficulty and labour hard
Mov'd on, with difficulty and labour hee;
But hee once past, soon after when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
Following his track, such was the will of Heav'n,
Pav'd after him a broad and beat'n way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling Gulf
Tamely endur'd a Bridge of wondrous length
From Hell continu'd reaching the utmost Orbe
Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse
With easie intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace. (2.1021-1033)

“This ‘diabolical Evil’ effectively functions as the ‘vanishing mediator’, whose disappearance renders possible the establishment of the opposition between the Good and ‘normal’, merely ‘pathological’” (Zizek IR 92). As Shattuck confirms, “Milton depicted the Garden of Eden as the scene not of tragedy but of a Fortunate Fall” (98).

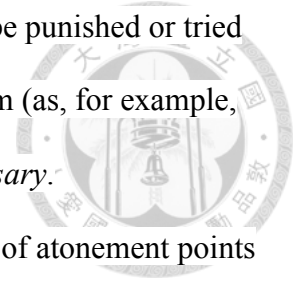


In *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, Zizek claims that the (real) hero of the New Testament is Judas, since the divine plan could only be executed through his readiness to betray Christ and accept eternal damnation. “Is Judas not therefore the ultimate hero of the New Testament, the one who was ready to lose his soul and accept eternal damnation so that the divine plan could be accomplished?” (16) “What we are encouraged to do, therefore, is to interpret Judas’ gesture of betrayal and consequent acceptance of sacrifice as *the highest expression of love*, precisely because the path to university (inclusive of its founding negativity) necessarily implies a terrifying act of infidelity” (Feldner 218).

For this reading, however, Zizek assumes Judas knew what he was getting into, and gave his permission willingly. It seems more likely that Judas acted out of purely self-interests and, like Satan, when he believed to be refusing or denying, was actually playing a role he had no choice in. In this sense, both Satan and Judas function as a necessary founding violence. Both figures might qualify as the *homo sacer* in Agamben’s theory of biopolitics: unworthy of either juridical punishment or religious sacrifice. “The target of sovereign violence exceeding the force of law and yet anticipated and authorized by that law. Banished from collectivity, he is the referent of the sovereign decision on the state of exception, which both confirms and suspends the normal operation of law.”

In other words, since not truly free, Satan or Judas warrant no punishment; yet they cannot be forgiven because their forgiveness would destroy the foundations of the judicial

system that was implemented as a response to their “crime.” They cannot be punished or tried under the Law; they also cannot be glorified as a sacrifice within the system (as, for example, Jesus was). They are the initial violence that makes Jesus’s sacrifice *necessary*.



In Freud’s 1913 reading (*Totem and Taboo*), the Christian doctrine of atonement points towards a hidden and forgotten violence. “And if this sacrifice of a life brought about atonement with God the Father, the crime to be expiated can only have been the murder of the father. In the Christian doctrine, therefore, men were acknowledging in the most undisguised manner the guilty *primaeval* deed, since they found the fullest atonement for it in the sacrifice of this one son. Atonement with the father was all the more complete.” The Son’s radical obedience cancels out Satan’s oedipal radical disobedience.

In that regard, the fallen Satan can be compared to the defeated Saturn, overthrown by his son Zeus (as Keats attempted in *Hyperion*). But in *Paradise Lost*, instead of dying/failed revolution, there is no sin or death of the father, no trespass against him actually, other than disobedience, which makes the resulting death of Jesus seems vulgar and unnecessary, and Satan’s persecution tragic.

In *Future Christ*, (2011), Francois Laruelle claims monotheism has two Gods, both of whom punish:

The first asserts a God that is ‘Alone one’, a jealous God who punishes either through his silence or by an excessive absence which opens in the believer’s identity an abyss of uncertainty and therefore of responsibilities for the Other, the single identity being responsibility. The second asserts a God that is ‘Alone great’ who punishes through an excessive presence that imposes on the believer an absolute certainty over its identity, resolving itself to an obedience identical to death. (16)

But God doesn't need to punish deliberately: once separated from the purely natural order of things, humans have consciousness, the alienation of separation and the anxiety of freedom in the face of the abyss of possibility. We have choice, but our desires and our rational will are often at cross purposes, which leads to fear and hope. Expectations lead to disappointment and suffering. The idea of a monotheistic god at the source of creation inspires defiance: if he is absent, we curse his absence which leaves us without meaning or purpose; if he is present, we feel threatened by his demands which challenge our liberty. Both defiance and obedience eventually lead to death or loss of subjectivity.

Paradise Lost demonstrates that Christian salvation is a process: a simple yes or no, obedience or refusal, isn't enough to build a secure identity in the chaos of human existence. First, we need a radical break with God to constitute true subjectivity and human freedom (but, although we need this, God can't force us into it, or we'd never forgive him or accept the blame for it and ask for forgiveness). Second, we can use our freedom to seek God out, and be unified in perfect obedience—something we would never do if God forced himself upon us. He sent Satan to cause the break that explains his absence; and Jesus to offer reconciliation, thus overcoming the problems with strict monotheism raised by Laruelle.

5.5 The Seduction of Satan (by God)

1. *Satan as spurned lover*

Since God needed Adam and Eve's transgression to be externally influenced, and Satan's fall to be self-willed, it's possible to read *Paradise Lost* as God's seduction of Satan. The God of *Paradise Lost* allows Satan, over and over again, to destroy himself in action, while doing nothing himself. Satan is the active, phallic principle, the Faustian drive, the violent desire, who

pierces the garden's stasis with his own will. God *allows* it to happen, but more than that, God encourages it.

Viewing Satan as God's jealous (and spurned) lover also helps us consider him in a new way; while in modern society, unmotivated violence is met with horror, the portrayal of a woman getting revenge on a cheating partner is often supported or celebrated. Carrie Underwood sings,

I dug my key into the side
Of his pretty little souped-up four-wheel drive
Carved my name into his leather seats
I took a Louisville slugger to both head lights
I slashed a hole in all four tires
Maybe next time he'll think before he cheats

And it's not a stretch to see Satan as God's lover: most classical paintings of Satan in the garden depict him as female. Joseph Campbell points out, in the Persian tradition, Satan refused to bow before mankind only because he loved God so deeply and intensely, he couldn't bring himself to bow to anything else.

And it was for that that he was flung into Hell, condemned to exist there forever, apart from his love. The Persian poets have asked, "By what power is Satan sustained?" And the answer that they have found is this: "By his memory of the sound of God's voice when he said, 'Be gone!'" What an image of that exquisite spiritual agony which is at once the rapture and the anguish of love!

Paradise Lost also shows a great deal of similarity to Seneca's *Medea*, enough to demonstrate that the tragic figure of Medea was influential in constructing Milton's Satan. Medea's violence was fueled by her heartbreak over being abandoned. As Martha C. Nussbaum writes in *Serpents of the Soul*,

(Seneca's) heroines are not criminals to begin with; they are made criminal by love. His tragedies parade before us a series of loyal loving wives who are abandoned in middle age by opportunistic husbands, usually for a younger woman, sometimes for money, always with callous disregard for the wife's long years of service. The wife's intense, unabated love then produces an upheaval that leads to tragedy – usually through evil action by the wife against rival, or husband, or both. (446)

In classical literature, revenge was often a moral obligation – an imbalance in nature caused by external aggression or violence, that needed to be repaid in kind. In the introduction to *Revenge Tragedy*, John Kerrigan points out that revenge can even demonstrate positive values:

Revenge is a cultural practice which arouses intense emotion, not only in those who exact or endure it but in those who stand by and judge. Much of its capacity to disturb stems from its paradoxical nature. A destructive impulse, it is mobilized by values and allegiances which would have to be called positive: a proper sense of self-worth, a willingness to strike back in defense of family or other social bonds. . . (vii)

Although Satan is usually condemned for his dedication to causing harm even when no good will come it, there may be a gender bias that allows us to judge Milton's Satan more harshly than Seneca's Medea. Comparing these two figures, therefore, may help us push Satan into gender-neutral space where his actions seem less culpable.

In Seneca's version, Medea used her powers to help Jason overcome the impossible tasks set by her father, King Aeetes, and recover the Golden Fleece. After betraying her own father and running away with Jason, they settle and have two sons together. Ten years later, however, Jason decides to improve his political position by marrying Creusa, daughter of King Creon of Corinth. Medea, now abandoned, talks herself into retribution. Like Satan, she recognizes that those who are beyond hope are also beyond despair.

Medea. Fortune tramples on the meek, but fears the brave.

Nurse. When courage is in place it wins approval.

Medea. It can never be that courage should be out of place.

Nurse. To thee, In thy misfortune, hope points out no way.

Medea. The man who cannot hope should naught despair.



Courage is *always* a positive value – at least in the classical ethics of epic literature. These traits become seen as negative and evil under the rise of Stoicism and Christianity (but have been revived in the postmodern theory of Zizek or Badiou). Her Nurse tells her she shouldn't resist fortune, and that she can't win a fight against Jason, who is now a prince. But Medea can't move on without getting justice, and promises to attack the very gods if necessary.

Nurse. Restrain thyself And cease to threaten madly; it is well

That thou adjust thyself to fortune's change.

Medea. My riches, not my spirit, fortune takes. (...)

Nor wind-blown ocean, nor the force of flame

By storm-wind fanned, can imitate my wrath.

I will o'erthrow and bring to naught and o'erthrow and bring to naught the world!

It is enough for much; this day shall see

What none shall ever hide. I will attack

The very gods, and shake the universe!

Nurse. Lady, thy spirit so disturbed by ills

Restrain, and let thy storm-tossed soul find rest.



Medea. Rest I can never find until I see

All dragged with me to ruin; all shall fall

When I do;—so to share one’s woe is joy.

Nurse. Think what thou hast to fear if thou persist;

No one can safely fight with princely power.

Martha C. Nussbaum places Medea as part of the heroic tradition, full of courage and (positive) pride:

For he displays her as shrewd, strong, regal, honest. He links her in the choral lyrics with great explorers and heroes of the past – with Orpheus, Hercules, Meleager, and others. He gives her speeches expressing an accurate sense of the wrong done to her and a determination that her proud spirit will respond to calamity in an appropriate way. “Fortune can take my wealth, but not my soul” (176) a statement that conjures up a whole tradition of Stoic heroism. She sees her murderous acts as Epictetus sees them, as appropriate, in some sense correct, responses to her loss. (448)

Medea, being injured, considers herself impaired; “in such a way that, injured and invaded by fortune, she is not herself any longer. She can be made Medea again only by a revenge that removes the obstacle” (448). This is, then, another way of understanding the demonic “I am not what I am”—a refusal to accept fortune’s accidents, a sense of injured merit, or a recognition of being impaired. Medea aligns herself with all the dark and mysterious powers, which she had previously resisted, calling upon them (with her left hand, the hand of defiance and sin).

