

# The Man Plague: Disco, the Lucifer Myth, and the Theology of “It’s Raining Men”

THOMAS AIELLO

To determine the nature and function of the Devil, is no contemptible province of the European Mythology. Who, or what he is, his origin, his habitation, his destiny, and his power, are subjects which puzzle the most acute Theologians, and on which no orthodox person can be induced to give a decisive opinion. He is the weak place of the popular religion—the vulnerable belly of the crocodile.<sup>1</sup>

(Percy Bysshe Shelley 1819)

Tonight for the first time, at just about half past ten—for the first time in history—it’s gonna start raining men.

(The Weather Girls 1982)

**I**N THE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S, AMERICAN DISCO CLUBS PROVED TO BE the vulnerable belly of the crocodile. New York City was in turmoil at the onset of the 1970s. From 1966 to 1973, the city’s murder rate rose 173 percent. There was a growing bureaucracy and steadily decreasing social services. The city had a three billion dollar budget deficit by 1975. Gang violence and race agitation threatened middle-class whites who often expressed their fear by absconding to the suburbs. But others found a more esoteric form of escape. Disco was a function of “baroque indulgence” in the face of this overwhelming social and economic breakdown (Shapiro 4–13). Indiscriminate sex, heavy drug use, dancing, and drinking all served as a form of motivated escapism—a sort of protest through studied nonchalance that girded its acolytes against the decay that grew around them. They responded

---

*The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 43, No. 5, 2010  
© 2010, Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

to the moral degeneracy of Babylon not by knocking down the tower, but instead by building it higher, higher, higher.

And so disco began in the dance clubs of New York City as the 1960s slowly became the 1970s (though historian Peter Shapiro traces its cultural roots back to Nazi-occupied Paris during World War II, where a thriving jazz and dance culture would give way in the postwar period to clubs such as the Whiskey à Go-Go. This celebratory spirit would cross the Atlantic, where it would combine with the rock-and-roll dance and drug culture, setting the stage for the development of what would become disco [Shapiro 15–30]).<sup>2</sup> As the 1970s progressed, it spread throughout the country, finding corresponding West Coast homes in the nightclubs of Los Angeles and San Francisco. By 1982, disco was at its low ebb, but the style and energy of the music had made its way into the broader popular music scene. That year, an unlikely hit made the transition from San Francisco dance clubs to the American mainstream:

Hi, we're your weather girls.  
And have we got news for you.  
You'd better listen.  
Get ready, all you lonely girls,  
And leave those umbrellas at home.

The humidity's rising,  
The barometer's getting low.  
According to all sources,  
The street's the place to go.

'Cause tonight for the first time,  
Just about half past ten,  
For the first time in history,  
It's gonna start raining men.

It's raining men.  
Hallelujah! It's raining men.  
Amen!  
I'm gonna go out,  
I'm gonna let myself get  
Absolutely soaking wet.

It's raining men.  
Hallelujah! It's raining men,

Every specimen:  
Tall, blond, dark and lean,  
Rough and tough and strong and mean.

God bless Mother Nature,  
She's a single woman, too.  
She took from the heaven,  
And she did what she had to do.  
She bought ev'ry angel.  
She rearranged the sky  
So that each and ev'ry woman  
Could find the perfect guy.<sup>3</sup>

"It's Raining Men" was fun. It was popular. But it provided its listeners, whether wittingly or unwittingly, with stark and disturbing religious imagery rooted in the historical tradition of Christian theology. It was, through the hustles and shakes, the lights and mirrors, a radical reinterpretation of the Lucifer myth.

Izora Rhodes was early considered a musical prodigy, and her young talent led from a religious childhood in Texas to the San Francisco Conservatory. It was there, in the mid-1970s, that Rhodes met San Francisco native Martha Wash while both were singing in the gospel group News of the World (NOW) (Perrone 35; Romanowski and George-Warren 1062).

After their stint with NOW, the women took a very different musical direction, turning to San Francisco's popular disco scene and the flamboyant performer Sylvester. As accompanists for the singer, Rhodes and Wash lent backing vocals to Sylvester's gold album *Step II* and garnered critical acclaim for their sound and ability (Larkin 4408; Morgan 43).

