

Meet Me in the Woods:

The Evolution of the “Devil in the Woods” Story and the Growth of the
Devil as a Sympathetic Character

by

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Let's take a walk, shall we? Here, I'll lead the way.

Behind my home, there is a hill. The hill is weathered, and a stone with gray and white watermarks sits just so to form a makeshift stair half hidden under the moss. The grass doesn't quite grow in this little dirt path, which shows a history of previous owners who might have occasionally crept upon this part of the property, reluctantly, to chase away smoking teens or lesser predators. Watch your step. Leaves crunch under our scuffed boots, and thorns scratch at the cuff of your socks. Overgrown bushes – forsythia, I believe, a bush-like plant with yellow buds and sticky bark – brush against your cheek and your forearm as you come to the top of the hill slowly. Thorny plants prick and tug at the hem of your pants, but you've made it just far enough away from the road so that the traffic starts to fade in and out of your ears. You have to concentrate very hard to hear the passing cars, which will be of no help to you later. You take a deep breath, and you raise your face to the sun that is looking down on you. You wish you'd brought a book to read, and perhaps a blanket to sit on. You wonder about the rabbit skull you passed on the way up. You wonder, then, why all the birds have stopped their insistent chirping, and why it is suddenly very quiet and very still.

You feel a sudden chill run up your spine. Not just any chill, though, this one is specific – instinctual. You, like the birds now hiding themselves solemnly in the branches above, can sense something watching you, hunting you: something dangerous.

“Well, hello there.” A voice casts shadows in your mind and moves your heart just that much faster. This is the sort of voice you imagine you would have heard from shadowy detectives in black and white movies, the ones without sound. It is gruff, but cool, and very clearly knows what it wants. “Is there something specific you are looking for?” the voice will ask you.

But you're not sure. Is there something?

“Well?” the voice will ask again. “Would you like to make a deal, today?” You'll look to the owner of the voice. He may have, according to literary tradition, one of many different appearances: a red demon with burnt flesh, a cruel young man with elegant features and wounds protruding from his shoulder blades, or just an ordinary older man in the guise of a gardener. His appearance may shock you or scare you, or it may not make you think twice. But regardless of his looks, he will be looking back at you, waiting for your answer.

What would your answer be?

Let's All Play the Devil's Advocate...

My intentions for this study could be misunderstood, as I play the Devil's advocate, by definition, in many moments. I wish to explore the misused and under-represented Devil as a trope in a long standing and quickly changing tradition as a literary character. The Devil has moved from Hawthorne's writings to Netflix as a character in the limelight, whether depicted as a cloven-hooved beast¹, an elderly gardener² and an Armani-draped club owner³. His intentions have shifted over time from pursuing genuine evil meant to defy God to simply exuding more rebellion than any teenager come after him. He has been tossed among waves of blame for every lusty thought, or naughty inkling, or horrible happening that has occurred in humanity throughout centuries of literature. This tradition has moved into pop culture and film, bringing elements of the previous lore associated with him. As he has moved through time, he has become less mysterious, less terrifying, and more sympathetic. He has become a character worthy of our

¹ The deformed Devil represented in earlier Puritan literature often involves imagery that presents the Devil as a non-human, animalistic creature. This imagery repeats itself in the Netflix original television show *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) and the goat-human hybrid representation of Satan.

² Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* (1926) represents the Devil as an elderly gardener when in direct proximity to Lolly.

³ The suave and debonair Lucifer is represented in the television show, *Lucifer* (2015).

compassion as we form connections with his modern incarnation, a figure who, like us, is also seeks a fulfilling life under the thumb of an all-knowing, and mysterious, divine being. His unabashed self-interest reflects the growing self-consciousness of Enlightenment subjectivity and the high premium upon individualism in the early years of the 20th century. Therefore, he has transformed from an antagonistic creature we can never understand to a nonhuman protagonist we can allow ourselves to *like*. This gradual evolution of his character reflects human values and leaves in its wake a host of traits and aptitudes that adhere to this character regardless of his place in the narrative. By examining some of these specific traits, I hope to shed fresh interpretative light upon the Devil's literary development over time to the present day.

Natural Desires: Nature and the Devil

Literature and lore have assigned the Devil to nature, her warm embrace wrapping him and his disciples in the supple graces of her gifts. Associated with what lies outside human society, the natural world has provided the Devil with a sort of home office – perfect for hiding in the shadows and luring the lost to the outskirts of their small towns or villages and into the woods. Once there, completely cut off from the rest of humanity, the Devil would corner and attempt to corrupt whomever sought his assistance or simply fell into it. This association traces back to the Garden of Eden, in which humanity becomes separated from nature when cast out of the garden. Stories of the woods and the horrors that lived there told of thieves, ruffians and animals of mystical and mundane horror. The fear of what lies outside of human society looms large in the literature of American Puritans, which features anxieties of the woods and nature in its impurity, as though assigning the beauty of nature to the ungodly, a concept that would not be reversed until the Romantics. Romanticism restored the beauty of nature, claiming that God can be found in nature and is no longer separate from it. Anxieties about the nonhuman and

humanity's own repressed animality become aligned with the Devil. And what do we do with the things we reject? Like any piece of unwanted waste, we toss it out the window, to be carried by the wind into the woods. And so, now we must also go into the woods to follow him...

The Woods: The Devil Sets the Scene

As the world's oldest scapegoat⁴, the Devil has always been associated with the one and only true escape from humanity: nature. The woods and the wild feature prominently in narratives of the Devil as spaces immune from human interference and ecological management. Yet today the notion of nature as a place wholly distinct from human culture seems an elaborate fiction. A clearing between the trees allows for better cell reception, rather than a meeting place for witches and faerie⁵, and a large oak is a glorified signpost awaiting manmade symbols to lead inexperienced hikers back to their brunches before noon. Signs are now nailed into trees along hiking paths or in campsites, such as in the photograph below in which an instructional sign about the prohibition of dogs is nailed into a tree at the end of a hiking trail winding through a camp site in Salem, Massachusetts:

⁴ *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* defines "scapegoat" as: "one who is blamed or punished for the sins of others" ("Scapegoat, n2).

⁵ Faerie are the mythical creatures that belong to the world of Faerie as used in Middle English and who were associated with dark magic and devilry.



Note the use of the tree as a post to hang the sign that reads: “No Dogs Allowed on Beaches Per Order Parks & Rec Comm”: *Untitled*, Michael J. Shershin IV, Salem, Massachusetts, October 2019.

The movement to bring humanity and wilderness together began with a call to action by Henry David Thoreau in 1862, in his essay “Huckleberry”. Thoreau argues for the need of everyday civilians to reestablish their relationship with the wilderness in the form of parks and trails. This created a less threatening atmosphere over the years as the woods slowly became less daunting. In reaction to Henry David Thoreau’s call for urbanites to reenter nature, John Muir wrote: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, overcivilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but fountains of life" (Callicott). This movement continued, parks were built, and hiking trails maintained, and years have brought an upsurge in interest in enjoying nature via hiking, specifically in the United States in the past ten years:

In addition to the "Wild"⁶ effect, he (Trimble⁷) believes hiking is increasing in popularity because more people are discovering the nation's various trail systems and learning about the concept of long-distance hiking. "I also think the Millennials, and even Gen Z, are putting a lot more value on experiences than on monetary items and career advancement," he says. "Cultural shifts have definitely played a role in the number of people getting out on the trails. (McManus)

Such cultural shifts in generational thinking about nature have led to age-specific groups to reconsider their sources of happiness and wellbeing. According to Melanie Radzicki McManus, the recent popular memoir *Wild*; by Cheryl Strayed, speaks to a new social media trend of showcasing one's adventures in the wild. McManus tracks the rise in hiking interest in up-and-coming generations:

Hiking is now the fourth most-popular outdoor activity in the U.S., after running, fishing and biking, according to The Outdoor Foundation's 2018 Outdoor Participation Report. The report noted that 44.9 million people hit the trails in 2017, up from 30 million in 2006. The biggest jump in participation came between 2015 and 2016. (McManus)

This return to nature has also marked a characteristic change in the way people think about their life choices and decisions.

The Devil, literary scapegoat and antagonist extraordinaire, has seen his own evolution throughout literary history, and I would like to explore the path of this new Devil. We will start where all things start, at the beginning, in a story meant to educate the masses. We will then

⁶ "The Wild Effect" is a term regarding the rise in hiking rates due to the literary influence of the memoir, *Wild*, by Cheryl Strayed in which Strayed's "which chronicles her 1,100-mile (1,770-kilometer) solo hike along the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from California to Washington state" (McManus).

⁷ Trimble refers to the park ranger McManus interviews for the article.

move through time as fiction takes turn after turn in forms of education, fear, seduction and adventure, carrying with it the Devil and all his baggage. This exploration of the Devil and his evolution as a sympathetic character will dip and dive through some of the most renowned literature, as well as some of the least known, in order to understand the development of this literary trope. Beginning with Dante Alighieri, reflection on the Christian Devil, we will then move to John Milton, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott, Edgar Allan Poe, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and several in between until we come to the present with a focus on not only literary, but also pop cultural icons such as Disney's Cruella de Vil from *101 Dalmatians* (1961) and film Devils such as in those inspired by the graphic novels of Neil Gaiman, Mike Carey, and Holly Black, all of which influenced the television series, *Lucifer* (2015).

The Devil's Playground: What Started in a Garden Ends in the Woods

But before we begin, we must enter the world of the Devil: the woods. Why woods? What about a collection of trees and living creatures scattered about is so terrifying and so hellish that it was assigned to such a character? The woods have hosted the Devil and his worshippers for centuries, starting with the smallest of characters, such as Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," (1835) and continuing today with the Spellman family in Netflix's *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018). The usage of the woods as the domain of the Devil and all his bidding can be traced back to the human race's first encounter with its tempter: the serpent and Eve. Disrupting the relationship between humans and God, the serpent serves as the principal antagonist or even a proto-devil. In John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1658), the poet asks:

Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

Th' infernal Serpent. He it was whose guile

Stirred up with envy and revenge deceived

The mother of mankind (Milton 1. 33-36).

