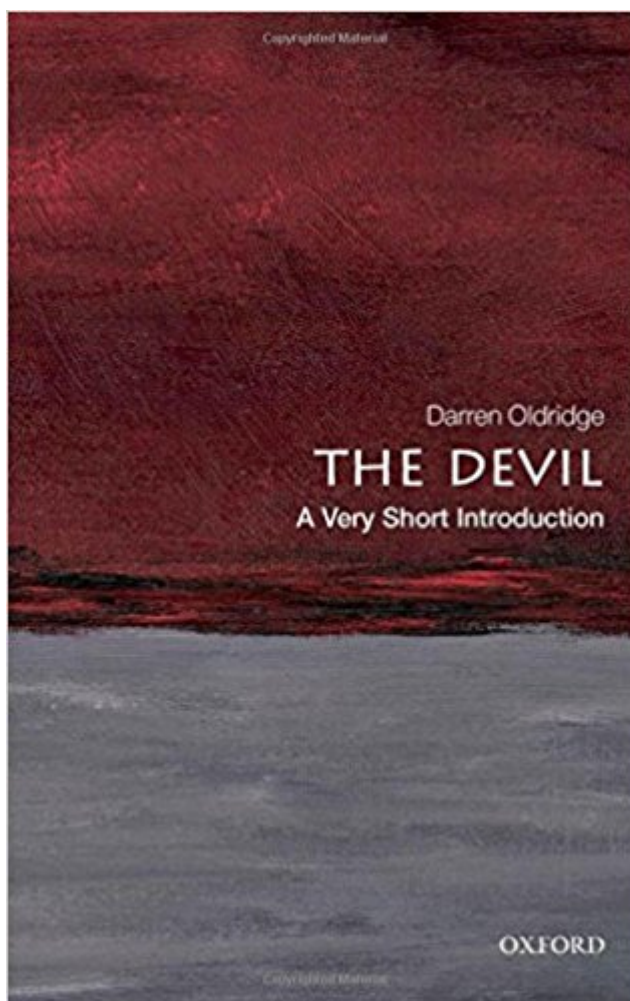


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# The Devil: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

The Devil has fascinated Christians since the time of the New Testament, and inspired many haunting works of art. This Very Short Introduction looks at the Devil in the history of ideas and in the lives of real people. Darren Oldridge shows us that the Devil is an important figure in western history--a richly complex and contradictory one. Oldridge focuses on three main themes: the idea of the Devil being integral to western thought from the early Middle Ages to the beginnings of modernity; the belief that the Devil represents the mirror image of goodness; and the multiplicity and instability of ideas about the Devil. Oldridge concludes by exploring "demonological" ways of thinking in our own time, including allegations of "satanic ritual abuse."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this densely researched and drily elegant book, Satan is pursued through Augustine, Marlowe, Milton, Shelley, Blake, Goethe, Ambrose Bierce, Auden and CS Lewis's *Screwtape*, tales of self-mortification and witch-hunting, painting and the cinema. \* Steven Poole, *The Guardian* \* Devil believer or devil-denier, you'll find plenty to get your teeth into here. \* *Northern Echo* \* This book may appeal to those wanting a short but insightful survey of those understandings of evil that the devil represents. \* *Reform Magazine* \*

Darren Oldridge is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Worcester.

Lots of good historical and historically oriented theological information here, even if you are familiar with longer and more coherent works like Jeffery Burton Russell's several volume history of Satan. The main issue is that this covers too much with too little time, often making examples seem slightly disjointed, and the theological/philosophical commentary being inconsistently interwoven in with historical information. This makes the book a little hard to read even though it is not particularly "difficult" in other senses of the term. Oldridge's discussion of Auden, however, may be worth the price of the entire book, and was the most interesting topic. Overall, it is a serviceable introduction to the Christian idea of "the Devil" in a theological-historical context, and maybe should be paired with OUP's introductions to other Christian topic as well as *Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction*.

An introduction to the devil as seen by Christian theologians, artists, filmmakers, poets and novelists. A nice book with which to begin your study of the devil. Oldridge also provides a nice "Further Reading" section in the back of the book for further study. Readers would also like "Jenna's Flaw," a novel about Satanism and demonic possession in the Midwest.

Para los interesados en conocer la historia del demonismo (del culto a los seres maléficos y al demonio), este libro es un excelente inicio. No es una obra muy condensada ni extensa. Todo lo contrario, de fácil lectura y con una extensión muy cómoda para cualquier lector. Para los interesados en abundar, les recomiendo revisar la bibliografía, la cual puede ser de mucho uso.

This small book starts with a quote by W.H.Auden and finishes with one of his poems, and both serve as two ways, among a myriad, of how one can conceptualize the Devil. The author first establishes how the Devil fits in comfortably within the framework of Christian theology. He then describes how the nature and characteristics of the Devil keep changing as a reflection on the contemporary world view, almost like a psychological construct. The discussion on how the idea of the Devil persists tenaciously one way or another in a secularized world is very interesting. It suggests the human need to narrativize experience and mythologize the world. Interspersed also are some insightful remarks on human frailties and pathos. Five stars.

This was diabolical! In a good way of course. This is basically a summing up of various Christian theologians and writers view of the Devil. The writing is a bit 'academic' but it was still readable. At times it was fascinating. There were a few decent illustrations as well. For me personally it was the

right length - detailed but not too detailed. Most of the arguments were quite straightforward to follow. It is pretty short which might be a consideration for some when it comes to value for money.

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