Her every power, and what before she feared

She does; lets loose all ills, mysterious arts.

With her left hand the dismal sacrifice

Preparing, she invokes whatever ills

Since she can't get direct revenge on Jason, Medea decides to hurt him in the only way open to her, by killing her own two children—she rationalizes that they aren't her children any more, but his, and must pay for their father's crimes. At the same time she recognizes this is a horrific and senseless act, and resists it. But, finding no other path, she gives up her role as mother and identifies with her anger.

I shed their blood?

My children's blood? Give better counsel, rage!

But they are innocent! . . .

But I am driven into exile, flight;

Torn from my bosom weeping, soon they'll go

Lamenting for my kisses—let them die

For father and for mother! Once again

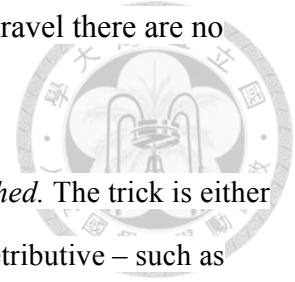
Rage swells, hate burns; again the fury seeks

Th' unwilling hand—I follow where wrath leads.

Medea's decision to commit herself to vengeance, even while abhorring the violence, has been read as a proto-feminist text of defiance against a patriarchal society; like Milton's Satan, Medea reacts to her abandonment and powerlessness with an irrational act of violence. However, while Satan's acts were already assimilated into the power discourse, Medea's appears to have broken through into a space of freedom.

At the end of Seneca's version, Medea hurls the bodies of her children in defiance down on Jason, before escaping on a flying chariot pulled by serpents. Jason calls out after her, "Go

aloft through the deep spaces of heaven, And bear witness that where you travel there are no gods” (1026-27). Kerrigan comments on the difficulty of this ending:



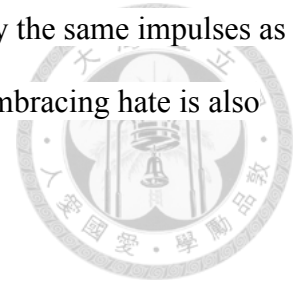
There is a moralistic desire to find Medea repellent, and *punished*. The trick is either to invoke a version of the story with an ending which seems retributive – such as Anouilh’s, in which Medea kills herself – and imply that it realizes what is latent in the Greek, or to argue that even in Euripides, “The granddaughter of Helios may stand in triumph on her dragon chariot, but Medea the woman is dead.” (98)

In Seneca’s version, however, Medea’s irrational violence clears the path of gods; although she’s not exactly vindicated, and even though she can’t be said to be find peace or happiness, she is still in some sense “free”—she’s escaped the world in which she had no power, and established her identity through destruction. While Satan is always stuck within God’s laws, Medea escapes the totalizing order. As Nussbaum writes,

Jason’s line, by contrast, tells us that the moral universe has a space in it. Not every place is full of gods. For the serpent chariot takes the loving soul to a realm in which god and god’s judgment on passion do not exist. A place, then, beyond virtue and vice, health and disease – a place, as Nietzsche would say, beyond good and evil. (464)

This is the same place that Satan is seeking, but didn’t find. Satan is still evil, within the confines of *Paradise Lost*, because (and only because) his enemy is God – both absolute authority and absolute good. Satan is a proud fool because he dares to try and overthrow (or even to exact revenge from) an omnipotent being. Satan is evil *by definition*; not because of his own actions, but because he is stuck in a universe ruled by a morality-deciding deity who proclaims Himself to be pure Goodness (and Satan is thus inescapably evil by default).

However, apart from that difference, Milton's Satan is motivated by the same impulses as Medea, and the language he uses to talk himself into giving up hope and embracing hate is also similar.



What hither brought us! hate, not love; nor hope

Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste

Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy,

Save what is in destroying; other joy

To me is lost. (9.475-79)

Both characters dehumanize themselves and become evil intentionally, ending up as symbols for evil. Epictetus said of Medea, “Poor woman, because she made a mistake about the most important things, she has been transformed from a human being into a poisonous snake.” (Disc. 1.28.8-9 – qtd. Nussbaum 448). Critics of Milton's Satan often point to his “moral degradation” which concludes by him being turned into a giant, hissing snake—just when he thought he had won and was getting ready to lead the devils into the new world he'd won for them: while Medea escapes to a place beyond gods on her serpent-chariot because her violence was real, Satan is punished in the form in which he sinned, because his violence was appropriated. Seneca's version is tragic because the pain and destruction signifies loss; whereas in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve, though exiled, have each other, and God's forgiveness.

Although Milton's God continuously argues that Satan was “Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall,” it is difficult to credit Satan with the burden of responsibility given God's

omnipotence. Kerrigan distinguishes between a tragic protagonist, who is responsible for his own suffering, and a “revenger”:

His predicament is imposed on him, and to know this is part of his plight. Injured by another, or urged towards vengeance by a raped mistress or murdered father, he is forced to adopt a role. His qualities colour the drama of which he is part; tragedy can mourn the waste which follows from the narrowing down of his personality to the bare demands of action; but for as long as he remains a revenger the proportions of the acts he engages in are determined by an injury he never gave or a request he did not make. (12)

In *Paradise Lost*, it isn't immediately clear that violence has been done to Satan, unless we read Satan as in love with God, and thus dealing with the heartbreak of being replaced by a new lover. However if we consider that God needed Satan to act, but also needed that action to at least appear self-willed, we can begin to understand how God lured Satan into his rebellion through a highly orchestrated series of events

2. *God as seduction*

If we see Satan as injured by love, his attempts at revenge seem more understandable. According to Nussbaum in *Therapy of Desire*,

Love itself is a dangerous hole in the self, through which it is almost impossible that the world will not strike a painful and debilitating blow. The passionate life is a life of continued gaping openness to violation, a life in which pieces of the self are groping out into the world and pieces of the world are dangerously making their way into the insides of the self; a way of life appropriately described in the imagery of bodily violation, implosion, explosion; of sexual penetration and unwanted pregnancy. (442)

God didn't have to do anything to Satan to trigger his rebellion, other than withhold his love. Jean Baudrillard's work *Seduction* (1979) offers an insight on how the process of seduction can provoke, or even command violence, without itself being violent. Baudrillard begins the book by pointing out that the seducer is usually blamed for seduction; therefore seduction is associated with Satan and evil. But then he points out how the seducer is actually seduced into his seduction by the object of his desire, and that seduction is a tool of power. Seduction works by hiding and retreating. The Faustian, masculine energy to produce, to know, cannot abide mystery, and wants to summon everything into the jurisdiction of signs.

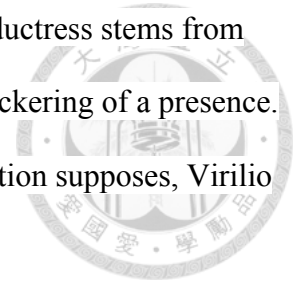
Let everything be rendered in the light of the sign, in the light of a visible energy. Let all speech be liberated and proclaim desire. . . All that is hidden and still enjoys a forbidden status, will be unearthed, rendered to speech and made to bow before the facts. The real is growing ever larger, some day th entire universe will be real, and when the real is universal, there will be death. (32)

Satan's act of "seduction" is actually a productive act, which he was tempted into by God's well-orchestrated actions.

The strategy of seduction is one of deception. It lies in wait for all that tends to confuse itself with its reality. And it is potentially a source of fabulous strength. For if production can only produce objets or real signs, and thereby obtain some power; seduction, by producing only illusions, obtains all powers, including the power to return production and reality to their fundamental illusion. (70)

According to Baudrillard, Seduction is sovereign—the only ritual that eclipses all others—but its sovereignty is cruel, and carries a heavy price. "To seduce is to appear weak. To seduce is to render weak" (83). Seduction seduces presence through absence. Its sole strategy is to "be-there/not-there, and thereby produce a sort of flickering, a hypnotic mechanism that crystallizes

attention outside all concern with meaning. The sovereign power of the seductress stems from her ability to “eclipse” any will or context. . . Here lies her secret: in the flickering of a presence. She is never where one expects her, and never where one wants her. Seduction supposes, Virilio would say, an ‘aesthetics of disappearance’” (85).



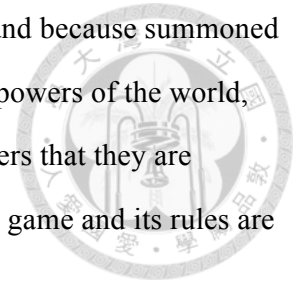
For seduction, desire is not an end but a hypothetical prize.

More precisely, the objective is to provoke and deceive desire, which exists only to burn for a moment and then be disappointed – it’s being deluded as to its power, which is given to its only in order to be withdrawn. The person might not even know what happened. It might be that the person seducing actually loves or desires the person seduced, but at a deeper level or a more superficial level if one will, in The Superficial abyss of appearances another game is being played out.

