

Devil/Satan/Lucifer

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Dec 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5813>

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Andrew Mason — 11 Dec 2010, 18:46

As this thread is, as Jonas would say, flying off in all directions, I'm taking the liberty of renaming some bits. (I notice from the archives that in the early days of this list, it seems to have been de rigueur to rename threads all the time, thus making them almost impossible to follow. Now it has swung the other way and we keep the same titles even when all contact with the original subject has been lost.)

I am a bit confused about all this talk of distinctions between various diabolic figures. David says that the Devil and Lucifer are different literary figures, one from American folklore and one from Paradise Lost. But the Devil/Satan/Lucifer - all names of the same being - was a figure of Christian thought long before either American folklore or Milton (who, in any case, mostly calls his character Satan) existed.

Antonio said they are different philosophically, but I'd like more explanation of that - I'm not sure what philosophical traditions we are talking about here. Perhaps this links up with another thing David said, that Satan is an eternal source of evil while Lucifer is a fallen angel. In that case I think we can say quite firmly that any diabolic figure in Wolfe (I'm not convinced there are any, but any there might be) would have to be a fallen angel (or, an in some way corrupt angelic sort of being) - Christian orthodoxy doesn't allow eternal sources of evil, and I'm pretty sure Wolfe goes along with that.

(I wonder if Inire might be Crowley - 'an angel who didn't so much fall as saunter vaguely downwards'.)

David Stockhoff — 11 Dec 2010, 20:05 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Thanks Andrew---I'd like to hear more from Antonio too.

I agree that Christian orthodoxy does not posit two eternal, opposing principles of good and evil, and that makes the "origin myth" of Satan key. Whether it "allows" this idea of real personified evil may be a different question, since I believe even the Vatican has a house exorcist.

Regardless, the Devil is largely a folk concept, like the Harrowing of Hell and so on, that was invented (or built up from pieces) during the Middle Ages. It might be more correct to say "orthodox tradition" rather than "orthodoxy"---Christianity has many contradictory traditions, as all religions do.

We also have two testaments of the Bibles to deal with. The Serpent in the Garden is in Genesis, which is most closely tied with myths of creation and precedes all other books. The name Satan does not appear there---but "everyone" agrees the serpent is Satan. Satan appears in the New Testament. Lucifer appears in the Old, but see below ...

I just found the following bit of illumination on a Mormon web site and make no guarantees

about it, but it is an example of the kind of transformations that occur over centuries (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/lucifer.shtml>):

"Lucifer makes his appearance in the fourteenth chapter of the Old Testament book of Isaiah, at the twelfth verse, and nowhere else: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" . ..Lucifer is a Latin name.... In the original Hebrew text, the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah is not about a fallen angel, but about a fallen Babylonian king, who during his lifetime had persecuted the children of Israel. It contains no mention of Satan, either by name or reference <<http://www.ankenyiowa.gov/index.aspx?recordid=1481&page=22>>. The Hebrew scholar could only speculate that some early Christian scribes, writing in the Latin tongue used by the Church, had decided for themselves that they wanted the story to be about a fallen angel, a creature not even mentioned in the original Hebrew text, and to whom they gave the name "Lucifer."

Why Lucifer? In Roman astronomy, Lucifer was the name given to the morning star (...Venus). The morning star appears in the heavens just before dawn, heralding the rising sun. The name derives from the Latin term *lucem ferre*, bringer, or bearer, of light." In the Hebrew text the expression used to describe the Babylonian king before his death is *Helal*, son of *Shahar*, which can best be translated as "Day star, son of the Dawn."

The scholars authorized by ... King James I to translate the Bible into current English did not use the original Hebrew texts, but used versions translated ... largely by St. Jerome in the fourth century. Jerome had mistranslated the Hebraic metaphor, "Day star, son of the Dawn," as "Lucifer," and over the centuries a metamorphosis took place. Lucifer the morning star became a disobedient angel, cast out of heaven to rule eternally in hell. Theologians, writers, and poets interwove the myth with the doctrine of the Fall, and in Christian tradition Lucifer is now the same as Satan, the Devil, and --- ironically --- the Prince of Darkness.

I wonder if *lubar*, in the context of BOTNS, should somehow be read more in terms of "heralding the rising sun" (the New Sun?!) than "fallen angel." Or both.

Anyway, you can see why I emphasize Milton's Lucifer, since *Paradise Lost* is a retelling of Genesis and Lucifer the angel is nowhere else so much expounded upon.

On 12/11/2010 1:46 PM, Andrew Mason wrote:

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