The scene begins in the Garden of Eden, with a newly formed Adam and Eve prancing about their daily doings, when suddenly enter the Serpent – humanity’s first antagonist, as we see in *Genesis*.

Adam and Eve find themselves the first protagonists of the Bible, tempted by a Serpent, that lures them in its nonhuman guise to break their covenant with God. The Serpent convinces them to break the word of God in a fury of apple biting. But before we focus on the characters in this origin story, let us focus on the first setting of the Devil’s doings: The Garden of Eden. This story of Eden provides us with two specific features: the first is the setting of the “garden” rather than the jungle, forest or woods. A garden implies: “an enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit or vegetables” (Oxford English Dictionary, “Garden, n1”). The “garden” alludes to a place in which life flourishes. All needs are met via the natural occurrence of food and water, and any sort of society or community that could exist in this place would be peaceful and made for habitation of human beings. Such a managed natural space contrasts sharply with the term “forest⁸” or “woods⁹”, both of which are associated with “dense growth” or “overgrown” life and thus allude to a lack of human intervention or maintenance.

The Devil returns to the woods in many stories. Nathaniel Hawthorne reflected on his Puritan heritage in his short story “Young Goodman Brown” (1835). Upon meeting the Devil in the woods, Young Goodman Brown begins to question his faith, and becomes uncontrollably paranoid about human goings on. *Lolly Willowes* (1926) by Sylvia Townsend Warner also returns to the woods, when Lolly makes a pact with the Devil to remain a woman alone in the

⁸ *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* defines “forest” as: “an extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth, sometimes intermingled with pasture” (“Forest, n1”).

⁹ *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* defines “wood” as: “a collection of trees growing more or less thickly together of considerable extent, usually larger than a grove or copse and smaller than a forest” (“Wood, n1”).

world. In a conversation with Satan, Lolly contemplates the connection between the woods and the Devil:

Once a wood, always a wood. The words rang true, and she sat in silence, considering them. Pious Asa might hew down the groves, but as far as the Devil was concerned he hewed in vain. Once a wood, always a wood: trees where he sat would crowd into shade. And people going by in broad sunlight would be aware of slow voices overhead, and a sudden chill would fall upon their flesh. (Warner 189)

Lolly acknowledges the inability of humans ever truly to control the woods, to tame the natural backdrop of the Devil. This lack of human intervention and control is what in fact leads our Devil to his assigned home. A discomfort experienced by humanity in a natural setting it cannot control; recalls the Biblical story of expulsion from an ideal natural world – The Garden of Eden. This discomfort also reflects anxieties about unknown environmental forces, in which predators and other evils lurk in the darkness of the woods. The woods provided the perfect setting for characters with different cultural backgrounds and values who might seek out the Devil to fulfill desires that deviate from the norm. Stories like this have fallen under the genre of a “Devil in the Woods Story”; or rather, a tale of Christian morality in Puritanical literature. These stories act as fables to steer children in Puritan families away from the woods, in order to maintain their form of social order. Nathaniel Hawthorne presents his own take on the “Devil in the Woods” in “Young Goodman Brown” (1835), in which he questions the effectiveness of blaming the Devil for the horrible happenings when Brown enters the woods. Stories such as Mark Twain’s “Letters from Earth” (1904), Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (1955) or Stephen

King's "The Man in the Black Suit" (1994) followed similar traditions, introducing the Devil to human protagonists who then question their faith and the humanity as a whole.

The demystification of the woods has left open the opportunity for authors to place the Devil in new environments; environments that range from the traditional woods or natural background, to an underground sanctuary built by mad scientists under Venice, or to the big city of angels: Los Angeles. The business hot spot for the Devil has evolved from the woods to the imagined spaces of Hell and mischief. Kai Meyer's *Dark Reflections Trilogy* (2010) depicts a devil called "The Lord of Light" (Meyer 437) who reigns over an underground Hell described as a "sea of tortoise shells, shoved over and under one another, some tilted, others broken. Domes of rock stretched among towers, minarets, and pyramids, under bridges and paths and grillwork. No area was unbuilt, all spaces were inhabited" (437-438). The Lord of Light rules Hell from his palace, the Axis Mundi. Mike Carey's *Lucifer* (2013) depicts a Lucifer who spends his time in a night club in Los Angeles that he owns, called Lux, decorated in Art Deco golds and blacks. These newer environments are just a small piece of the evolution of the Devil and his changing position in literature.

Many protagonists have valued their time parading around the woods, just as I did in my youth, flanked by a young orange and white cat, named Pretty Boy. Pretty Boy and I were inseparable, an odd-looking sight under the cover of a leafy canopy. What a *familiar* and wonderful memory to lead us into our next discussion: the Devil, his witches, and their familiars.

The Devil and his Dames: The Devil's Preference for Women

And now, as we break from the woods, I move from the different kinds of comfort that nature provides to the more chilling topic of what exactly would have *met* the Devil in the woods. Lolly once described the Devil as "a man who can never hold out against women"

(Warner 188), before proceeding to contemplate why the Devil fell in with a more feminine crowd. While stories have often featured male heroes influenced by the Devil, much devilish lore has sported female protagonists. As we saw earlier, humanity's first confrontation with its antagonist took the form of an exchange between a Serpent and a woman: Eve. The connection of villainy or devilry with the female sex acted as not only a contrast to the connection of the male subject and his God, but also as a solution for the oppressed. Centuries of literature have documented the plight of women crushed under a patriarchy that masquerades traditional Christian values. In her lesser-known novel, *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, (1866) Louisa May Alcott writes about a character named Rosamond Vivian, who claims in the first few lines of the novel:

I tell you I cannot bear it! I shall do something desperate if this life is not changed soon. It gets worse and worse, and I often feel as if I'd gladly sell my soul to Satan for a year of freedom! (Alcott 1).

The novel was published as a serial in a magazine and follows the ideal woman in good social standing as she fights to live her own life outside the clutches of men. Rosamond, unable to reach the Devil in Alcott's novel, runs away with the dashing but scandalous Phillip Tempest, who fills the shoes of a devil in his seduction and claim the virtuous Rosamond. Like the Devil in most stories in which he is featured, Tempest does not release Rosamond from patriarchy altogether, but rather replaces her grandfather's rules with his own. This novel is a key example of women's need for the Devil in a social system that strove to hold them down, and those who did not follow the expectations of subservience to father or husband were bound to be cast aside. These social norms included men as heads of the household, and women as homemakers. Women married young and had many children, while men married equally young and worked to

provide for the family. Any woman who chose not to follow this set of gendered social expectations became an old maid, leading to spinsterhood and disempowerment. Along with widows, spinsters would be cast to the outskirts of towns or villages. Many of the interests and talents of these women, who were required to survive completely on their own, were then called into question, regardless of how potentially valuable that knowledge might have been. Herbalism was spurned as witchlike, just as potions made for simple matters of health were deemed morally suspect. Wisdom coming from a life on edge and a different experience than a married woman appeared presumptuous. A woman living without the assistance of a man was unthinkable. Add the companionship of an animal, a cat perhaps, and on came the accusation that that animal was a familiar, a gift from the Devil.

Another example of such spurned knowledge is Lolly in *Lolly Willowes* by Sylvia Townsend Warner. Lolly, following the death of her father, moves to the protection of her brother. As an unmarried woman, she begins to live a life shuttled between siblings' households. She battles against a patriarchy that labels her a spinster because of her lack of interest in the fulfilling the societal roles assigned to women. Because of this, she finds herself running toward the only alternative: the Devil. She enters a pact with the Devil in order to find freedom from her brother and nephew. After the pact has been arranged, a familiar exchanged and a deal done, Lolly enters into a comradeship with the Devil and in the later part of the novel discusses his tendencies towards women:

Women have such vivid imaginations, and lead such dull lives. Their pleasure in life is so soon over; they are so dependent upon others, and their dependence so soon becomes a nuisance... When I think of witches, I seem to see all over England, all over Europe, women living and growing old, as common as

blackberries, and as unregarded. I see them, wives and sisters of respectable men, chapel members, and blacksmiths, and small farmers, and Puritans. In places like Bedfordshire, the sort of country one sees from the train. You know. Well, there they were, there they are, child-rearing, house-keeping, hanging washed dishcloths on currant bushes; and for diversion each other's silly conversation, and listening to men talking together in the way that men talk and women listen. Quite different to the way women talk, and men listen, if they listen at all. And all the time being thrust further down into dullness when the one thing all women hate is to be thought dull... And think, Satan, what a compliment you pay her, pursuing her soul, lying in wait for it, following it though all its windings, crafty and patient and secret like a gentleman out killing tigers. Her soul – when no one else would give a look at her body even! (193-195)

A patriarchy reigning over the Western world, leaving women out in the cold to do as they are told and continue the tradition of living in the shadows of the men they are attached to provided the literary canon and the Devil an ample opportunity to claim a world of his own. Raised in a Christian household, Lolly would likely have been familiar with the creation story in *Genesis*, in which we learn, “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, / That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Genesis, 6.1-2.) The earliest of Judeo-Christian literature proclaimed women as property of and less empowered than men. God seems to express a preference for men. Therefore, in the tradition of always doing the opposite of his holy counterpart, the Devil prefers women.

Witchcraft: Not All the Devil's Wenches

A large part of the reputation of our dear Devil is actually based on his ability to grant women an escape from an overbearing patriarchy via witchcraft. This tradition is not exclusively literary, spreading through the other art like a blight, taking innocent men and women down with every accusation. However, though the historical aspects of witchcraft have cost many their lives, and some their reputation, witchcraft has grown in the Occult entertainment industry and flourished as a religion all its own. Because of this, the reputation of witches has been uneven over the centuries, documented in yellowing pages throughout the world. These documents range from short stories, to plays, to actual court documents staining the participants with ignorance and shame as the subsequent generations recognize the flaws in their logic. These faults cost many women, and men, their lives as they were accused of consorting with the Devil via acts of black magic and witchcraft. These cases are not as few and far between as we might care to recognize, and as Nathaniel Hawthorne stated, in response to his family's participation in the Salem Witch Trials in 1692 "...I, the present writer, as their representative, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes, and pray that any curse incurred by them—as I have heard, and as the dreary and unprosperous condition of the race, for many a long year back, would argue to exist—may be now and henceforth removed" (Hawthorne 20). Regardless of the effort of the successors of these tragic trials, the sentiment remains in the written evidence: witchcraft was condemned by the common man, and accusations resulted in cruelty or death. Why, though, were those accused of practicing witchcraft put to death?