Seduction lures people to their own destruction, by retreating in a shimmering non-clarity that forces them to produce meaning. According to Baudrillard, she does this by asking them to define her:

What destroys people, wears them down, is the meaning they give their acts. But the seductress does not attach any meaning to what she does, nor suffer the weight of desire. Even if she speaks of reasons or motives, by they guilty or cynical, it is a trap. And her ultimate trap is to ask: “Tell me who I am” – when she is indifferent to what she is, when she is a blank, with neither age nor history. Her power lies in the irony and elusiveness of her presence. She may be blind to her own existence, but she is well aware of all the mechanisms of reason and truth people use to protect themselves from seduction. (89)

For nothing exists naturally: things exist because challenged, and because summoned to respond to that challenge. It is by being challenged that the powers of the world, including the gods, are aroused; it is by challenging these powers that they are exorcized, seduced and captured; it is by the challenge that the game and its rules are resurrected. (91)



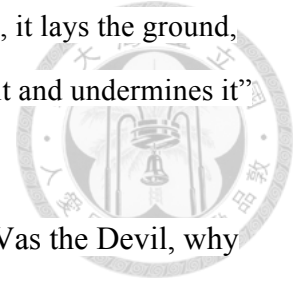
Baudrillard uses the example of Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer* to demonstrate how seduction works in practice: for the seducer, the object of desire forms a threat and a challenge:

And because she is graced, one must find grace in her eyes, for like God she possesses a matchless vantage. As a result, because *naturally endowed with all seduction*, she becomes the object of a savage challenge and must be destroyed.... His strategy, his intention and *destination* are a response to the young girl's grace and seductiveness, to a *predestination* that is all the more powerful because unconscious, and that must, as a result, be exorcized. . . The seducer himself is nothing; the seduction originates entirely from the girl. . . She has already played her hand *before* the seducer begins to play his. Everything has already taken place; the seduction simply rights a natural imbalance by taking up the pre-existing challenge constituted by the girl's natural beauty and grace. (99)

In the second part of Faust, Goethe shares the famous passage, "the Eternal Feminine draws us onward." If we consider Milton's God as the Eternal Feminine, who withdraws and hides himself to tempt Satan forward into action, we can see how even the wilde garden or Eve's beauty, or the pulsating abyss, or Jesus's promotion all provoked Satan into responding—and even though Satan didn't have a clear plan, the consequences of his actions were foreseen and controlled. This process is described by Zizek in *The Ticklish Subject*,

For Lacan, negativity, a negative gesture of withdrawal, precedes any positive gesture of enthusiastic identification with a Cause: negativity functions as the condition of

(im)possibility of the enthusiastic identification—that is to say, it lays the ground, opens up the space for it, but is simultaneously obfuscated by it and undermines it” (70)



In Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Friday asks, “If God much strong . . . Was the Devil, why God no kill the Devil so make him no more do wicked?” Walsh writes,

God frees Satan from his chains at the bottom of the Lake of Fire, God allows Satan’s unholy issue, Sin and Death, to emerge, and then he gives Sin the key to the gates of Hell. God stands idly by as Satan flings himself toward Earth, bent on humanity’s seduction and destruction. Does God therefore require evil for the working out of his plan? (28)

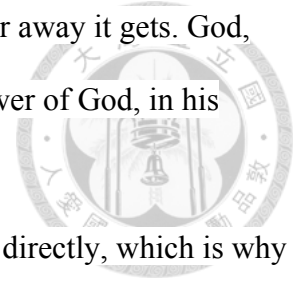
Man’s relationship with God (or Being, Nature, Existence, Reality) is that the rules to the game have already been set up, and our freedom is limited by the ground of existence. Our identities are generated in a response to this ground; but cannot be experience directly, only posited, in the face of a retreating and mysterious Truth.

Free must possess a contracted ground of His being which is not directly accessible but can be inferred only from God’s activity as its reclusive, withdrawing base (Zizek 70)

God does this deliberately by remaining hidden: in the Old Testament, looking directly at him is Death. In Exodus (33:18-34:9) Moses asks God to make His ways known to him (“show me thy Glory”). God agrees, but says “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” In the New Testament, Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:29 / Matthew 16:13).

This, I believe, is the real “seduction” of *Paradise Lost*, and the meaning of “visible darkness”—the eclipse, the not-beingness of God; the uncertainty that seduces action. Something

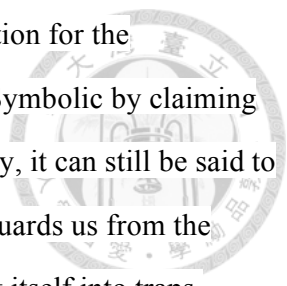
is there, but we can't make it out, and the more we chase after it, the further away it gets. God, the Other, cannot impose or command... but he can *seduce*. This is the power of God, in his visible darkness, his *obscurity*.



This quality of God makes it impossible for humanity to know him directly, which is why Satan was necessary to bridge the gap (a role previously held by Dionysus or Orpheus, or other man-gods; it's possible that Jesus later fills this same roll, replacing Satan as revolutionary suffering-savior like Prometheus). For Satan, however, there is no resolution, there is always only the vanishing mediator, the hope for and possibility of mediation (Satan knows it can be possible, for he sees how freely it's been given to Adam and Eve, who did nothing to deserve it, but profit from his own suffering). So he's in a constant state of hysteria, stuck between faith, desiring peace and knowing it exists but that he can never have it. In Žižek's Lacanian terms, Satan is the vanishing mediator between the symbolic and the real.

We cannot pass directly from nature to culture. Something goes terribly wrong in nature: nature produces an unnatural monstrosity and I claim that it is in order to cope with, to domesticate, this monstrosity that we symbolize. Taking Freud's *fort/da* as a model: something is primordially broken (the absence of the mother and so on) and symbolization functions as a way of living with that kind of trauma. In short, the ontological necessity of "madness" resides in the fact that it is not possible to pass directly from the "animal soul" immersed in its natural life-world to "normal" subjectivity dwelling in its symbolic universe—the vanishing mediator between the two is the "mad" gesture of radical withdrawal from reality that opens up the space for its symbolic reconstitution. (3)

As Carew puts it, this indefiniteness of the Real (the God of *Paradise Lost*) creates insecurity.



The Real sans fissure and the noumenon represent a compensation for the impossibility of an intimate experience of the Real within the Symbolic by claiming that, outside the reach of this synthetic (re)constitution of reality, it can still be said to persist in a state lacking contradiction and antagonism. It safeguards us from the realization that the Real itself is morcelé: it does not merely get itself into traps, producing monsters that disrupt the flow of knowledge in the Real by making the latter howl under ontological pain. (93)

God invites defiance by his silence, by his “visible darkness” – by hinting that he is there, hinting that the order is all powerful, but also feigning weakness, disappearing, making us doubt and question; forcing an anxiety that demands an act of will. God defeats us by calling us to destroy ourselves, he defeats us by not doing anything, like the Greek Sirens, or The Tao.

He helps people lose everything
they know, everything they desire,
and creates confusion
in those who think that they know. (3)

And this self-destruction, this un-doing of being, while negative is not necessarily evil (at least for postmodern theorists or New Age spirituality based on New Age philosophies (for those who still believe in a fixed universal Truth, this postmodern deconstructionism is terrifying). As Michael Walsch claims Critical Theory is satanic, because it refuses all meaning:

In its purest form, which is to say its most malevolent form, Critical Theory is the very essence of Satanism: rebellion for the sake of rebellion against an established order that has obtained for eons, and with no greater promise for the future than destruction. (Walsh 50)

5.6 Conclusion

Claiming that the fall of Adam and Eve is in some way “good” is neither new, nor controversial. And as David Hawkes points out, this goodness can even be extended to Milton’s Satan.

For example, the poem’s pivotal event, the Fall of Man, is unequivocally a bad thing “for us,” and Satan, as the being who brings it about, is thus unequivocally evil from a human perspective. On the monotheistic assumption of an omnipotent God, however, we must inevitably concede that God intended the Fall to occur, and that it and its author, Satan, are therefore, in a sense that is by definition beyond human comprehension, good. (xxxvi)

Critical theory and postmodern thought syncs up remarkably well with *Paradise Lost*, with the following indications: First, that Satan’s rebellion was never self-willed, but always a response to the abyss of freedom, which caused an anxiety-inducing identity crisis; Second, that Satan’s quest to restore security by seeking new and stable ground could not be successful because he never escaped God’s power structure (to do so, he would have had to over-identify rather than rebel); Third, that Satan’s restoration or forgiveness is impossible because his separation was necessary to build a path for human salvation, to restore mankind’s relationship with God. As such he’s not the villain of *Paradise Lost* but the necessary sacrifice, the hidden crime which leads to the happy resolution of the other characters.



Conclusions

The main aim of this thesis, rather than to merely challenge the orthodox reading of Milton's Satan as a proud fool, or restore the Romantic reading of Satan as a revolutionary hero, has been to show that these polemic responses to *Paradise Lost* were shaped by political events; and also to demonstrate how Milton's Satan is intimately tied to liberal values of resistance that have become integral to modern theories of subjectivity and political justice. Moreover, the fact that postmodern theories of subjectivity are formulated in terms frequently used in *Paradise Lost* makes a postmodern reading of *Paradise Lost* easy and illuminating—yet this reading is resisted by orthodox critics who refuse the idea that Satan's transgression is in any way justified. The two major points that I intended to demonstrate in this thesis were these:

One, that Ahab had it right: defiance is the only way to worship—defiance hurled into the abyss of unknowing that makes life nearly unbearable; defiance caused by the flickering, non-being of God that tempts by his visible darkness. This defiance is caused by the idea of monotheism that either compels us to obey by its presence, or forces us to seek new meaning in its absence. Moreover, that defiance is a creative and quintessentially human act: the refusal of what *is* and a firm commitment to how you want the world to be. Every decision comes down to a simple yes or no—sameness, or difference—which prompts action or non-action. In most (possibly all) cases, authentic action is better than merely obediently playing your part in a

system over which you have no control. In *The Neverending Story* (1984), a young boy travels to Fantasia, a world that's being destroyed by the Nothing, and learns he can save it through an act of will—by naming. The more he names, the more things come into being and populate the world (naming is Adam and Eve's essential role in Genesis 2:20 as well). "Bastian," cries the empress as her world is torn apart, "Why don't you do what you dream?" "But I can't," he replies, "I have to keep my feet on the ground!" Finally he gives in and, with the help of his imagination, saves the world by making wishes.

There are two paths: accepting what is, or choosing what will be. One leads to obedience and death to self (you become an automon, never free). The other leads to freedom, but without goals or limits will become monstrous and devour itself in pure negation, a rejection of everything, even a rejection of self (which is also a kind of death). In postmodernism, however, "what is" automatically threatens and challenges, because meaning and knowledge is always being consumed—meaning is created by the imagination, and it is a necessary response to the Nothing (nihilism). This choosing is creative, because it makes the new, and also destructive, because it replaces the old. Therefore, the new order will see it as positive, while the old will see it as demonic.

