Adam Kotsko. *The Prince of this World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017.

In *The Prince of this World,* Adam Kotsko traces the forces that shaped the devil. The author outlines the devil's origin, accounts for the devil's radical conversion, and concludes with the devil's provocative legacy. He begins the genealogy with Pharaoh, the first unjust rival and enemy of God's rule. Through the Bible this genealogy tracks the experience of suffering inflicted by evil (ones) alongside belief in a just God. The author describes three paradigms: the Deuteronomistic paradigm (evil ones deliver punishment for the wrongdoing of the faithful); the Prophetic paradigm (evil ones remain God's servants in world history); and the Apocalyptic paradigm, which emerges when the people cannot reconcile the experience of suffering in the midst of faithfulness and must reconcile matters in a cosmic realm.

The Apocalyptic paradigm ultimately births a recognizable devil when God battles rivals in both the earthly and cosmic realms. This paradigm continues in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation, where God's glory will be revealed only in the apocalyptic overthrow of the Beast, and the suffering of the faithful will be no more (though the suffering of the wicked will be increased and extended in order to render justice).

Whereas the previous biblically-based paradigms dealt with the faith in a just God and the question of suffering (and those who inflicted it), the Patristic paradigm emerged as Christianity made peace with Rome. The evil ones were no longer those who inflicted suffering, but primarily Jews and heretics who did not adhere to the solidifying orthodoxy. Rome's conversion was viewed as God's vengeance on them. This quite unexpected event "was tantamount to the devil's conversion to Christianity. . . , [w]hereby the devil becomes the tool of the oppressor rather than the oppressed" (75).

In monastic and medieval Christianity, the devil is almost completely divorced from political associations, and the focus shifts to battles over true belief and bodily temptations. This culminated in another reversal. Previous paradigms attempted to explain suffering, but orthodox theologies now began to *demand* it as a good in and of itself. "The God of medieval Christianity is a God who delights in suffering, a God who has become demonic" (103).

These changes left theologians grappling with God's goodness and the origin of evil, a problem in which "it can seem as though God is setting the devil up to fall. . . . [With free will emerging as] an apparatus for producing blameworthiness" (131). The devil was 'free' to choose otherwise, a conception that the author connects with modern individualism.

Kotsko spends the second half of the book 'in hell,' reviewing images of punishment from Dante to Foucault. There is no redemption for the damned, and punishment serves as a spectacle and distraction from present realities. Indeed, hell and prison *create* evildoers as much as they punish them. The God who was formerly called upon to overthrow those inflicting suffering has moved through the medieval paradigm of suffering for the sake of redemption to inflicting suffering on those disobeying his rule and order. "Hell is finally the location of all that God *cannot* control" (193).

The author locates the devil's legacy in the realm of choice and freedom. Freedom, necessary to maintain the concepts of God and evil, quickly became the mechanism for producing blameworthiness and preserving God's purity. Though Western culture has discarded most theological language, Kotsko maintains that modernity remains Christian when individuals are blamed for the world's suffering because of their poor consumer and political choices. While we cannot escape this element of the Christian inheritance, we can trace untaken paths from the positive resources that are equally part of it. Foremost here is the idea that the devil can perhaps be saved—not by applying liberal moral relativism, but by undermining the illusion of individual choice that justifies the production of Hell and punishment. Then we could take aim at the powers that profit from, and inflict suffering from, that production.

Kotsko has provided a tremendous resource for understanding the shifts within biblical and Christian theological traditions of evil, the devil, and hell. As well, he has offered insights into the forces forming the modern subject, the notion of freedom, and the reasons we blame and demonize. This is a well-crafted account, one in which even skeptics will find the devil in the details.

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