In the Puritan colonies, those accused of witchcraft were imagined to have consorted with the Devil. In the play *The Crucible* (1952) by Arthur Miller, audiences are confronted with the flawed logic of the Puritans during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. The belief of the Puritans

was based upon a Christian doctrine, with somewhat stricter guidelines. One of those guidelines included witchcraft and a strong belief in the words of *Exodus*: “Thou shall not suffer a witch to live” (*Exodus* 22:18). Puritans believed that the tests they put forth for an accused witch were legitimate acts that could discern their disloyalty to God. Reverend Hale states: “We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her” (Miller 38). Puritanical law required an accused witch to confess to witchcraft or to suffer the trials. The reasoning behind this devilry was that the Puritanical Devil was after the souls of good Christians, intent on misleading them and taking their eternal souls away from God and Heaven to be damned in Hell. Reverend Hale mentions that: “What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is best the Devil wants” (41). The structure of the colonies depended on the complete obedience of citizens under religious and non-religious laws in order to maintain civility in a new land, among a native¹⁰ people with whom they were not friendly.

Heading into the 1920s, literature enters a time focused on the individual. This concept of the self and self-awareness brings with it a sense of responsibility in each person for their own actions and choices. With this, the devil, a character mostly used as a scape goat for so long, becomes a character also in need of a self. In Sylvia Townsend Warner’s 1926 modernist novel about a witch and her search for self, *Lolly Willowes*, a new Devil begins to take shape. Warner camouflages this change amongst witch lore and key devil worshipping characteristics classic to

¹⁰ In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown” (1835), the Native Americans were considered “devils,” and the use of an early political devil to separate the Puritans from the Indians is identified in the comment from Goodman Brown: “‘There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,’ said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, ‘What if the devil himself should be at my elbow!’” and the thought process that went from Native American to devil in extremity.

the genre, such as a cat given as a familiar and mysterious coincidences happening around Lolly dependent on her desires. However, the changes in the Devil as a literary trope, are evident in descriptions of his appearance and actions. Logically, now, we can separate the spinsters from witchcraft. Spinsters no longer appear dangerous, but merely eccentric, and their choice to remain unmarried is simply that: a personal choice rather than a dark and mystical dealing. A pet, particularly a cat, is not a gift in exchange for a pact with the Devil, but simply a companion, another beating heart in the house.

The Devil's Gifts: Familiars

As a replacement for the common patriarchal structure in Western society, the Devil offers another option to women in the place of a husband and a life under male rule. This comes in the form of something specific, in the guise of a witch's familiar. According to *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, a familiar is a "demon spirit or evil spirit supposed to attend at call" ("Familiar, nB3"); additionally, the familiar serves an important role in the art of witchcraft, and functions as a symbol of the pact between the witch and the Devil. These animal companions acted as a comfort to women exiled from society via their choice to remain husbandless, or due to their interests in subjects that aligned them with the occult, such as herbalism and medicine. Cats are the species that become the most notable to fall victim to the suspicion of being a witch's familiar, because their reputation for arrogance and agility lends itself towards devilish qualities. If dogs, once domesticated, are blindly loyal, cats come and go as they please, almost as if they had some business to attend to in the woods.

Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* (1926), places special emphasis upon the familiar: a little white kitten named Vinegar Tom. Vinegar Tom gets quite a lot of attention for a

familiar, especially since his bite is a sign of the official blood pact made official with Satan and Lolly:

She, Laura Willowes, in England, in the year 1922, had entered into a compact with the Devil. The compact was made, and affirmed, and sealed with the round red seal of her blood. She remembered the woods, she remembered her wiles cry for help, and the silence that had followed it as though in ratification... Couched within the wood, sleeping through the long sultry afternoon, had lain the Prince of Darkness; sleeping, or meditating some brooding thunderstorm of his own. Her voice of desperate need had aroused him, his silence had answered her with a pledge. (142)

Unlike many familiars in fiction that came before, Vinegar Tom holds the responsibility of enacting and sealing the deal between Lolly and Satan. After biting her, Lolly realizes what role the kitten plays in her new life as a witch: “The kitten was her familiar spirit, that already had greeted its mistress, and sucked her blood” (142). And while she questions the ability of something so tiny to be successful as a familiar – “Strange that anything so small and weak should be the Devil’s Officer, plenipotentiary of such a power” (143) – she acknowledges its place in her new home: “Poor little creature, no doubt it missed the Devil, its warm nest in his shaggy flanks, its play with imp companions” (143). Vinegar Tom continues to be a multi-dimensional character as he begins to cause trouble for Titus, Lolly’s nephew, who overstays his welcome. He is even given greater complexity as he does so:

All this had unsettled her victim a great deal, but it had not unseated him, and meanwhile it was sufficiently unsettling for her. So far, she thought, the scheme and its execution had been the kitten’s – she could recognize Vinegar’s playful

methods. She gave him credit for doing his best. But he was young and inexperienced, this was probably his first attempt at serious persecution... (175)

Lolly supplies elaborate detail about Vinegar Tom's attempts to be a good familiar by ridding her of her problems. This is similar to our next familiar, who while nameless is more prevalent than familiars before *Lolly Willowes*.



Untitled, Sylvia Andersen, 2019.



The Discovery of Witches, Matthew Hopkins, 1647.

This next familiar is the frog in the television series *Salem* (2014), starring Janet Montgomery as Mary Sibley. The series tells the story of the witches who inspired and coerced the people of Salem Massachusetts to begin the infamous witch trials in order to fulfill a blood atonement to bring forth the Devil from Hell to rule over Earth. While very loosely based on the historical Witch Trials of 1692, the use of witch lore is extremely detailed, right up to the use of familiars not only as companions, but as an immortal source for sacrifices and rituals. The rituals include one similar to possession in which Mary Sibley shoves the frog familiar down the throat of her husband, Mr. Sibley, who is a prominent man in the community. The ritual paralyzes him, allowing Mary Sibley to assume a position of power in a Puritan society that otherwise would not allow a woman to take a governmental position. During spell casting, Mary also uses her

froggy friend as a ritual sacrifice to complete the spell, knowing that, despite being killed, the familiar will eventually return to her unharmed and alive once again. Anne Hale, another witch in the series, is gifted a mouse as a familiar she uses in the same manner, but with whom she forms an attachment to and names Brown Jenkins because of the brownish tint in his fur.

Another example is Salem, in the Netflix original drama, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018). Salem is a demon in the guise of a black cat, called upon by Sabrina in a summoning spell she performed in the first episode. She rings a bell several times between the lines of the spell, and calls forth for a familiar to come to her:

Spirits of the forest, I pronounce my intentions to thee

Come forth and seek me and equal we will be.

Not master and servant, but familiar to familiar

To share our knowledge, our spirit and our traits.

And now spirits, we will wait. (16:00-16:36)

Salem is also Sabrina's familiar in the graphic novel *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, which features a witty and even defiant animal companion. On one occasion in Issue Three, he scolds Sabrina for calling him a pet, stating "I am no pet! I am a familiar!" (Aguirre-Sacasa 19). There is a distinction between pet and familiar that is important to recognize as a status in witch lore. Ownership is aligned with the term pet, while a form of equality, as seen in Sabrina's incantations above, is central to the familiar-witch relationship.

The Devil in the Details: The Devil's Appearance

Bound up in witchcraft and devilry is a morality tale older than the Salem Witch Trials, as Arthur Miller muses in *The Crucible*:

Like Reverend Hale and the others on this stage, we conceive the Devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an earth without a “sky”. Since 1692 a great but superficial change has wiped out God’s beard and the Devil’s horns, but the world is still gripped between two diametrically opposed absolutes. (Miller 33).

And without further ado, I turn now to the aesthetics of our Devil: his physical form and other ostensibly “superficial changes.”

Literature has given readers conflicting imagery when it comes to the descriptions of the Devil. Like any good antagonist, he has spooked the hearts with shadows and gloom, but also seduced and tempted with his good looks. There is more than freedom that has attracted people, especially women, to the Devil. Certain qualities used in a form of seductive dance are our next stop in the Devil’s transition. His consistent association with the feminine sex has also earned him a famed handsomeness, reminiscent of the agreed upon stigma against beauty by society, i.e. a male model, or very fit male specimen. However, this was not always the case. His appearance has transformed along with his reputation, following the negative and positive connotations assigned to him at the time. We are going to follow the line of these appearances and their changes here, examining the connection between his physical form and his position, whether protagonist or antagonist.

In early literature, we find the Devil in the physical form of symbols. His very first appearance is not necessarily as himself, but rather in the guise of a serpent. Legless and low to the ground, the serpent bears the burden of tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, leading the book

of *Genesis* to tell the story of what happens to those who defy God. The Serpent is then condemned to writhe along the dirt for all of eternity, banished from the garden and cursed.

However, the Devil himself begins his life as one of the more beautiful of God's angels, Lucifer, the Morning Star. Before his rebellion, Lucifer reigned as Satan in Dante's *Inferno* (1300):

The emperor of the realm of grief protruded
From mid-breast up above the surrounding ice.
A giant's height, and mine, would have provided
Closer comparison than would the size
Of his arm and a giant. Envision the whole
That is proportionate to parts like these.
If he was truly once as beautiful
As he is ugly now, and raised his brows
Against his Maker – then all sorrow may well
Come out of him. How great a marvel it was
For me to see three faces on his head:
In front there was a red one; joined to this,
Each over the midpoint of a shoulder, he had
Two others – all three joining at the crown.
That on the right appeared to be a shade
Of whitish yellow; the third had such a mien
As those who come from where the Nile descends.
Two wings spread forth from under each face's chin,
Strong, and befitting such a bird, immense –
I have never seen at sea so broad a sail –
Unfeathered, batlike, and issuing three winds
That went forth as he beat them, to freeze the whole
Realm of Cocytus that surrounded him.
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. (Pinsky XXXIV.31-58)

He sits in a crater at the center of the Earth, having fallen from Heaven to reign over Hell as punishment. He has three faces, each of which is weeping and chewing eternally on the three worst traitors of humanity: Judas, Cassius and Brutus¹¹. All three of these traitors betrayed the

¹¹ The three traitors represent treachery against the State (Italy) as well as the Roman Catholic Church. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ the night before his crucifixion. The other two traitors are Brutus and Cassius who both betrayed and took part in the demise of Julius Caesar in the Roman Senate.