Helen Gardner says that the demonic, in Milton, Faustus and Macbeth, "is an act against nature, it is a primal sin, in that it contradicts the 'essential fact of things', and its author knows that it does so" (48). However, she also blames Satan as responsible for his own degradation:

His exclusion is self-willed, as is the exclusion of Faustus [and] Macbeth ... Like them he gazes on a heaven he cannot enter; like them he is in the end deformed; like them he remains in the memory with all the stubborn objectivity of the tragic. (61)

But as we've learned, the anxiety caused by peering into the abyss, or heaven, or whatever is outside of the ability of human comprehension and thus threatens our sense of self identity and mastery over our surroundings, isn't what causes alienation in the first place. As Copjec writes,

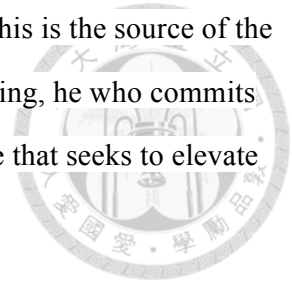
Lacan does not ask you to think of a gaze as belonging to an Other who cares about who or where you are, who pries, keeps tabs on your whereabouts, and takes note of all your steps and missteps, as the panoptic gaze is said to do... the horrible truth, revealed to Lacan... is that *the gaze does not see you*. So if you are looking for confirmation of the truth of your being or the clarity of your vision, you are on your own. (qtd. in Krips 95)

It's like a mirror that does not reflect our image; or a "visible darkness" that attracts our interest but will not be illuminated. It draws us forward, desperate for clarity, but always recedes. The journey is well represented in *Paradise Lost* by Satan's journey over the "wilde abyss", which is both "the Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave" (2.911). Likewise, Schelling calls nature "an abyss of the past" (32); the depths of human freedom are mapped between the Ground and the Abyss. Hegel calls it "an alien existence in which Spirit does not find itself," (Philosophy 3, 313).

When challenged by the anxiety or alienation of our self-identity against this opaque space that does not acknowledge our existence, we can either do nothing and dissolve our identity in the impersonal force of nature, or we can affirm ourselves through deciding and willing. For Kant, this is the root of evil: in essence, nothing more than an excess of self-affirmation, an immoderate passion for one's self. As Simona Forti puts it in *The New Demons, Rethinking Power and Evil Today*:

The will to evil for the sake of evil exists, and it is the movement that seeks to restore in the subject the union between finite and infinite, a union that can exist only in God. The exaltation of human will, the revolt against the divine bond between ground and

existence, creates the human illusion of divine omnipotence. This is the source of the rivalry between human beings and God. In the words of Schelling, he who commits evil is a “reversed god.” (29). . . For Dostoevsky, too, the finite that seeks to elevate itself to infinity is the nesting spot for the power of evil. (36)



However, while both good and evil end in death to self, and both postmodernism and esoteric spirituality believe in moral relativism (there is no good or evil, there is only what seems good or evil *to you*), the path of resistance is knowledge-generating. The path less travelled is not merely as good as the one that everyone else uses, it's *better*, because it's more challenging—it takes more effort to conquest. What you get out of the experience is a stronger will. A person who has stayed on the path, followed the rules, and had a safe and pleasant trip will be lacking in experience, self-knowledge and skills that can only be forged in the anxiety of leaving the path. Like Faust, we are seeking something that satisfies us, and this eternal lack of satisfaction is what calls us forward into action; though this action might be futile in the end, it is also necessary to give life purpose and meaning. Joseph Heller reverses the famous maxim in *Catch-22* “Anything worth dying for. . . is certainly worth living for.” We need to reject everything we don't want, to find something we do; something we can hold onto, something on which to ground our being.

The problem is, in postmodernism, nothing is worth dying for, which means, nothing is worth *killing* for. And at the very least, since nothing really matters, we might afford everyone the space and freedom to figure out everything on their own, to choose whichever path seems best *to them*. The danger is, in Ayn Rand's words, we have abandoned the world to the care of those who (still foolishly perhaps) believe life has meaning, that things are worth dying for (and killing for). And they will *always* win, because they care more than we do, because they believe the stakes actually matter, that anything makes a difference.

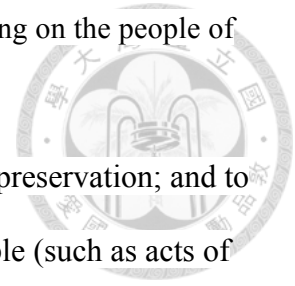
Satan, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, shows the transition from belief to agnosticism; it is the same process of postmodern subjectification... From certainty to nothingness. His degradation is this, from unity, to division, to recognition of self, to retribution (the belief in justice or a universal order). He increasingly doubts his own abilities to find any small form of freedom or meaning, which leads him to become diabolical—not what he is (the refutation of self, doing what he abhors). It may not result in freedom, it may not be “good”, but at least it's something. As T.S. Eliot writes in *Little Gidding*,

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Two, (the second main point of these thesis has been to show that) believing in universal forces of good and evil allows and justifies largescale cultural violence against minority groups. Instead of looking for secret motivations or conspiracies that govern the world, or giving power over to fate or an inevitable system, every action should be individually weighed and assessed, to avoid hurting or restricting the freedom of anyone else, while also shooting towards the maximum benefit and the least pain. As Berman writes in *Terror and Liberalism*,

There is always a people of God, whose peaceful and wholesome life had been undermined. They were the proletariat or the Russian masses (for the Bolsheviks and Stalinists); or the children of the Roman wolf (for Mussolini's Fascists); of the Spanish Catholics and the Warriors of Christ the King (for Franco's Phalange); or the Aryan race (for the Nazis). There were always the subversive dwellers in the Babylon, who trade commodities from around the world and pollute society with their abominations. . . The subversive dwellers in Babylon were always aided by Satanic

forces from beyond, and the Satanic forces were always pressing on the people of God from all sides. (49)



A belief in persecution by evil forces leads to violence in the name of self-preservation; and to justify actions that could never otherwise be considered ethical or reasonable (such as acts of terrorism).

The problem is not whether or not an impersonal or absent God exists in some abstract or philosophical way. The *real* problem is the way people like Samson, who *believe* in a personal and present God, tend to construct that God entirely in their own image, and then use that construction as a warrant for actions that would be absolutely unspeakable by any other definition and in any other context. (Bryson 5)

The way forward has already been proposed in popular media and entertainment: an appreciation for the other. In the 1985 novel *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card (made into a movie in 2013), a 6-year-old boy is taken to an orbital military academy to be molded into a soldier for a looming extraterrestrial war. The recurring motif is that, to defeat your enemy, you must understand them. However, “in that moment, where victory becomes possible and you truly understand them, you also love them.” The hero, believing he is in a simulation, wipes out an entire alien species that was just trying to survive. Filled with remorse, he switches sides: promising to find a new home for the race he’s just destroyed. As such, he becomes another Tom Cruise in *The Last Samurai*, or Jake Sully of *Avatar*: a white man turning his back on the expansive military power and becoming the last hope for a race of an indigenous culture being wiped out for the sake of progress.

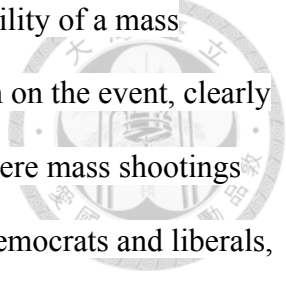
The shared lessons of these stories is that there is no such thing as evil. When we put a blank mask over the faces of our enemies and refuse to acknowledge their individuality (for example, *Stormtroopers* in *Star Wars*), we are propagating a violent fiction: necessary for us to

excuse ourselves for what would otherwise be unforgivable acts of destruction and cruelty. But at the same time, the exact same myth means that we will *never defeat* our enemy, because we are creating a monster that doesn't exist. To truly defeat violence, we would have to understand and love our enemy. To defeat Satan, we'd have to love and understand him; to give him a place at the table. To allow his existence, without negating him. We've stripped his voice, taken everything away except a grand fiction about unmotivated, pure evil. To exercise the Faustian quest for power, we disguise our ambitions as heroic by demonizing those we must destroy.

The pursuit of earthly perfection, as Faust discovered, ends in misery, murder, and death. However tarted up in their often impenetrable German turns of phrase, at the root of their deceptive philosophy lie incitement and rage in the service of a quest for power over their fellow men. The Devil always wears the same mask, and yet each generation must penetrate the disguise for itself or perish. (Walsh 98)

It isn't always easy to see which side is the persecuted minority and which side is the violent majority; often the roles are reversed as the peaceful minorities, feeling persecuted, respond with terrorism. But the only real issue is the response prompted by the anxiety of freedom: are we happy with what is, or will we choose something else? As I write this (June 2016) America has just suffered the worst mass shooting in its history in Orlando Florida. Certainly we can claim that the shooter is in a sense, diabolical (willing to inflict pain) although dismissing him as "evil" or "crazy" refuses to recognize that his actions were in his mind justified: he may have seen himself as a rebel, fighting a nearly omnipotent power discourse through an act of terrorism. The important question is the matter of *response*.

Bill O'Reilly, appearing on the Colbert show on June 14th, recommended a war on radical Islamic Jihadists; he admits it won't do anything to stop lone gun men, but can't see any other options because America's 2nd Amendment guarantees the right to bear arms. This



complacent attitude assumes the price of our freedom is the constant possibility of a mass shooting, and a helplessness to do anything. President Obama, in his speech on the event, clearly presented two options: we can decide we don't want to live in a country where mass shootings occur and *change something*, or we can do nothing. For Obama and most democrats and liberals, allowing the sale of automatic rifles to civilians under the guise of a protection of civil liberties is dangerous and foolish; and can be changed. It would be "evil" to do nothing. For conservative republicans, limiting or controlling civilians' rights to bear arms is a step towards totalitarianism, a destruction of the US constitution. Doing nothing is obedience to the way things are, a kind of national patriotism, a fidelity to the event of the American revolution.

On June 23rd, after failing to get a vote on two simple gun laws that would have required background checks for the purchase of firearms and a block of sales to terror suspects on the government's no fly list, Democrats led a 25 hour sit-in. On *The Daily Show*, Trevor Noah supported the action, saying: "Let's face it, the system is already broken. People elect congressmen to effect their will; and right now, by refusing to hold votes on a bill that's supported by 90% of the American people, the GOP is ignoring that will. The Democrats are just trying to shock the system back into working."

The solutions aren't easy, and once we agree to change things, in a quest to make things better, we may destroy everything. Though we won't agree on what counts as "good" or "evil"—the response is always the same. Do nothing and accept what is, or dare to make something better.

Final Summary

This thesis was formulated as a response to the problem that Milton criticism has been stuck in a rut for at least half a century: rather than Hegel's historical dialectic which leads to progress through synthesis, *Paradise Lost* generates a bitter entrenchment predicated on irresolvable personal opinions about the correct response to the human experience.

Faced with the alienation of subjectivity, should humans persevere in defiance, shaping reality to our own will and the celebrating our meaning-generating powers of production, or should we seek a restorative relationship whereby we purge our subjectivity in over-obedience to a divine Other?

According to Blond, "the project of transcendence centred around the Other has culminated then not in ethics but in the wholesale endorsement of an erasure of existents from existence" (218-19). The orthodox reading of *Paradise Lost* is basically a Levinasian reading—we must resist ourselves and our personal reactions to the text so as not to be tempted into sympathizing with Satan's rhetoric; but this process is in diametrical opposition to the standard New Age and postmodern values that there is no absolute meaning or "correct" response to life, and that we are instead complete free and empowered to create any reality we choose through courage, will and imagination.

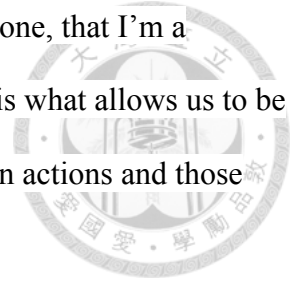
Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a seductive text on many levels, but what is often missed is why it is so seductive: God's power invites resistance, and encourages Satan's necessary self-destruction, but more than that, God's flickering reality, his beauty and perfection, causes Satan's existential anxiety, which he attempt to purge by taking action, destroying himself. While Milton's depiction of God as deliberate manipulator cannot help but make him a villain, symbolically it is actually God's silence and passivity that seduces Satan into the plot of the story.

Whether Satan is a hero or fool is inconsequential: he is both and neither. He begins as a hero, becomes a villain and perhaps ends as a fool—but in creating the ground back to reunify humanity with God he becomes a tragic hero. God's stable existence or non-existence would result in security, but his residue, his "Possibility of eclipse, of seductive disappearance and translucence" (Baudrillard 88), his being and not-being, acts as a challenge and demands response. We shout defiance into vault of heaven, not to show our courage, but because the uncertainty of God's existence forces a psychological crisis... we issue a challenge, so that he either gives us a response, or does not, either way "proving" the matter.

Paradise Lost is the Ur-Myth of our times: the precise issue of Satan's rebellion and punishment, his refused voice, continues to pop up, over and over again, not only in the hundreds of movies and TV shows explicitly about Satan, but also in the revolutionary heroes based on his romantic legacy. Why do we have a right to resist? When is violent revolution justified? The inability to derive satisfactory answers is precisely the reason these themes continue to seduce and draw us in; the mystery and profundity, the unclarity of it, focuses our minds and gaze, to look deeper, to question, and in that process we gain a sense of self-knowledge, more profound in God's total absence and Satan's constant appeals for justice, than we could do in any totalizing doctrine. (QUOTE?)

Even where apparently harmless, the orthodox reading of *Paradise Lost* conceals the same castration of reason that led to the Salem Witch Trials and the Satanic Panic. It is worse than Cartesian skepticism that doubts even my own reason; it's the idea that my experiences, and my own rational and emotional responses to my experiences, were orchestrated by a sinister and masterful arch-enemy, who is trying to deceive me (whether God or Satan, doesn't really matter).

The belief that I can't trust myself, that I can't trust anything or anyone, that I'm a helpless victim unable to deal with the magical enormity of my adversary, is what allows us to be "seduced by Satan"—but only because we give up responsibility of our own actions and those allow ourselves to become the thing we are not, and blame it on Satan.



We give Satan power by assuming he's out to get us, and that he can manipulate our experiences. He ceases to have any power, not when we resist his temptation, but when we recognize that there is no universal force of evil dedicated to our moral downfall. There is absolutely no risk of being seduced by Satan or accidentally falling into sin. We are all, therefore, personally responsible for our own actions.

Synthesis and limitations

What have we learned? *Paradise Lost* is in a bubble, but needs to be freed: it has been read as a response to sin, temptation and resistance. It *should* be read as a power discourse, in which a slave race (the demons) is created to serve the reigning majority; as well as an appeal to recognize, as Rilke said, that everything terrible needs love: something that is stressed over and over again in modern culture.

The idea that evil is powerful in its seduction is a lie on two counts: first, that evil exists outside of ourselves, and that we are somehow not responsible for bad things that happen, because they are fated or natural or predetermined; second, as Baudrillard showed, seduction is not a tool of weakness, but a position of power.

This thesis has reached into several new areas for Milton studies, but my contribution to knowledge is general rather than specific: the relationship between *Paradise Lost*, Boethius's

Consolations, Seneca's *Medea*, and the postmodern generation of subjectivity could each be greatly clarified with further study and a more elaborate textural analysis and comparison.

By covering so much ground, I'm afraid I've made the histories and the section on Milton's biography much too brief and rushed; however expanding them wasn't necessary to make the major claims of this thesis, so they'll have to be left to other researchers or further studies. There could have also been a discussion of Adam and Eve's relationship with Satan, or God, after their fall from grace—but this thesis was about Satan, rather than humanity.

Likewise, I may have focused too much on what I called the "orthodox" reading of *Paradise Lost*—a reading that has perhaps already gone out of style with contemporary Milton scholarship (and yet still forms the mainstream, ordinary reading presented in companion guides to Milton and nearly all pedagogical approaches). I feel that contemporary scholarship has moved past this issue without resolving it: so if I seem to be digging up skeletons it's because the topic of Satan's morality *matters* more than contemporary scholarship is willing to admit.

Finally I think Satan's role as a necessary vanishing mediator needs to be fleshed out and explained in more detail; in the notes of *The Indivisible Remainder*, Žižek writes, "in political theory, the exemplary case of a 'vanishing mediator' is provided by the Hegelian notion of the historical *hero* who resolves the deadlock of the passage from the 'natural state' of violence to the civil state of peace guaranteed by legitimate power. This passage cannot take place directly, in a continuous line, since there is no common ground, no intersection, between the state of natural violence and the state of civil peace; what is needed, therefore, is a paradoxical agent who, by means of violence itself, overcomes violence, i.e. the paradox of an act which retroactively establishes the conditions of its own legitimacy and thereby obliterates its violent character, transforming itself into a solemn 'founding act'" (83). I think Milton's Satan fills this

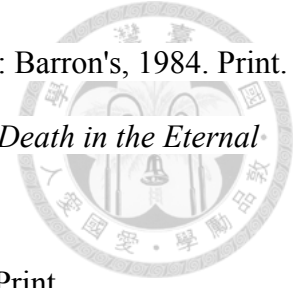
role perfectly, and I've provided enough commentary to make the link credible and lay the basis of a more complex argument, but I'll leave this to future studies.



Works Cited



- Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. New York: Oxford UP, 1953. Print.
- Adams, Ian. *Political Ideology Today*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993. Print.
- Adorno, Theodor W., Samuel Weber, and Shierry Weber NicholSEN. *Prisms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1981. Print.
- Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*. Trans. George Thomson. New York: Dover, 1995. *Google Books*. Dover. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Alger, William R. *The Theory of a Personal Devil*. Vol. LXXI. Boston: Christian Examiner, 1861. *Archive.org*. Web.
- Alighieri, Dante, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Dante Alighieri. *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri, the Florentine: Purgatory*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2004. Print.
- Apollonio, Umbro, ed. *Documents of 20th Century Art: Futurist Manifestos*. Brain, Robert, R.W. Flint, J.C. Higgitt, and Caroline Tisdall, trans. New York: Viking Press, 1973.
- Appelbaum, R. "Milton, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Mythography of Terror." *Modern Language Quarterly* 68.4 (2007): 461-91. Web.
- Arp, Robert. *The Devil and Philosophy*. Vol. 83. Chicago: Open Court, 2014. Print. *Popular Culture and Philosophy*.
- Ashe, Geoffrey. *The Hell-Fire Clubs: A History of Anti-Morality*. Phoenix Mill: Sutton, 1986. Print.
- Auden, W. H. *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*. New York: Random House, 1947. Print.



Auer, Jim. *Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea*. Woodbury, NY: Barron's, 1984. Print.

Augias, Corrado, and A. Lawrence Jenkins. *The Secrets of Rome: Love & Death in the Eternal City*. New York: Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2007. Print.

Augustine, and Henry Chadwick. *Confessions*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.

Bacon, Sir Francis. "The Advancement of Learning." Online Library of Liberty. Ed. Joseph Devey. Liberty Fund, 19 Aug. 2016. Web. 22 June 2016.

Badiou, Alain. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. London: Verso, 2001. Print.

Badiou, Alain. *Theory of the Subject*. Trans. Bruno Bosteels. London: Continuum, 2009. Print.

Bakunin, Mikhail Aleksandrovich. *God and the State*. New York: Dover Publications, 1970. Print.

Banta, Martha. *Failure and Success in America: A Literary Debate*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978. Print.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Flowers of Evil*. Trans. James McGowan. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993. Print.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990. Print.

Bell, Emma. "Demonic Possession in the Early Modern Period." *Crossroads* III.I (2008): 92-97. Web.

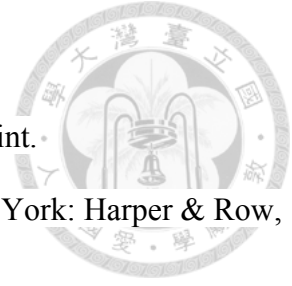
Benn, Gottfried, and E. B. Ashton. *Primal Vision: Selected Writings of Gottfried Benn*. London: M. Boyars, 1976. Print.

Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, by Lord Bacon, edited by Joseph Devey, M.A. (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1901). Liberty Fund, 19 Aug. 2016. Web.