Church and the State. Judas betrayer of Jesus Christ when he kissed him on the cheek to single him out among the apostles the night before he appeared before Pontius Pilot betrayed the Church in his betrayal of the Savior. Both Cassius and Brutus plotted against Caesar, the emperor most closely related to the success of the Roman Empire, therefore betrayed the state. To pay for these crimes against Christianity and Italy, Dante abandons his characters to the jaws of his three faced Devil.

Moving from Dante, we find ourselves enthralled with one of the earliest representations of Lucifer, a Devil given a name. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1658) brings the traditional Christian Devil into the light as a fascinating antagonist. The fascination begins with the emphasis on the description of the Devil immediately after his fall from Heaven. He is described as a gargantuan angel, still with signs of the divine though the brightness of that light is fading. In his introduction to the W.W. Norton 2005 critical edition of *Paradise Lost*, editor Gordon Teskey explains:

In Milton's Satan we do not see the horrible figure of the medieval imagination, chewing and excreting the damned in Hell. We see the darkened splendor and the reserved, explosive power of an archangel: "He above the rest / In shape and gesture proudly eminent / Stood like a tower" (1. 589-91)." (Milton xxiii)

Following in the footsteps of Alighieri Dante, who imagined that not even the size of the giants that guarded the Devil could be used as a comparison to the size of Lucifer, Milton also lays heavy emphasis on the sheer size, the mass of Satan, constantly referencing how his body is positioned, and comparing it to infamous landscapes in lines such as:

With head uplift above the wave and eyes
That sparkling blazed. His other parts besides,

Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
 Lay floating many a rood¹² in bulk as huge
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size:

Titanian or Earth-born that warred on Jove. (Milton 1. 193-198)

And also in lines like “So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay” (1. 209). Just the sheer mass that is described as the body of Satan is a concept that baffles the mortal mind.

However, while this Devil is intimidating in size, he is given a more human quality as well, when described using his spear while “He walked with to support uneasy steps / Over the burling marl” (1. 295-296). Suddenly we are confronted with a fiend, a Devil that up until Milton’s work has been described as beastly and nonhuman. The ability to extend compassion to such an antagonist is minimal until his qualities are more similar to our own. Having a description of a weapon that he used against God, while proving his malintent, also allows us to see a weakness. The fallen archangel has trouble navigating the new land, despite his gargantuan size, and his remaining divinity. He uses his weapon to steady himself, as if it were a walking stick in the wood.

We are also suddenly given the impression that knowledge, and the mind are important to the Devil. Satan states that:

The mind is its own place and in itself
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell out of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same
 And what I should be: all but less than He
 Whom thunder hath made greater?” (1. 254-258).

¹² “Rood”, as defined by footnote 196, is “a measure of distance, six to eight yards” (Milton 8).

The changes in his own appearance, as well as those who followed his fall, are insignificant to Milton's Satan. He is unashamed of his loss: "Though changed in outward luster" (1. 97), he is convinced that he will fight God again, and has decided "To wage by force or guile eternal war / Irreconcilable to our grand foe" (1. 121-122). His stubbornness and desire to overthrow God via intelligence and force are more important than his changing appearance or spiritual essence.

This idea moves into so many new opportunities for writers to dress up the Devil however they want to. Puritan literature returned to the medieval idea of a cloven-hooved beast, intent only on seducing humanity into ultimate sin. Arthur Miller mimics these depictions in his choice of dialogue: "(T)he Devil's touch is heavier than sick. It's death, y'know, its death drivin' into them, forked and hooved" (Miller 13). However, Puritan literature also recognized the ability of the fallen angel to change his form in order to maintain appearances, and to trick humans into doing his bidding. Upon entering the woods, before meeting anyone, Young Goodman Brown comments, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!" (340). However, Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" found a Devil that looked like an ordinary man: "...He passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him" (340). Goodman Brown continues his journey, referring to the Devil as the "fellow traveler" (340), inwardly commenting that

As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveler was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable

air of one who knew the world, and would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. (340-341)

This description of the Devil that Brown meets is meant to focus on a Puritan idea that the Devil can shift form in order to become more appealing to his victims. By wearing finer clothing that reflected the position of a well-mannered Puritan man, the Devil is able to walk beside Brown without initial superstition. However, while Brown is less curious, Hawthorne also left hints at the Devil's identity with the snake like staff, referencing the serpent from the creation story in *Genesis*. There is also a perceived arrogance about his person, which Brown attributes to confidence that would allow him to feel "unabashed at the governor's dinner table" (340). Arrogance is sinful, and therefore such behavior allows the audience to see what Brown cannot immediately recognize: he is walking in the woods with the Devil himself. The Devil's features continued to morph, coming to a new form in Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*, in which the Devil is mostly presented in the guise of a gamekeeper and an elderly gardener when he is in the presence of Lolly. At their first formal meeting, Lolly describes him:

Whistling to himself, a man came out of the wood. He walked with a peculiarly slow and easy gait, and he had a stick in his hand, an untrimmed rod pulled from the woof. He switched at the head of a tall thistle, and Laura saw the dew fly off the astonished blossom... She thought he must be a gamekeeper, for he wore gaiters and a corduroy coat. His face was brown and wrinkled, and his teeth were

as white and even as a dog's. Laura liked his appearance. He had a pleasant, rather detached air, which suited well with the early morning. (168-69)

Later, when she meets the Devil again, she describes him again:

...She saw a gardener come out of the enclosure, carrying a flag basket and a pair of shears. He came towards her, and something about the rather slouching and prowling gait struck her as being familiar. She looked more closely, and recognized Satan. (187).

Lolly has no reason to fear a fellow gardener, or an elderly man going about his daily duties as a gardener. When this conversation is taking place, Lolly is walking through a public garden, and seeing the caretaker would not be alarming. This is comforting to Lolly because of her own connection with nature, and her desire to be alone in her own garden. He is non-threatening, and does not intimidate her, even when they are in spaces alone together. Moving forward appearances change more as the Devil's name is used in vain, being applied to political figures and taking form in their skins in songs such as Don McLean's "American Pie" (1972).

Another description of the Devil worth looking at is that of "The Lord of Light" (Meyer 437) in Kai Meyer's *Dark Reflections Trilogy* (2010). Originally published in German, the young adult novels follow the adventures of Merle and Serafin as they attempt to help Venice defeat the Egyptian army in a dystopian world. In search of help to defeat the Pharaoh, Merle plunges to the center of the Earth, to Hell. This Hell is run by the Lord of Light, an older man, named Professor Burbridge. He has "thick, gray hair" (511) and wearing:

...A black frock coat, narrowly cut, with a flower of red glass on the lapel. His trousers were also black, and his pointed patent leather shoes gleamed. The golden chain of a watch hung in a semicircular loop out of his jacket pocket, as if

the shape were mimicking the dark circles under his eyes. Merle had never seen such dark circles, as dark as if they were painted. Nevertheless, he didn't act tired, or exhausted, quite the contrary. He radiated a liveliness that belied his age. (513)

This Devil is much different than the Devils previously described as his appearance as an older man, as a scientist, is not a disguise at all. Dr. Burbridge is a scientist, he is older and he is also the Devil. He has no need to hide his true self from the other characters as he presents himself as the Devil from the first meeting. Unlike Lolly's Devil who must shield himself in guises to walk among humans, Dr. Burbridge walks around Hell as his own Devil, in his own skin.

Fast forward a decade or so to another look at the devil: pop cultural icons. Pop culture begins to give the Devil a new physical identity in graphic novels such as the *Sandman* (2013) series by Neil Gaiman. This series depicts Lucifer as a tall, suave, rich club owner in the streets of Los Angeles, in which his handsome good looks get him anything he wants as he hides from his responsibility as King of Hell. This Devil is the Devil we will look at now, exploring his appearance in the Gaiman series, as well as the two spin-off series, both titled *Lucifer*, by Mike Carey (2013) and Holly Black (2016). In *American Horror Story* (2012) Leah refers to the Devil as a creature with the potential to haunt humanity with his intense beauty: "The Devil is real. And he's not a little red man with a tail. He can be beautiful. Because he's a fallen angel, and he used to be god's favorite" (Rhymer). This could not have been put better as we examine the physical features of the graphic novel and film adaptations of Neil Gaiman's Lucifer. In Gaiman's series *Sandman*, Lucifer appears more beautiful angel than demon. He is drawn to be fit, muscular and tall. His shoulders are wide to reflect a masculine ideal, and his hair is blonde to reference his original spot as the Lord's Brightest Angel, His Morningstar. He has features familiar to statues chiseled by the Greeks, and this appearance transfers to the television series,

Lucifer (2015) in which the changes are subtle. The graphic novels that continue the story of Lucifer by Mike Carey and Holly Black also continue to paint this Lucifer as more angel than demon, keeping him in white clothing. The clothing is supposed to be reflective of a wealthier man who only wears designer labels. His convertible is also white, and it is described in the first page of the graphic novel:

When the Devil arrived in Los Angeles, he drove in a long white convertible, with the top down, the scent of brimstone on the wind behind him. People had to look away when they saw him for fear of falling in love right then and there. (Black 13)

While the graphic novels by Gaiman, Carey and Black all reflect the original blonde Lucifer from *Sandman*, the television adaptation removes the blonde Lucifer and introduces references to a more classical Devil with darker features including black hair and a preference for black clothing. The opening of the show mimics the first page of Black's adaptation, beginning with Lucifer driving through Los Angeles in a convertible, but the car is black and the opening depicts his entrance to the human world: "In the beginning... the angel Lucifer was cast out of Heaven and condemned to rule Hell for all eternity. Until he decided to take a vacation..." (00:01-00:11). Played by actor Tom Ellis, the character is still society's ideal beauty: tall, slim and broad shouldered, but now with black hair and dark eyes.