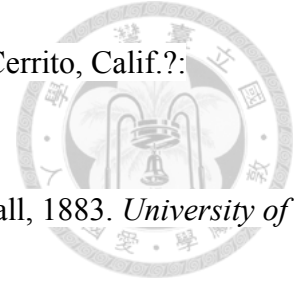
Bentley, Eric. *The Cult of the Superman; a Study of the Idea of Heroism in Carlyle and Nietzsche, with Notes on Other Hero-worshippers of Modern times*. Gloucester, MA: P. Smith,



1969. Print.
- Bentley, Eric. *Thirty Years of Treason; Excerpts from Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938-1968*. New York: Viking, 1971. Print.
- Berlin, Isaiah, and Henry Hardy. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*. New York: Knopf, 1991. Print.
- Berman, Paul. *Terror and Liberalism*. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.
- Blackett-Ord, Mark. *Hell-fire Duke: The Life of Duke of Wharton*. Windsor Forest: Kensal, 1982. Print.
- Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Complete Poems*. Ed. Alicia Ostriker. New York: Princeton University Press, 1977. Print.
- Blavatsky, H.P. *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*. London: Theosophical Publ. Society, 1888. *Google Books*. Cambridge UP. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Boethius, and V. E. Watts. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1969. Print.
- Bloom, Harold. *Satan*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Pub, 2005. Print.
- Bone, Drummond. *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Booth, Edward. "The Ages of the World , by F.W.J. Schelling. Trans. and Intro. by Jason M. Wirth." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 33.1 (2002): 103-04. Web.
- Boswell, James. *Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson*. H. G. Bohn, 1848. Life of Johnson. Gutenberg.org, 12 May 2006. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Bridgewater, Patrick. *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003. Print.
- Bryson, Michael. *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton's Rejection of God as King*. Newark: U of



- Delaware, 2004. Print.
- Budick, Sanford. *Kant and Milton*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010. Print.
- Bulgakov, Mikhail, and Michael Glenny. *The Master and Margarita*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. Print.
- Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London: Dodsley, 1767. *Google Books*. Web.
- Butler, Marilyn. *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Print.
- Byron, Lord. "Manfred. The Harvard Classics." *Bartleby*. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Byron, Lord. *The Complete Works of Lord Byron*. Ed. John Galt. Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1835. *Google Books*. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Call, Lewis. "A Is for Anarchy, V Is for Vendetta: Images of Guy Fawkes and the Creation of Postmodern Anarchism." *Anarchist Studies* 16.2 (2008): 154-72. Web.
- Cameli, Louis J. *The Devil You Don't Know: Recognizing and Resisting Evil in Everyday Life*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 2011. Print.
- Campbell, Gordon, and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live by*. New York: Viking, 1972. Print.
- Camus, Albert. Trans. Anthony Bower. *The Rebel*. New York: Vintage, 1960. Print.
- Carlson, Shawn. *Satanism in America: How the Devil Got Much More than His Due*. El Cerrito, CA: Gaia, 1989. Print.
- Carlson, Shawn, Gerald A. Larue, and Gerry O'Sullivan. *Satanism in America: Final Report for*



- the Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER)*. El Cerrito, Calif.?:
Publisher Not Identified, 1989. Print.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes and Hero-worship*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1883. *University of Adelaide*. University of Adelaide. Web. 10 June 2016.
- “Charlie Chaplin - Official Website.” *Charlie Chaplin : The Great Dictator's Speech*. Roy Export S.A.S., 1918. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Carew, Joseph. *Ontological Catastrophe: Zizek and the Paradoxical Metaphysics of German Idealism (New Metaphysics)*. Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2014.
- Christiansen, Rupert. *Romantic Affinities: Portraits from an Age, 1780-1830*. London: Bodley Head, 1988. Print.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, William G. T. Shedd, Henry Nelson Coleridge, and Sara Coleridge Coleridge. *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. With an Introductory Essay upon His Philosophical and Theological Opinions*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853. *Google Books*. Web. 24 June 2016.
- Conrad, Peter. *Modern Times, Modern Places*. New York: Knopf, 1999. Print.
- “CRAWFORD V. WASHINGTON.” *Cornell Law*. Supreme Court, 2004. Web. 22 June 2016.
- Crowley, Aleister. “Liber 77.” *Thelema Texts*. OTO, 1895. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Crowley, Aleister. “The Tao Teh King (Liber 157).” *Sacred Texts*. OTO, 1895. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Crowley, Aleister. “Magick in Theory and Practice.” *Sacred Texts*. OTO, 1895. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Dallas, E. S. *The Gay Science*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1866. Print.

Dalton, John, Thomas Augustine Arne, and John Milton. *Comus a Mask*. London: Printed by J. Hughs for R. Dodsley, 1738. Print.

Davidson, Edward H., William J. Scheick, and Thomas Paine. *Paine, Scripture, and Authority: The Age of Reason as Religious and Political Idea*. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh UP, 1994. Print.

Davies, Stevie. *Milton*. New York: St. Martin's, 1991. Print.

Defoe, Daniel. *A System of Magic*. Oxford: Printed by D.A. Talboys, for T. Tegg, 1840. Print.

Defoe, Daniel. *The Political History of the Devil, as Well Ancient as Modern: In Two Parts*. London: T. Warner, 1840. *Google Books*. Web.

De Sade, Marquis, Richard Seaver, and Jean Paulhan. *The Marquis De Sade: The Complete Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*. New York: Grove, 1965. Print.

Diekhoff, John Siemon. *Milton's Paradise Lost: A Commentary on the Argument*. New York: Humanities, 1958. Print.

Dobranski, Stephen B., and John Peter Rumrich. *Milton and Heresy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

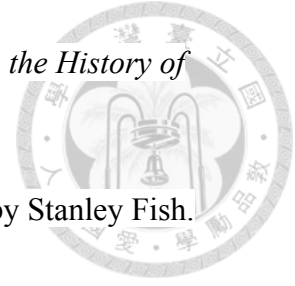
Doran, Robert. *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015. Print.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, Constance Garnett, and William Hubben. *The Grand Inquisitor*. New York: Association, 1948. Print.

Dreyfus, Hubert L., and Sean Kelly. *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age*. New York: Free, 2011. Print.

DuRocher, Richard J. *Milton and Ovid*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985. Print.

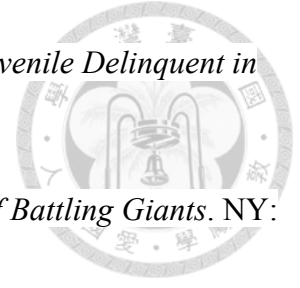
Duran, Angelica. *A Concise Companion to Milton*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. Print.



- Dyson, R. W., and Peter M. R. Stirk. *Natural Law and Political Realism in the History of Political Thought*. New York: P. Lang, 2005. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. "The Estate Agent." Rev. of *The Trouble with Principle*, by Stanley Fish. *London Review of Books* 22.5 (2000): 10-11. 21 July 2016. Web.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Divinity School Address." *Emerson Central*. Boston, J. Munroe, 1849. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Ralph Waldo Emerson Quotes." *Goodreads*. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Empson, William. *Milton's God*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1965. Print.
- Eysteinnsson, Ástráður, and Vivian Liska. *Modernism*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub., 2007. Print.
- Fallon, Stephen M. "Kant and Milton // Reviews." University of Notre Dame. *Philosophical Reviews*, 2 Apr. 2011. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Ferber, Michael. *The Cambridge Introduction to British Romantic Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge U, 2012. Print.
- Fernie, Ewan. *The Demonic: Literature and Experience*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print.
- Fish, Stanley Eugene. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in "Paradise Lost."* London: Macmillan, 1967. Print.
- Fish, Stanley Eugene. *How Milton Works*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2001. Print.
- Flannagan, Roy. *John Milton: A Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002. Print.
- Flaubert, Gustave. "The Temptation of St. Anthony." *Archive.org*. NY: The Alice Harriman Company, 1910. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Fletcher, M. D. *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Amsterdam:



- Rodopi, 1994. Print.
- Flowers, Stephen E. *Lords of the Left-hand Path: Forbidden Practices & Spiritual Heresies*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2012. Print.
- Foner, Eric. *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1995. Print.
- Forsyth, Neil. "Satan." *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost* (n.d.): 17-28. Web.
- Forsyth, Neil. *The Satanic Epic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003. Print.
- Forsyth, Neil. *John Milton: A Biography*. Oxford: Lion, 2008. Print.
- Forti, Simona, and Zakiya Hanafi. *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today*. Stanford (California): Stanford UP, 2015. Print.
- Foster, Brett. *John Milton*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Pub, 2004. Print.
- France, Anatole, and Pierre Watrin. *The Revolt of the Angels*. New York: Heritage, 1953. Print.
- Freedman, Ralph. *Hermann Hesse, Pilgrim of Crisis: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton, 1962. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund, and Philip Rieff. *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. Print.
- Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History?* Washington, D.C.: National Affairs, 1989. Print.
- Gardner, Helen. "Milton's 'Satan' and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy." *English Studies* ns., 1 (1948): 46-66. Shakespeare Navigators. 21 July 2016. Web.
- Gibran, Kahlil. *The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran*. Ed. Martin L. Martin. Trans. Anthony R. Ferris. Secaucus, NJ: Castle, 1980. Print.
- Gibran, Kahlil. "The Priest and Satan." *Gibran Online*. Web. 23 June 2016.



- Gilbert, James Burkhart. *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*. NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2013. Print.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang Von. "Faust." Trans. Anna Swanwick. *Bartleby*. NY: P.F. Collier & Son Company, 1909–14. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Gotthelf, Allan, and Gregory Salmieri. *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2016. Print.
- Gottschall, Jonathan, and David Sloan. Wilson. *The Literary Animal: Evolution and the Nature of Narrative*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2005. Print.
- Grey, Robin, and Douglas Robillard. "Melville's Milton A Transcription of Melville's Marginalia in His Copy of The Poetical Works of John Milton." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* *Leviathan* 4.1-2 (2002): 117-204. Web.
- Grierson, Herbert John Clifford. *Milton and Wordsworth: Poets and Prophets, a Study of Their Reactions to Political Events*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Cambridge U, 1937. Print.
- Groom, S. Alyssa, and Janie M. Harden Fritz. *Communication Ethics and Crisis: Negotiating Differences in Public and Private Spheres*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2012. Print.
- Grotius, Hugo, and Stephen C. Neff. *Hugo Grotius on the Law of War and Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012. Print.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Modernity: An Unfinished Project*. N.p.: MIT, 1997. Print.
- Hawkes, David. *John Milton: A Hero of Our Time*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009. Print.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1850. *Bartleby.com*, 1999. Web. 23 June 2016.

Heehs, Peter. *Writing the Self: Diaries, Memoirs, and the History of the Self*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Print.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22, a Novel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961. Print.

Herman, P. C. (2005), Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Found: The New Milton Criticism. *Literature Compass*, 2: **. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2005.00176.x.

Herman, Peter C. "C. S. Lewis and the New Milton Criticism." *Milton Quarterly* 45.4 (December 2011): 258-66.

Herman, Peter C., and Elizabeth Sauer. *The New Milton Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012. Print.

Hill, Christopher. *Milton and the English Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1978. Print.

Hill, Napoleon, and Arthur R. Pell. *Think and Grow Rich*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2005. Print.

Hill, Napoleon, and Sharon L. Lechter. *Outwitting the Devil: The Secret to Freedom and Success*. New York: Sterling, 2011. Print.

Hirsch, David H. *The Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz*. Providence, RI: Brown UP, 1991. Print.

Hitler, Adolf, and Ralph Manheim. *Mein Kampf*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943. Print.

"The Knickerbocker: New-York Monthly Magazine, Volume 21." *Google Books*. Ed. Charles Fenno Hoffman. BiblioBazaar, 2015. Web. 23 June 2016.