And following this ideal of a beautiful and seductive Devil, but paying homage to the classical cloven-hooved Satan, Netflix's original series, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) provides two images of the same Devil. The first "Dark Lord" with whom we come into contact. The first is based on the image of Satan from the Temple of Satan featured in the

teachings and writings of Anton Szandor LaVey¹³. There is not only a CGI Devil that makes a rare appearance to Lilith throughout the show, but also a statue in the middle of the School for Unseen Arts Sabrina attends. The image reflects a half goat, half man creature. The head of a goat sits on the torso of a man, with legs of a goat holding it up. His mouth is full of gnarly teeth, and large protruding claws with unkept talons replace hands at the ends of his arms. However, after the successful ascension of the Dark Lord to Earth, he takes a human form, played by Luke Cook. Cook plays the Dark Lord, Lucifer Morningstar, as himself from head to hoof, his body and legs resembling a fully human body, but goat legs emanating from his knees down. The clever throwback to a cloven hooved Puritanical and Medieval Devil is almost nostalgic, while the Luke Cook Devil is still more contemporary in his mostly human form.

As we have made our way through centuries of European and American literature and explored the changing physical forms of the Devil, I will now examine another alluring part of the Devil's makeup: his musical tendencies...

Play Me Out: The Devil and Music

Music; as well as visual arts, must be considered in an examination of the Devil and his journey through the centuries. In Puritanical law such forms of aesthetic extravagance were often outlawed. It has been a "truth" universally acknowledged, when talk of Puritans is involved, that activities of the performative arts were reserved for worshipping, not for entertainment. However, upon further investigation, such a notion may be a misconception, based on laws that strictly outlawed only specific kinds of music. Percy A. Scholes, in 1933, wrote in *The Music Quarterly* specifically about the Puritans and their connections to music. He reflected on a false historical claim that Puritans disdained all forms of music. Instead, however, Scholes found that

¹³ The Church of Satan actually sued Netflix and Warner Brothers for illegal use of their icon in November 2018, almost halting the continuation of the series. (Castillo)

the Puritans were actually music lovers, who simply disowned certain music that therefore became aligned with the Devil. Scholes argues: “You may find in Puritan England ordinances regulating street music and tavern music (both still under regulation in our present-day quite un-Puritan England). But it is, as I have said, impossible to find any enactment whatever against music *as such*” (Scholes 4). He goes on to cite music-loving Puritans such as Oliver Cromwell, who “... had attached to his court a little body of ten of the most admired vocal and instrumental performers of the day, much as the Stuart kings who proceeded him” (4) and John Milton, whose poetry we visited earlier, who played the organ. Scholes also states that music was held in high esteem by educators of both young Puritan men and women, leading to apprenticeships for some young men who would later become musicians in churches. This misconception of a ban on music by Puritans can be partly attributed to the ban on spoken dramas, and tavern regulations. Music, when combined with physical delights such as dancing or in combination with alcohol, was frowned upon because such behavior was regarded as devilish. Music, on the whole, however, was not under such strict regulation. Nevertheless, a connection between music and the Devil lingers in Puritan law when it comes to pursuing passions such as music divorced from Puritan purpose. This brings us to the present day, with a musically charmed Devil, Lucifer.

One of the attractions of Lucifer Morningstar in the television 2015 show *Lucifer* is his musical inclinations. Owning a nightclub, Lux, Lucifer plays the piano quite often throughout the first season of the show. Sticking to the Devil’s love of wordplay, he usually plays songs that reference himself, such as “All Along the Watchtower”, by Bob Dylan in Season Two, Episode One. These scenes call to mind the attraction of the arts as a form of seduction discussed in Elizabeth Grosz’s monograph article “Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth” (2008). Grosz discusses the seductive purpose of music, and the connection between

music and the animalistic urge for sexual gratification that is satisfied or ignited by music. Grosz asks, "Is music what we share with animals, an outcome of our animal heritage; or is it that which distinguishes the human from the animal?" (Grosz 30). Grosz revisits the evolutionary argument that music precedes spoken language and that animals employed the principles of rhythm and vibration to seduce their partners. Beginning with the examples of birds and mating calls, she explains that such sonic seduction extends to humans. Vibration elicits physical reaction: "...there is something about vibration, even in the most primitive of creatures, that generates pleasurable or intensifying passions, excites organs, and invests movements with greater force or energy" (33). Grosz argues that at their origin forms of art are connected to the non-human passions, such as emotional reactions and carnal pleasures ("body and the earth"), in contrast with the so-called human aptitudes for reasons and the word. This theory can therefore be applied to our Devil and his tendency to indulge in the nonhuman, allowing our animal passions or desires to trump human reason. "Of all the arts," Grosz argues, "music is the most immediately moving, the most visceral and contagious in its effects, the form that requires the least formal or musical education or background knowledge for appreciation, though of course, as with all cultural forms, music cannot be considered universal or culturally unmediated" (29). The Devil acts as a nonhuman entity, an immortal being playing the chords of human desire as easily as a finely tuned violin. Moving from *Lolly Willows* in which Lolly is encouraged by her Devil to do as she pleases, toward a political Devil who manipulates to achieve his own agenda, we see a common thread of selfishness and self-gratification actions of the Devil. He acts as a bridge between human desire and various animalistic means of achieving it. What defines the nonhuman in this matter is the instinctual and animalistic need to indulge in the less socially accepted behaviors, such as nonprocreative sex. The repression of these animal qualities,

specifically in the societies of the early 1900s, led to the use of the arts to express such inner turmoil. Grosz explains:

What music and the arts indicate is that taste and erotic appeal are not reducible to the pragmatic world of survival, although of course subject to its broad principle as a limit: they indicate that those living beings that “really live,” that intensify life – for its own sake, for the sake of intensify or sensation – bring something new to the world, create something that has no other purpose than to intensify, to experience itself. Music and art are the opening up of the pragmatic world of performed and judged actions to qualities, the opening up of life to taste, to sexuality, to erotic appeal, to excessiveness. (39)

This translates to the use of music as a visceral passion, aiding in the natural but animal instinct to reproduce for the species’ survival. However, despite the biological need for reproduction, the repressive operations of many Western cultures have stigmatized sexual expression as animalistic. Music, therefore, steps in to seduce in the absence. We see evidence of the ability of music to move individuals physically and emotionally throughout literature, such as in E.M. Forster’s *Howard’s End*, in which the young heroine sits in an orchestra listening as the “[m]usic enwrapped her, and she could not enter into the distinction that divides young men in whom one takes an interest from young men whom one knows” (Forster 32). We see in a scene of the show, *Lucifer* that the Devil attracts women to him as he plays. The pure attraction of a musician is not lost on the Devil as he uses his talents to seduce those around him. Lucifer has a talent to hypnotize those around him into telling him their deepest desire. He uses direct eye contact and a low voice to coax the human characters into revealing their desires to him. This usually ends in a

seductive tone that, in some cases, results in a sexual encounter between Lucifer and the human character in question.

The Star-crossed Lover: the Romantic Devil

This discussion of seduction brings us to one of the Devil's newest guises: a romantic figure looking for love. This Devil came about in the graphic novels that inspired the television show – *Lucifer* (2015). The character, Lucifer, first introduced in Neil Gaiman's Sandman series, continues his story in two spinoff series, both called *Lucifer*, by Mike Carey and Holly Black. This Devil first encounters love in his marriage to Mazikeen, a romance that ends bitterly when Lucifer gets bored with Hell and leaves Mazikeen chained to the throne as a hostage queen. However, the television show takes this romantic Devil to a new level, introducing the detective, Chloe Decker. The sexual tensions not only increase the interest in the show, but also introduces a new Devil, one we can see in a new light.

Lucifer begins to display many more human qualities as he falls in love with Chloe. The first is the confusion. When the feelings of amorous interest begin to develop in Lucifer, he is confused, convinced that his polyamorous identity cannot be in question. He begins to doubt his feelings, as many humans in love do, as he finds himself less interested in multiple partners and more interested in Chloe. Revisiting the concept of the star-crossed lover concept from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1594), our cinematic Devil becomes even more alluring as he experiences an unrequited love, providing the audience with another reason to find this contemporary Devil more human than non-human.

However, there is also the delightful addition of the detective's daughter, Beatrice. Nicknamed Trixie, the throwback to Alighieri Dante is almost missed, as the writers named the spunky little girl after Dante's own unrequited love, Beatrice. The initial repulsion Lucifer shows

for Trixie and the development of their relationship represents the family life and love, that Lucifer is looking for in comparison to the love Dante could never have. While Dante's Beatrice takes the form of a celestial angel, Lucifer grows attached to mortals. Like Dante's unreturned love, Lucifer acknowledges that his immortality and status as the Devil will ultimately keep him and Chloe apart. With this delightful reference to a previous literary Devil, I will now examine the next attractive quality of the Devil in literature: his love of wordplay.

The Devil is Punny: The Devil and Wordplay

From our first antagonist in *The Garden of Eden*, devilry has been long associated with intelligence. The Serpent entices Eve to take a bite of the forbidden apple; an apple that will give her all the knowledge of good and evil. The forbiddance of the apple and knowledge aligns the Devil with the search for knowledge and the ability to ask questions. And what better display of intellectual ingenuity than a bit of playful wordplay? Using language to seduce humans as well as to glimpse the truth of a bigger picture, the Devil employs wordplay in many of his literary appearances. From *Lolly Willowses* to the television adaptation, *Lucifer*, wordplay involves puns as well as artful commentary on the origin story of Satan that mocks his own history.