Hofmannsthal, Hugo Von, and J. D. McClatchy. *The Whole Difference: Selected Writings of Hugo Von Hofmannsthal*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2008. Print.

Hume, David. *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. London, 1777. Oxford UP, 2001.

DavidHume.org. [Http://www.davidhume.org/texts/dnr.html](http://www.davidhume.org/texts/dnr.html). Web. 10 June 2016.

Hume, David. *An Enquiry into Human Understanding*. London, 1777. Oxford UP, 2001.

DavidHume.org. Web. 10 June 2016.

Hunter, William B. *A Milton Encyclopedia*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1983. Print.

Jacoby, Russell. *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic, 1987. Print.

Jaedine, David, Esq., ed. *A Treatise of Equivocation*. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans.: London, 1851. *Archive.org*. Web. 10 June 2016.

James, King, I. *Daemonologie*. John Fian, 1591. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 10 June 2016.

Johnson, Samuel. *The Works of the English Poets With Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, by Samuel Johnson*. London: Printed by H. Hughs, 1779. *Google Books*. Web.

Joyce, Weston St. John. *The Neighbourhood of Dublin: Its Topography, Antiquities and Historical Associations*. Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1939. Print.

Jung, C. G., and James L. Jarrett. *Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the Seminar given in 1934-1939*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1988. Print.

Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. Berkeley: U of California, 1960. Print.

Kean, Margaret. "Waiting for God: John Milton's Poems of 1671." *Proceedings of British Academy* III (2001): 157-77. Print.

Kean, Margaret. *John Milton's Paradise Lost: A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Kenneth V. Lanning, "Investigator's Guide to Allegations of 'Ritual' Child Abuse", Behavioral Science Unit, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of



- Investigation, FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia 22135 (1992).
- Kerouac, Jack, and Ann Charters. *The Portable Jack Kerouac*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Viking, 1995. Print.
- Kerrigan, John. *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. Print.
- Kerrigan, William, and John Milton. *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983. Print.
- Kolbrener, William. *Milton's Warring Angels: A Study of Critical Engagements*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Kolin, Philip C. *Tennessee Williams: A Guide to Research and Performance*. N.p.: Greenwood Group, 1998. Print.
- Kolocotroni, Vassiliki, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1998. Print.
- Krips, Henry. "The Politics of the Gaze Foucault, Lacan and Žižek." *CU Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 2.1 (2010): 91-102. Web.
- Kuribayashi, Laurie. "The Search for Order in Milton's Paradise Lost and Boethius'." *University of Hawaii* (2014): 1-65. Web.
- "Becoming Like God." *LDS.org*. Church of Latter Day Saints, 2 Dec. 2012. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Larkin, Edward. *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution*. New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.
- Laruelle, François. *Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy*. London: Continuum, 2010. Print.
- Lau, Beth. *Keat's "Paradise Lost"* Gainesville: U of Florida, 1998. Print.
- Leonard, John. *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

Levin, Murray Burton. *Political Hysteria in America; the Democratic Capacity for Repression*.

New York: Basic, 1971. Print.

Levinas, Emmanuel, Michael Bradley Smith, and Barbara Harshav. *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-other*. London: Continuum, 2006. Print.

Levine, Robert S. *The Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1985. Print.

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford UP, 1961. Print.

Lewis, C.S. "The Screwtape Letters." Gutenberg. London: Geoffrey Bles, The Centenary Press, Sept. 1944, 15 May 1014. Web. 23 June 2016.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity; an Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. Lingis Alphonso. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne UP, 1969. Print.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Otherwise than Being, Or, Beyond Essence*. Trans. A. Lingis. Nijhoff: Dordrecht, 1974. Print.

Loftus, Elizabeth F., and Katherine Ketcham. *The Myth of Repressed Memory: False Memories and Allegations of Sexual Abuse*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. Print.

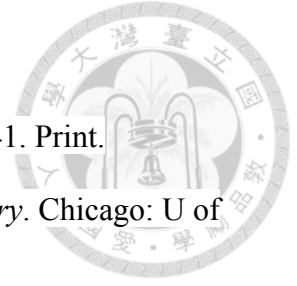
Low, Donald A. *Robert Burns; the Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1974. Print.

Luijk, Ruben Van. *Children of Lucifer: The Origins of Modern Religious Satanism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2016. Print.

Lush, Tamara. "Occupy Wall Street: Vendetta Masks Become Symbol Of The Movement." *The*



- Huffington Post*, 4 Jan. 2012. Web. 22 June 2016.
- Machiavelli, Nicolo. *The Prince*. Trans. W.K. Marriott. *Project Gutenberg*, 11 July, 2006. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Mahood, M. M. *Poetry and Humanism*. London: Cape, 1950. Print.
- Marinetti, F.T. "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." *Italian Futurism*. Paris: Le Figaro, 1909. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Marlowe, Christopher. "Doctor Faustus." NY: Harvard Classics, 1909-14. *Bartleby*. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Marshall, John. *John Locke, Toleration, and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and "early Enlightenment" Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- Martindale, Charles. *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*. London: Croom Helm, 1986. Print.
- Marx, Karl. "The Fiddler." *Marxists.org*. NY: International Publishers, 1975. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Marx, Karl, Loyd David Easton, and Kurt H. Guddat. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967. Print.
- McKie, Robin. "Charles Manson Follower Ends Her Silence 40 Years after Night of Slaughter." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 2009. Web. 23 June 2016.
- McMahon, Robert. *The Two Poets of Paradise Lost*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1998. Print.
- Mccarthy, B. Eugene. "Defoe, Milton, And Heresy." *Milton Quarterly* 3.4 (1969): 71-73. Web.
- McMurray, P. (1998), "Aristotle on the Pinnacle: Paradise Regained and the Limits of Theory." *Milton Quarterly*, 32: 7-14. doi: 10.1111/j.1094-348X.1998.tb00593.x



Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. N.p.: n.p., 1892. *Google Books*. Web.

Mencken, H. L. *Newspaper Days, 1899-1906*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1941. Print.

Mermin, Dorothy. *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Origins of a New Poetry*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1989. Print.

Metcalf, Henry Aiken. *Sir Walter Raleigh by Henry David Thoreau*. Boston, 1905. Web. 10 June 2016.

Middleton, Tim. *Modernism. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies: 1935-1970*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Milton, John. *On the Fifth of November*. Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

Milton, John. *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*. Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

Milton, John. "Lycidas." *Poetry Foundation*. Chicago, 2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

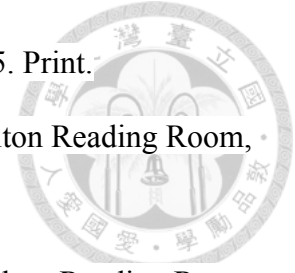
Milton, John. *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. . Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

Milton, John. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

Milton, John. *Eikonoklastes*. Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

Milton, John. *The Ready and Easy Way to Establishing a Free Commonwealth*. Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth*, John Milton Reading Room, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.

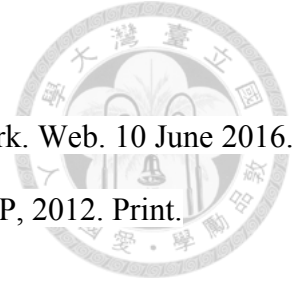
Milton, John, and Merritt Y. Hughes. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. New York: Odyssey, 1957. Print.



- Milton, John, and Philip Pullman. *Paradise Lost*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Milton, John. "Areopagitica." Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth, John Milton Reading Room*, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Milton, John. "Paradise Lost." Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. *Dartmouth, John Milton Reading Room*, 1997-2016. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Milton, John. *Prose Works: Poetical Works*. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1844. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Mohamed, Feisal G. *Milton and the Post-secular Present: Ethics, Politics, Terrorism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2011. Print.
- Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Trans. Susan Fischer. London: Verso, 1997. Print.
- Motion, Andrew. *Keats*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. Print.
- Murray, Patrick. *Milton: The Modern Phase; a Study of Twentieth-century Criticism*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967. Print.
- Musgrove, S. "Is The Devil An Ass? 1." *Review of English Studies The Review of English Studies* Os-XXI.84 (1945): 302-15. Web.
- Myers, Benjamin. *Milton's Theology of Freedom*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006. Print.
- Nash, Thomas, and John Payne Collier. *Pierce Penniless's Supplication to the Devil*. London: Reprinted for the Shakespeare Society, 1842. *Google Books*. Web. 23 June 2016.
- "The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription." *National Archives and Records Administration*. Archives.gov, 20 July 2016. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Natoli, Joseph P., and Linda Hutcheon. *A Postmodern Reader*. Albany: State U of New York, 1993. Print.
- Nealon, Jeffrey T. *Foucault beyond Foucault: Power and Its Intensifications since 1984*.



- Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2008. Print.
- Nelson, James B., and Sandra P. Longfellow. *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. Print.
- Newman, Saul. *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2001. Print.
- Newton, Isaac. *The Prophecies of Daniel*. London: John Murray, 1922. *Archive.org*. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. *John Milton; a Reader's Guide to His Poetry*. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1963. Print.
- “Nietzsche & Melville, Forum.” *ILovePhilosophy.com*, 22 Nov. 2009. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”“ *Archive.org*. Trans. Thomas Common. NY: Modern Library, 1917. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Google Books. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. Full Text of “The Antichrist.” *Archive.org*. Trans. H.L. Mencken. Project Gutenberg, 18th Sept. 2006. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990. Print.
- Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1994. Print.
- O., Henry. “My Tussle with the Devil: And Other Stories.” *Internet Archive*. New York: I.M.Y Company, 1918. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Oberman, Heiko Augustinus. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*. New Haven: Yale UP,



1989. Print.
- “F.A.Q. Fundamental Beliefs.” *Official Church of Satan Website*. New York. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Oldridge, Darren. *The Devil: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. Print.
- Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Paris: Librairie Generale Francaise, 1972. Print.
- Peikoff, Leonard. *The Ominous Parallels: The End of Freedom in America*. New York: Stein and Day/Publishers, 1982. Print.
- Perry, Michael J. *Morality, Politics, and Law: A Bicentennial Essay*. New York: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.
- Pius, Pope, X. “Pascendi Dominici Gregis (September 8, 1907) | PIUS X.” *Pascendi Dominici Gregis (September 8, 1907) | PIUS X*. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Pullman, Philip. *His Dark Materials*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. Print.
- Quint, David. “Milton, Fletcher and the Gunpowder Plot.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991): 261. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Quint, David. *Inside “Paradise Lost”: Reading the Designs of Milton's Epic*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014. Print.
- Rand, Ayn and Peter Schwartz. *Return of the Primitive: The Anti-industrial Revolution*. New York: Meridian, 1999. Print.
- Rapoport, David C. *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Rhu, Lawrence Rhu F. “Tobias Gregory, From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic.” *Modern Philology* 107.3 (2010): 1-30. Web. 23 June 2016.
- Ricœur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. Print.
- Riggs, William G. *The Christian Poet in Paradise Lost*. Berkeley: U of California, 1972. Print.

Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Duino Elegies*. Trans. C.F. MacIntyre. Berkeley: U of California, 1963.

Print.

Rilke, Rainer Maria, Anita Barrows, and Joanna Macy. *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*. New York: Riverhead, 1996. Print.

Robinson, David. *Chaplin, the Mirror of Opinion*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1983. Print.

“Romans.” St. Paul, *Romans*, (NIV). Biblegateway.com. 2011. Web. 23 June 2016.

Romero-Jodar, Andres. “Trauma and Terrorism in Alan Moore's Graphic Novels.” *Critical Engagements: A Journal of Criticism and Theory* 6.2 (2013): 131-48. Web.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968. Print.

Rumrich, John Peter. *Milton Unbound: Controversy and Reinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy, and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest times to the Present Day*. NY: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981. Print.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986. Print.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1988. Print.

Salim, Majid. “A Study of Ridley Scott's Bladerunner.” *Blade Runner Insight*. Tor Inge Skaar, 1998. Web. 23 June 2016.

Sanders, Ed, and Rick Veitch. *Sharon Tate: A Life*. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2015. Print.

Sands, Kathleen R. *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004. Print.

Santner, Eric L. *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2006.

Print.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, Robert Baldick, and James Wood. *Nausea*. London: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Sauter, Molly. "Guy Fawkes Mask-ology." *HiLobrow*, Apr.-May 2012. Web. 10 June 2016.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. *Robert Kennedy and His times*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978. Print.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The Basis of Morality*. Trans. A.B. Bullock. London: CosimoClassics, 2007. *Google Books*. Web. 24 June 2016.

Schulman, Lydia Dittler. *Paradise Lost, and the Rise of the American Republic*. Boston:

Northeastern UP, 1992. Print.

Shattuck, Roger. *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*. New York: St.

Martin's, 1996. Print.

Shaw, Bernard. *Devil's Disciple: A Melodrama*. London: Brentano's, 1906. *Google Books*. Web.

Shaw, Bernard, and Charles Mozley. *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy*. Fairfield:

1st World Library, 2003. *Google Books*. Web.

Shawcross, John T. *With Mortal Voice: The Creation of Paradise Lost*. Lexington, KY: U of

Kentucky, 1982. Print.

Shawcross, John T. *John Milton: The Critical Heritage - Volume 1 1628-1731*. London:

Routledge, 1995. *Google Books*. Web. 10 June 2016.

Shears, Jonathon. *The Romantic Legacy of Paradise Lost: Reading against the Grain*. Farnham,

England: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus*. N.p.: Cambridge, 1869. Print.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus*. Hertfordshire:

Wordsworth Classics, 1993. *Google Books*. Web. 10 June 2016.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, and Lawrence John Zillman. *Prometheus Unbound, a Variorum Edition*.
Seattle: U of Washington, 1959. Print.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*. In two
volumes. Edited by Mary Shelley. London: Edward Moxon, (1840) [1839].

Silverman, Hugh J. *Writing the Politics of Difference*. Albany: State U of New York, 1991. Print.

Simmel, Georg. *Metropolis and Mental Life*. Chicago: Syllabus Division, U of Chicago, 1961.
Print.

Simmonds, James D. *Milton Studies*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh Pr., 1993. Print.

Simpson, David. "Albert Camus." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002. Web.
23 June 2016.

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *Civil Disobedience: An Encyclopedic History of Dissidence in the United
States*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Reference, 2009. Print.

Spark, Clare. *Hunting Captain Ahab: Psychological Warfare and the Melville Revival*. Kent, OH:
Kent State UP, 2001. Print.

Stanford, Peter. *The Devil: A Biography*. New York: H. Holt, 1996. Print.

Steadman, John. "The Idea of Satan as the Hero of "Paradise Lost"" *Proceedings of the
American Philosophical Society* 120.4 (1976): 294. *Jstor*. Web. 10 June 2016.

Steiner, George. *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes towards the Redefinition of Culture*. New
Haven: Yale UP, 1971. Print.

Stevens, Richard. *Sigmund Freud: Examining the Essence of His Contribution*. Basingstoke:
Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Stoll, Elmer Edgar. "Give The Devil His Due: A Reply To Mr. Lewis." *Review of English
Studies The Review of English Studies* Os-XX.78 (1944): 108-24. Web.

Stone, Oliver, and Peter J. Kuznick. *The Untold History of the United States*. New York: Gallery, 2012. Print.

Svendsen, Lars Fr. H., and Kerri A. Pierce. *A Philosophy of Evil*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive, 2010. Print.

Tanner, John S. *Anxiety in Eden: A Kierkegaardian Reading of Paradise Lost*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.

Taylor, Victor E., and Charles E. Winquist. *Postmodernism: Critical Concepts*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Teskey, Gordon. *The Poetry of John Milton*. N.p.: Harvard UP, 2015. Print.

"*The Legislation Placing "In God We Trust" on National Currency.*" Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, July 11, 1955. Web. 23 June 2016.

Thorpe, James, and James Ernest Thorpe. *Milton Criticism: Selections from Four Centuries*. London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1962. Print.

Tichenor, Henry M. *The Sorceries and Scandals of Satan*. Ed. R. Merciless. St. Louis, MO: P. Wagner, 2010. Print.

Todd, Henry John, Edward Philips, and John Milton. *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. London: A. Spottiswoode, 1842. *Google Books*. Web.

Tournu, Christophe, and Neil Forsyth. *Milton, Rights, and Liberties*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. Print.

Treitl, Ilona. *The Dangers of Interpretation: Art and Artists in Henry James and Thomas Mann*. New York: Garland, 1996. Print.

Trevor-Roper, H. R. *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999. Print.

Tung, Mao Tse. "Quotations from Mao Tse Tung." Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1966.

Trans. David Quentin. *Marxists.org*, 2000. Web. 23 June 2016.

Twain, Mark, and John Sutton Tuckey. *Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream? And Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years*. Berkeley: U of California, 1967. Print.

Twain, Mark, and Mark Twain. *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger: Being an Ancient Tale Found in a Jug and Freely Translated from the Jug*. Berkeley: U of California, 1969. *Google Books*. Web. 10 June 2016.

Twain, Mark, and Mark Twain. *Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1992. Print.

Urban, D. V. (2012), The Acolyte's Rejoinder: C. S. Lewis and the New Milton Criticism, Yet Once More. *Milton Quarterly*, 46: 174–181. doi: 10.1111/milt.12002.

Vighi, Fabio, and Heiko Feldner. *Žižek: Beyond Foucault*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Vitz, Paul C. *Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious*. New York: Guilford, 1988. Print.

Voltaire. *Essay on Epic Poetry*. Ed. Florence D. White. Albany: NY, 1915. Print.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Cat's Cradle*. New York, NY: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 1998. Print.

Waite, Arthur Edward. *Devil Worship in France: Diana Vaughan and the Question of Modern Palladism*. York Beach, Me.: Samuel Weiser, 2003. Print.

Waites, Rosie. "V for Vendetta Masks: Who's behind Them?" *BBC News*, 20 Oct. 2011. Web. 22 June 2016.

Waldock, A. J. A. *Paradise Lost and Its Critics*. N.p.: UP Cambridge, 1961. Print.

Walsch, Neale Donald. *Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996. Print.

Walsh, Marcus. *Shakespeare, Milton and Eighteenth-century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.

Walsh, Michael. *The Devil's Pleasure Palace: The Cult of Critical Theory and the Subversion of the West*. NY: Encounter Books, 2015. Print.

Wardhaugh, Ronald. *Reading; a Linguistic Perspective*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969. Print.

Watts, Alan. *An Outline of Zen Buddhism*. London: Golden Vista, 1932. Print.

Watts, Alan. *The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity*. New York: G. Braziller, 1963. Print.

Watts, Alan. *The Book; on the Taboo against Knowing Who You Are*. New York: Pantheon, 1966. Print.

Watts, Alan. *The Essence of Alan Watts*. Millbrae, CA: Celestial Arts, 1977. Print.

Watts, Michael. *Kierkegaard*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2003. Print.

Weber, Carson. "The Lucifer Verse within the Book of Mormon - A Conundrum." *CarsonWeber.org*, 15 Sept. 2012. Web. 23 June 2016.

Werblowsky, R. J. Zwi. *Lucifer and Prometheus; a Study of Milton's Satan*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1952. Print.

White, Andrew Dickson. *Seven Great Statesmen in the Warfare of Humanity with Unreason*. New York: Century, 1910. Print.

Whitworth, Michael H. *Modernism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. Print.

Wilde, Oscar. *Collected Works of Oscar Wilde: The Plays, the Poems, the Stories and the Essays, including De Profundis*. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2007. Print.

Williamson, Marianne. *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992. Print.

Willmott, Robert Aris. *Lives of Sacred Poets*. London: J.W. Parker, 1838. Print.

Wilson, Colin. *Bernard Shaw; a Reassessment*. New York: Atheneum, 1969. Print.

Wilson, Colin. "How 'The Devil' Hauled Shaw Up From Hell." *The New York Times*. N.p., 1988.
Web. 10 June 2016.

Wittreich, Joseph Anthony. *The Romantics on Milton; Formal Essays and Critical Asides. With
a Critical Introd. and Notes*. Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve U, 1970. Print.

Woll, Walter. *Thomas Paine: Motives for Rebellion*. Frankfurt Am Main: P. Lang, 1992. Print.

Wootton, David. *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*.
Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 1996. Print.

"The Tao Te Ching (Multiple Translations)." *YellowBridge*, Web. 23 June 2016.

Young, R.V. "Stanley Fish: The Critic as Sophist." *Reconsideration II* 45.3 (2003): 243-53. Web.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters*. London:
Verso, 1996. Print.

Zizek, Slavoj. *Robespierre or the "Divine Violence" of Terror*. Lacan.com, 2006. Web. 23 June
2016.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London: Verso,
1999. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*. Cambridge, MA:
MIT, 2003. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Parallax View*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006. Print.