An example of the use of wordplay is in Kai Meyer's *Dark Reflections Trilogy*, in which Dr. Burbridge is the acting Devil. He is convinced that humanity is a plague; and that the harm humans can do is worse than anything he can do to them: "The human is a better devil than the Devil" (Meyer 511). This play with language coaxes his followers, along with himself, to think that his experiments are acceptable, despite the horrors they actual are.

A majority of this wordplay stems from the association of an apple with the Devil, since "[a]pples are all over fairy tales and folklore, not to mention the Goddesses Aphrodite and Freyja. And they can represent everything from love to immortality" (Thompson 12). Apples

signify knowledge in the Garden of Eden, and they continue to be a symbol of the Devil. The titular character in *Lolly Willowes*, when discussing her new-found witchcraft with Satan, holds a basket of fresh apples. Satan reaches over and takes one, saying: “I’ll have one of your apples if I may. They are a fruit I am particularly fond of” (Warner 192). Lolly describes the Devil as playful, intelligent. The notion of a Devil who likes to wag his tongue at humanity appears again in Holly Black’s graphic novel, *Lucifer*, in which Gabriel, the arc angel, accuses Lucifer of murder after killing someone only moments before. Lucifer responds by stating, “Pot, meet kettle” (Black 15) as a play on the famous saying “The pot calling the kettle black” in reference to hypocritical behavior. Later in the same conversation he issues another accusation:

Gabriel: Ask any child who wants to kill God and they’d say: the Devil.

Lucifer: And that’s why children make such wonderful detectives. (16)

He also is protective of his own reputation, hurt by the blacklist on which he has been placed and so he also uses his wit to defend himself: “I tempt, I deceive, I trick. I am cruel and I am ruthless, but I dislike being forsworn” (18). His eloquence is another form of attraction. The same use of puns transfers from the graphic novel adaptations to the television series, *Lucifer*.

In the Archie comics *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (2019), by Kelly Thompson, there is a moment when Sabrina is offered an apple. She comments: “Hmmm. My aunts always did tell me to be wary of taking fruit goods from snakes or handsome strangers” (Thompson 11). We note here the satiric reference to *Genesis*, to the Garden humanity can never return to jests about the rebellious son’s relation to a father he despises: God.

From Torturing to Torment: A Tormented Devil

The attraction to a tormented, rebellious adolescent is no mystery to any young woman, and neither is the allure of a son attempting to triumph over his father. Sigmund Freud

maintained that the natural progression of male life includes the inevitable conflict between father and son, whose own power resides in his ability to overcome and sacrifice the father idolized in youth. Human history, Freud argued, is the story of the Oedipus complex. And the coming-of-age story of our beloved antagonistic Morning Star, Samael, or “Light Bringer” takes the same form. In an act of rebellion against God, the favorite angel in God’s ethereal army fight back, recruiting other angels to fight alongside him. They are defeated and banished to Hell. Dante’s *Inferno* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* revisit this story. The rebellion happens pre-Eden, causing a rift between good and evil to occur in the immortal world. The development of the Devil continues, and we begin to recognize the symbolic or proto-devil in the Garden of Eden: the Serpent.

And so, the eternal war wages on.

The Devil becomes symbolic of all evil. He is used as a tool by the Church in the Dark Ages to keep people in line, and later blamed by Puritans for tempting good folk. His reputation is based solely on his own power struggle with God, a constant need to turn humans to his way of thinking. Perhaps with the Enlightenment investment in individual reason, the Devil comes to a crossroads of his own, in which his search for an identity separate from God brings his own cultural revolution. Much fiction finds him less evil and more companionable. He becomes an agent of free will rather than a monster forcing one’s hand, such as in *Lolly Willowes* with his attempt to help Lolly remain a single woman of her own accord, rather than languish under the thumb of a man. His appearance shifts along with his motives, and while he continues his rebellious behavior in fictional venues such as the television series *Lucifer* (2015), he cuts off his wings and embraces his Devil Face¹⁴. There is a popular myth that all women, while claiming

¹⁴ The Devil Face refers to the transformation of Lucifer’s physical features from human to devil, in which the skin is replaced by bloodied tendons and muscles. His eyes glow red and horns appear on his forehead. It can be believed

interest in “nice guys”, are actually consistent in their overall attraction to the contrary: bad boys. This attraction, according to Harvard’s own Edward Horgan, originates in a search for “Male dominance, the overarching quality encompassing the physical attractiveness and possession of resources (Bogaert and Fisher 1995) that defines a bad boy, has been linked to higher perceived attractiveness and to a higher number of sexual partners” (Horgan 4). This attraction to the dominance of a rebellious male transfers beautifully to our Devil in his eternal effort to overthrow his father: God. What woman, so the logic goes, could resist the ultimate bad boy?

The Lesser of Two Evils: The Political Devil

After listing the traits above that provide the Devil with the ability to seduce and collect his many servants and worshippers, I will now turn to another Devil in modern in guise: the Political Devil. Featured as a staple symbol, the Devil takes the stage at rallies and elections in glorious infamy. Tender feelings are rarely expressed by those who consider a particular politician devilish, and the examples of such symbolic labeling have been a pinnacle in the Devil’s evolutionary journey.

A key example of the political Devil comes to us in the song “American Pie” by Don McLean. Referencing many a political and moral dilemma, the song illustrates that, “...[b]asically, in American Pie, things are heading in the wrong direction” (Moyer). Moyer’s article discusses the sale of the original manuscript of the song, in which he interviews McLean finally to put speculation about the song’s meaning to rest. McClean admits that the song is full of individual messages: “People ask me if I left the lyrics open to ambiguity... Of course I did. I wanted to make a whole series of complex statements. The lyrics had to do with the state of society at the time” (Moyer). This statement is rather broad, and I must return to the subject of

that the complete bodily shift is possible and that that form would more closely resemble that of the older ink etchings of the Devil.

our discussion before he has the chance to smite me for the minor detour, but the Devil is not a stranger untouched by McLean in his 1972 number one hit. There are two positions played by the Devil; one is a symbolic questioning of faith in a time where politics and potential war threaten everyone. A second position is the Devil sits at the center of the song as a veiled symbol for the higher ups in politics, the politicians themselves, making the decisions that implicate common people.

Questioning faith, and the Devil's involvement in such spiritual doubt, is not a new concept. Much like the comical illustrations of the Devil sitting on a shoulder while verbally sparring with an angel on the other shoulder, the idea of the Devil whispering in the ears of those questioning their faith is a common one. The Devil is the apparent cause of such doubts, and McLean employs this story to question the blind faith of the American public in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. In the midst of so many tragedies and horrific events, he finds it difficult to believe in a faith of any kind, and that specific questioning references a Devil whispering in the ears of those in doubt. As the song references the tragic deaths of musicians and losses in wars and assassinations, McLean questions the ability of the listeners to remain faithful in such chaos: "And do you believe in God above / If the Bible tells you so?" (22-23). The Bible represents instructional literature guiding common people to believe in something despite doubt and stands in for morality. In the face of such tumultuous times, McLean cannot seem to grasp how some people will just blindly continue to believe in the word of a merciful God when so many devilish deeds were at hand. However, the song also calls into question whether or not the same people following the Bible blindly would not do the same with a Devil whispering in their ears:

Oh, and there we were all in one place

A generation lost in space

With no time left to start again
 So, come on, Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
 Jack Flash sat on a candlestick
 Cause fire is the devil's only friend. (78-83)

The imagery paints a specific generation, most likely the younger, waiting for the faith to bring them out of all the bad things and into the good, but it doesn't. McLean references the nursery rhyme, and the inability of the people to get out of their situation. The situation is political unrest, represented by the fire, and that fire has spread via the Devil making a mockery of faith by jumping from shoulder to shoulder whispering naughty doings to those in power.

However, it is not merely the Devil whispering in the ears of the masses, but rather the political figures controlling the outcomes. McLean brings his own Devil into the literal light as he places him on a stage before his narrator:

Oh and as I watched him on the stage
 My hands were clenched in fists of rage
 No angel born in Hell
 Could break that Satan's spell. (84-87)

The stanza references a political rally, in which the "Satan" on stage refers to the politician giving a speech. The spell cast by the devil in this instance refers to the media coverage that leaked like a petulance throughout the society in question, and the symbol of a political Devil comes to a head. This concept continues to today, and the most recent presidential election, in which a social media thread began by labeling democratic candidate Hillary Clinton as the Devil herself. This alignment of a political figure with the Devil was followed by a hashtag "#HillaryDevil," which brought about a slew of tweets including one on August 2nd, 2016 from

@Ienceladus in which declares that “She’s the Devil! #HillaryDevil.” Clinton is aligned with the Devil strictly because of her differing opinions of where the government should be headed in leadership of the country. This sort of alignment is used to discourage people from following the politician being labeled as devil based on the assumptions that have become common with the language and symbolism of the Devil. His reputation as an ultimate evil guides voters towards the opposing party, and away from the devil in question. The same thinking is applied when any references are thrown about in political dialogue or propaganda, including any involvement of a good versus bad symbol cast upon the candidates.

However, while the Republicans labeled Clinton a devil, the Democrats went after Donald Trump as a devil. Propaganda in the form of political comics in newspapers depict Trump as a Devil, before and after his official election.



How the Hell Did I End Up Here? Bill Day, Cagle Cartoons, 2017.

The need for a person to align an opponent with the Devil is what drives this Political Devil. The Devil becomes symbolic of everything the candidate disagrees with, while the candidate’s opinions become godly, aligned with all that is good. This is also evident in the deflection of

political issues into a defense based solely upon the Bible, despite a law in place that is supposed to separate the Church¹⁵ and State in the policy making of the United States. An example is the demonizing of the LGBTQ community, in which one side supports the rights of all despite sexual orientation, while the other references the Bible in defense of oppressing these rights. Using the Devil as a comparison fills the gaps in the argument. Personifying the issues and the politicians defending the opposing sides, elevates the issue and creates a Political Devil to fight against, despite the individual's inability to truly fight in a political standoff.

That Which We Call a Devil By Any Other Name Would Smell As Much Like Brimstone...

Another contemporary figuration of the devil in female guise not unlike the politicized Devil Hilary is Walt Disney's Cruella de Vil. While many arguments featuring the flaws with the feminist ideals come into conversation today, I will focus on the use of symbols and metaphors in Disney's animated films that were directed not only for the child audiences, but for the parents who would understand the references. It took about sixteen years until Cruella's last name, "de Vil" resonated in my mind as play on the word "Devil".

This connection continues not only in her name, but in her appearance in both animation as well as live action. In both portrayals of the character, Cruella de Vil is pale, with skin white and cold like a corpse. Her features are sharp, rather than rounded as a purer female protagonist might be described. Her clothing has elements of both white and black, showing an instable balance of both the lighter and darker natures. The way in which she holds herself, her posture – in both animated format as well as when performed live by Glenn Close – is confident, prideful and egotistical: she holds her head high, allowing her to appear as if she is looking down on those around her. Her hair duplicates the duality in her clothing, and is styled wildly in spikes

¹⁵ Church stands in her for organized religions, regardless of particular faith.

going in several directions from her head. She is thin and sickly looking and always holds a cigarette.



Glenn Close, Disney, *101 Dalmatians*, 1996.



Cruella de Vil, Disney, *101 Dalmatians* (animated), 1961.

The cigarette acts as Cruella's connection to flame and fire, just like the Devil and his hell. She attempts to brutally kill puppies – animals aligned with men, and obedience. Cruella is also selfish, only concerned with her own desires and well-being. These characteristics are used by the animators and writers to ensure that there is no confusion that Cruella de Vil is in fact the antagonist in the story.

However, one interesting feature shifts in the Devil that is Cruella de Vil and the Devil that literature has abused for centuries: the connection she has with nature is not a healthy connection. Rather, in the Disney story animals – specifically animals in the embraces of humanity, such as dogs – mistrust the Devil or “de Vil” as an antagonistic demon. She is not one with nature in the way that Warner represents the Devil in *Lolly Willowes*, but instead at war with nature. She is extravagant in dress as well as in her wealth and position, which while common with the more modern Devil, also suggests that she has left the woods behind her to live

lavishly. Her lack of connection with a non-human being also suggests that her last links to the animal world have been broken.

Like all well-crafted villains, Cruella de Vil continued the legacy of the Devil in political symbolism, becoming a figure easily superimposed upon candidates in order to sway public perceptions. Gianni Caldwell, a Fox News political analyst referenced the 2016 election in his book *Taken for Granted: How Conservatism Can Win Back the Americans that Liberalism Failed* in which he argues that: “Hillary Clinton is clearly setting herself up as the Cruella de Vil of politics” (Caldwell). Based on the novel, *101 Dalmatians* by Dodie Smith, Cruella de Vil is a villain from the Disney adaptations. She is a horrible woman intent on stealing the puppies of a pair of Dalmatian dogs. Disney’s 1961 animated version as well as the 1996 live action adaptation of the novel depicts Cruella de Vil as a classical, evil villain, designed to be hated or feared by audiences. Even her name “de Vil” references the Devil in its spelling, automatically assigning her to the antagonistic position along with the Devil. This symbol is then given to Clinton by Caldwell, painting the image of a puppy-killing monster with a sinister last name. The use of the Devil’s name as a way to align political figures with villainy has contributed to our dear Devil’s poor reputation.

The Fallen Angel, Plus One Million... a Dive into Satanism and Our Devil’s Followers

Following the misuse of the Devil’s name, we must now dive headfirst, or should I say cloven hoof first, into the religion that has blossomed from the values assigned him by definition and position. Like any religion, the followers of the Devil are a boundless collection of interesting people with different backgrounds and reasons for coming to the religion. However, also like many religions, Satanism has gotten some rather negative press, as well as a collection of stereotypes based upon misinformation or misunderstood traditions. Although the material

text of the religion was not available until 1969, the worshipping of the “Lord of Darkness” (Aguirre-Sacasa) is not a new phenomenon. While witchcraft as a form of worship is something covered in another section of this discussion, the spiritual elements of devil worship are closely related to the evolution of the character of the Devil as a being worthy of worship.

Satanism became an organized religion in 1966¹⁶, under the supervision of Anton Szandor LaVey. LaVey’s biography as given to readers in the introduction to the book, covers a broad span of musical talent and abnormal jobs. Although born in Chicago in 1930, LaVey moved to California in his early childhood. His family practiced many traditions from Eastern Europe, passed down by his grandmother, and his interests leaned towards the darker aspects of life in reading early horror literature such as Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein*¹⁷. LaVey was musically talented, and these talents were acknowledged early in his life. This talent supplied him with his first set of odd jobs as a traveling musician going from venue to venue performing. “His interests marked him as an outsider,” explains Gilmore, “and he did not alleviate this by feeling any compulsion to be ““one of the boys”” (11). His career choices continued to deviate from the social norm, as he worked at carnivals after dropping out of high school. His jobs involved acts with large felines and assisting with the machinations of the “spook shows” (11). He played the calliope as “The Great Szandor” as well as the organ at bawdy shows on Saturdays, and for revivalists on Sunday mornings. In the 1950’s, his income was supplemented by investigations into supernatural occurrences, to which he was referred by police departments when cases came around that were too obscure to receive

¹⁶ Gilmore writes “In 1966 on the night of May Eve – the traditional Witches’ Sabbath – LaVey declared the founding of the Church of Satan and renumbered 1966 as the year One, Anno Satanus – the first year of the Age of Satan” (13).

¹⁷ Gilmore also states that, despite what one might assume, LaVey did not in fact enjoy books on the occult, dismissing them as “sanctimonious white magic”, and focusing on “applied obscure knowledge” instead (LaVey 10).

full investigative attention. After disappointing clients with logical resolutions, LaVey began inventing “exotic sources to make them feel better” (12). His music continued to also supplement his income, as his personal life fluctuated. LaVey posed as a local celebrity in his large black home and conveyed by most as someone comparable to the Addam’s Family. The religion, however, took shape as a series of lectures on the “hidden side of what moves the world” became more popular, and a group he was of which he was a part of called a “Magic Circle” suggested he work to create an actual religion out of the philosophies. The publication of *The Satanic Bible* in 1969 was followed by three other books entitled *The Compleat Witch* (1971), *The Satanic Rituals* (1972) and *The Devil’s Notebook* (1992).

We learn the most about the creation of LaVey’s ideology not in the book itself, but in its introduction by one of the High Priest’s following LaVey, Magus Peter H. Gilmore. In his introduction, Gilmore describes LaVey’s larger intentions as well as the process by which LaVey came to write *The Satanic Bible*. Gilmore explains:

It is a diabolical work, written with elegance, earthiness, and might, serving quite magically as a mirror. If you look within these pages and see yourself; if you find it’s principles to be those you’ve lived by as long as you can remember; if you feel the evocation of an overwhelming sense of homecoming, then you will have discovered that you are a part of a scattered “meta-tribe,” and the proper name for what you are is a “Satanist”. (LaVey 9)

The misconceptions following the publication of the book come with the misunderstood ideas behind the philosophy itself. Gilmore describes the ideology as follows:

The philosophy presented in it is an integrated whole, now a smorgasbord from which one can pick and choose. It is meant only for a select few who are

epicurean, pragmatic, worldly, atheistic, fiercely individualistic, materialistic, rational and darkly poetic... Satanism moves into the realm of religion by having an aesthetic component, a system of symbolism, metaphor, and ritual in which Satan is embraced not as some Devil to be worshipped, but as a symbolic external projection of the highest potential of each individual Satanist. (14-15)

The Satanic Bible offers a window into the perceived reputation of the Devil, and the human hands that have sculpted this conception of the character. While the book is named after the Devil, *The Satanic Bible* does not represent anything other than the opposite of the character always opposing the Devil: God. While the Bible might offer lessons on selflessness and charity at the cost of the self, *The Satanic Bible* guides humanity toward self-consciousness and selfishness. Despite popular misconceptions, *The Satanic Bible* does not support violence or malicious behavior because, while it may be gratifying at first, the consequences would not benefit the individual, and the individual is the key in Satanism. The religion focuses, instead, on the characteristics of the Devil I have been tracing, namely to attain the manifestations of a single individuals' deepest desires, whether human or nonhuman.

In fiction that references Satanism, such as Holly Black's *Lucifer: Cold Heaven Vol. 1* (2016), the dark faith proves kinder than the stereotype. At the end of the graphic novel, a young girl, Rosemary, in a Satanist family meets Lucifer's son, and while on a holiday to introduce him to her family, she attempts to explain Satanism – unaware of whom he really is. In her account of Satanism, Rosemary muses:

Do I think there's some bright red guy with a forked tongue who's going to grant all my worst wishes? No. Most Satanists don't believe in, like, a literal Satan from a literal Hell of fire and brimstone. I mean, some do, with horns and hooves and

everything. But for more of us, its about seeing the benefits of putting yourself first. Being okay with earing too much and lusting after hot people and having lazy days and getting angry. Being difficult. Being a bitch. And considering it a sacrament. The Devil gets his due, you know? And that's no small thing, getting your due. (Black 124)

Satanism, much like the Devil himself, has gotten a bad reputation based upon a long-standing tradition of imagining the Devil as the incarnation of evil. Contemporary fiction, however, will overturn that reputation, or at least, shine a little light on the Devil's origin.

Daddy's Little Devil: The Devil as a Rebellious Son

The association of the Devil with one of God's fallen angels provides an ideal entrance into my examination of the Oedipus Complex, in which a son must indefinitely defeat or rebel against his father. Although the specifics of this theory deviate from the story of our Devil¹⁸, many of the key features of the psychological complex remain intact as more contemporary adaptations of the Devil focus on a more human Lucifer, and his relationship with the Almighty in a light that is rather familial. An example of this relationship is depicted in the DC Entertainment 2015 television show, *Lucifer*, in which the main character, Lucifer, is a rebellious child who acts out by leaving his post as king of Hell to roam mischievously throughout Los Angeles, the City of Angels. The Oedipus Complex informs the show's narrative as angels such as Amenadiel come to retrieve Lucifer. These angels are referred to as his brothers, and they even go so far as having fits of sibling rivalry, fist fights, and pet names. Amenadiel, for

¹⁸ The Oedipus Complex also involves a process in which the son overcomes and kills the father to take his place as head of the family, and ultimately to mate with his own mother. This part of the theory deviates from our Devil's story, a mother figures appearing rarely if at all in the adaptations.

example, calls Lucifer “Luci”, and refers to him as “brother” in an endearing tone that demands the respect he expects as the oldest of the angel siblings. Amenadiel also states that:

Every culture around the world and throughout history, for that matter, has its very own myth of the Devil. But the one thing that they all have in common is that the Devil is essentially a rebellious son. (*Lucifer* S.1.Ep. 6, 29:40-29:50)

The comparison of son and father to Devil and God presents humanity with an accessible vision of the divine, similar to that of the gods and goddesses from Greek mythology. The humanizing of the non-human allows for the faith to be followed with less hesitation. John Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, after falling from Heaven, explains his position in Hell: “Farthest from Him is best / Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme / Above His equals” (Milton l. 247-249). He claims that it is “Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven!” (l. 263). The need to rebel against a fatherly figure continues in the television show, *Lucifer* (2015). Lucifer has left Hell unattended to seek his own fulfillment in Los Angeles. He refers to God as “Dad” and refuses to return to Hell. The history of his banishment is embellished somewhat, his father casting him into Hell as king because of his rebellion, not unlike being grounded as a child. He continues to rebel, using puns to tease the faithful or to avoid companionship after the war with his father leaves him with trust issues.

“The Devil Made Me Do It”: Insight into Our Favorite Scapegoat

Samuel Butler put it best when he wrote: “An apology for the devil: it must be remembered that we have heard only one side of the case. God has written all the books” (Black 1). Centuries have passed with the deployment of the Devil for unexplained actions for which we do not want to take responsibility for. “The Devil made me do it,” for example, has crossed the lips of petulant children and irresponsible adults since time immemorial, it seems, as they make

one bad decision after another and refuse to own up to it. Until recently, it appears, the Devil has sat back and accepted this role for himself, taking the displaced blame with pride as he sits on shoulders whispering bits of bad behavior here and there. However, it is as though at the beginning of the twentieth century, he had enough and the first few signs of resentment at the human races' need to spread the guilt began popping up in literature. In Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*, Lolly helps us begin to understand that the Devil does not act alone, only creating acts of mischief or questionable doings when asked to by his followers. Once Lolly has made the deal with Satan by accepting the kitten familiar and venturing into the woods for the Witches' Sabbath, Satan comes to her to tell her that he would always assist her: "Remember, Miss Willowes, that I shall always be very glad to help you. You have only to ask me" (170). This conversation follows Lolly's acknowledgement of the power she has been granted:

This was her domain, and it was to keep this inviolate that she had made her compact with the Devil. She did not know what the price might be, but she was sure of the purchase. She need not fear Titus now, nor any of the Willoweses. They could not drive her out, or enslave her spirit any more, nor shake her possession of the place she had chosen. (145-146)

After offering his help, Satan brings inconveniences for Titus, Lolly's inconsiderate and leeching nephew who will not leave her be. He swallows tainted milk and: "gashe[s]d his thumb on the raw edge of a tin" (173). Lolly attributes all these doings to that of her kitten familiar, Vinegar Tom. After a few failings on the part of the kitten, Lolly decides to ask Satan to get rid of Titus:

The Devil would get rid of Titus more speedily, more kindly (he had no reason to be anything but kind; she could not imagine Titus being of the smallest interest to Satan), more economically. There would be no catastrophe, no pantechicon

displays of flood or fire. He would proceed discreetly and surely, like a gamekeeper going his rounds by night; he would remove Titus as imperturbably as Dunlop had removed the beech-leaf. She could sit back quit comfortably now, and wait for it to happen. (175-76)

Lolly knows that the Devil has dispensed with Titus at her bidding, because she “hated him [Titus] for daring to love it at all. Most of all she hated him for imposing his kind of love on her. Since her had come to Great Mop she had not been allowed to love in her own way” (135). Lolly exposes the need for human will behind the Devil’s doings, and recognizes how human influence over him reflects their free will. This free will is what drives him to rebel in the first place, after all.

This idea of a resentful Devil continues into the twenty first century, in which the television show *Lucifer* explores why Lucifer flew the coop and bailed on Hell. In Episode Two, Lucifer is face to face with a street performer, a fanatical priest who is spouting about the world’s end. The priest is a fake, and confronts Lucifer for undermining his performance, but not before annoying Lucifer by blaming him for all of humanity’s faults:

Preacher: Have you seen the face of the Devil?

Lucifer: Oh, every morning in the mirror, pal.

Preacher: Exactly! He’s in all of us! In our every moment of weakness. Look at this world! The sin, the lust! It is the Devil’s touch!

Lucifer: N-n-no, don’t give me credit for all that. You humans do plenty all on your own. (2:01-2:16)

Lucifer has had enough of our name game. He resents God for making him the end all of evil and sin. He punishes the wicked, after all, for he is not wicked himself. When pulled over by an

officer for speeding in Episode One, Lucifer admits his need to punish humans for the evil in the world:

Officer: You know why I pulled you over?

Lucifer: Well obviously you felt the need to exercise your limited powers and punish me for ignoring the speed limit. It's okay, I understand. I like to punish people, too. Or at least, I used to. (01:05 – 01:19)

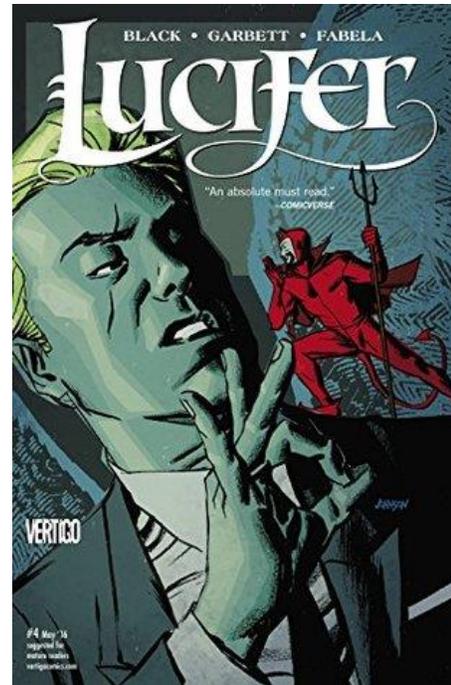
In the contemporary world of the Devil, such as in *Lucifer* by Holly Black¹⁹, a 2015 graphic novel adaptation of the Lucifer in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series, the same resentment becomes more evident: "I tempt, I deceive, I trick. I am cruel, and I am ruthless, but I dislike being foresworn" (Black 18). Lucifer shows a level of frustration similar to that of a child forced to follow in a father's footsteps, directly referencing the above-mentioned rebellious child the Devil is also said to be. However, this resentment likewise results in more rebellion against God in these adaptations, Lucifer having abandoned his post as king of Hell to run a muck in the human world.

This brings us to an interesting part of this study in which we will examine something more often seen in children's cartoons and animated films. This concept of a Devil and an Angel on our shoulders, one telling us the right thing to do, the other the naughty, pervades popular representations of angels and devils.

¹⁹ Both Holly Black's and Mike Carey's *Lucifer* follow the Lucifer character from Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* Universe, and all three were the direct influence over the *Lucifer* television adaptation in 2015.



Kronk in Mark Dindal's 2000 Film *The Emperor's New Groove*.



Lucifer, Issue 4, Holly Black, 2015.

These physical representations of the human conscience have become quite popular, and because of their popularity have annoyed our contemporary Devil quite a bit. However, his distaste for the metaphor does not mean it is all together untrue. In Episode Three of *Lucifer*, Lucifer stands behind a young lady, whispering to her that she should jump, that it won't hurt. The assumption from this scene is that the young woman is about to jump to her death, when in fact she jumps directly into a pool, at which point the scene shifts to show a massive party going on.

William Wood wrote that the Devil cannot be ultimately at fault for all sins, as even his fault in the “first sin” (Wood) poses an issue:

The fall of the devil poses the problem of how to explain the very first sin, the initial act by which evil comes to mar God's wholly good creation. On the traditional Christian account, Satan and the other angels were created completely good, in an environment that was completely good, and with intellects and wills that functioned exactly as designed by

God. Nevertheless, Satan rebelled against God, an act so grave that he was justly condemned to Hell, where he suffers the torment of eternal separation from his creator.

What can account for such an inexplicable choice? Given Satan's pre-fallen cognitive and volitional strengths, his sinful choice seems utterly perverse: an act of existential self-harm heightened to an almost infinite degree. (Wood)

However, *Lucifer* is not the only example of this concept being undermined. Political cartoons, too, have come to the Devil's defense, such as in this cartoon by Christopher Weyant at the Boston Globe depicting the Devil being lured to do harm by President Donald Trump:



Untitled, Christopher Weyant, the Boston Globe, 2018.

The overused ideal presents the Political Devil as a more diabolical devil than the Devil himself, who, though he has resented his position on humanity's shoulder, now must rethink his position as a necessary evil, rather than a burden or misnomer that defines his entirety.

The Light at the End of the Literary Tunnel

To avoid a cliché in this last paragraph my prove difficult, as many generations are guilty of abusing the Devil for this or that, and by way of that guilt, it is impossible for me not to issue

a similarly broad accusation. Therefore it is with some hesitation that I close by way of a more ambitious interpretive claim. The human race has taken solace in believing that its bad behavior, and the consequences of such actions have been imposed upon them by some devilish fiend, waiting for our souls in some dark depths below the crust of the Earth's surface. However, through closer scrutiny we can appreciate the way the Devil has transformed from scapegoat to unwilling servant to a sympathetic victim of God. As victim, he is likewise a pawn in a universal game in which no being has ultimate say in, perhaps including the Almighty Himself.

Throughout this study we have leapt from text to text along with the world's age-old beast, and we have felt the tremors of time change below his cloven-hooves – feet. This ends our walk in the woods, and I hope to meet Lucifer again in some future state of literary fame. And if I am lucky, or rather if he is, perhaps such a future will include less fire and brimstone.

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