Sylvester James had, like Rhodes and Wash, also come from a religious family (his from Los Angeles) and began his career by singing in a traveling gospel choir as a child. But he gave it up in his teens, following the compulsions of his rebellion to San Francisco, where he developed careers as a drag queen and disco performer. After playing with various Bay Area bands, Sylvester (as he had taken to calling himself, dropping his last name in a common display of androgynous popular bravado) was "discovered" by Motown producer Harvey Fuqua, who helped the singer cull a professional band and signed him to the Fantasy Records label.<sup>4</sup>

Fuqua had worked with Marvin Gay in Detroit before coming west, and when he arrived, Sylvester was not the only talent he discovered.

The producer moved Rhodes and Wash from NOW to the disco singer's house band, where they found immediate success—success that seemed immanently translatable to a starring role. So Fuqua moved them again, recording Rhodes and Wash, both excessively obese, as Two Tons of Fun in 1979. After two relatively marginal albums, the duo then moved to Columbia records and renamed themselves the Weather Girls. It was there at Columbia where the two teamed with producer Paul Jabara (Perrone 35).

Jabara began his career as an actor, performing in the original Broadway cast of *Hair* before moving on to movies and television. He also wrote and performed music, earning Grammy and Academy Awards in 1978 for his song "Last Dance." When Jabara met with the Weather Girls, he pitched them a new song he co-wrote with Paul Schaeffer (Hadad).

From the small, isolated town of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Schaeffer had come to New York in 1974. The following year, he began playing piano and keyboards for *Saturday Night Live*, leading to guest spots on the show and side projects with members of the cast—most notably serving as musical director for Dan Aykroyd' and John Belushi's Blues Brothers tour (Knutzen S16). But he was also a songwriter, and together with Jabara, Schaeffer crafted a seemingly lighthearted dance number using rain as a trope for the virtually limitless availability of perfect, single men. Barbara Streisand had turned down the opportunity to perform the song. So too had Donna Summer. But the Weather Girls were in no position to reject songs composed by a Grammy-winning songwriter. They accepted Jabara's offer, and in September 1982, Columbia released "It's Raining Men."<sup>5</sup> The song was nominated for a Grammy Award. It topped the United States disco charts and reached number forty-six on Billboard's Hot 100. But the Weather Girls were never able to capitalize on the song's success, producing a string of relatively lackluster follow-ups throughout the 1980s (Perrone 35).

Such do not seem the conditions to foster the authorial impetus for a fictional takeover of heaven. But that they were. "God bless Mother Nature," the Weather Girls sang. "She's a single woman, too. She took from the heaven, and she did what she had to do. She bought ev'ry angel. She rearranged the sky so that each and ev'ry woman could find the perfect guy." The song describes the takeover of heaven by Mother Nature, who bribes angels in a revolt against the ordained regularity of

God's creation, all in an attempt to change water into eligible men. The radicalism of the story certainly veers from the canned, mundane lyrics of most American popular music, but the subtlety of the message and the celebratory attitude surrounding the celestial coup have generally kept that radicalism hidden. Of course, they have also made the message all the more radical.

Both Izora Rhodes and Martha Wash came from religious backgrounds. Neither Paul Jabara nor Paul Shaffer have demonstrated religious axes to grind in their other songs. There is little evidence that either the authors or singers intended sacrilege. But popular culture is created by the public reception of authorial messages, not the intent of individual authors. Listeners, readers, and watchers create the meaning, validation, and emotional impact of artistic work. When authorial content enters the public domain, authorial intent becomes meaningless. "It's Raining Men" is no different. Though Jabara and Shaffer's lyrics tell the story as listed above, listeners—driving in their cars, dancing in a nightclub, cloistered away through personal headphones—do not have access to formal, written lyrics. They interpret lyrics through the mediation of the singers. And their interpretations reveal a far darker portrayal of this battle. Internet lyrics sites depict the song in two different manners, each fundamentally changing the message of the original.

God bless Mother Nature, she's a single woman too  
 She took on the heavens, and she did what she had to do  
 She fought every angel, she rearranged the sky  
 So that each and every woman, could find the perfect guy.<sup>6</sup>

This version presents an even more radical story of the holy war. Mother Nature, in sympathy with her gender to the detriment of her affiliation as a supreme being, does not "take off from the heaven." In this instance, she is far more active, "taking on" heaven, attacking the full panoply of heaven's defenders. There is no conniving here. No bribery. This version is far more visceral, as violence becomes the principal mode of achieving her ends. Still another reinterpretation of the lyrics changes the story yet again.

God bless Mother Nature, she's a single woman too  
 She took off to heaven and she did what she had to do  
 She taught every angel to rearrange the sky  
 So that each and every woman could find her perfect guy.<sup>7</sup>

Here again Mother Nature is far more active, more atavistic than she is in the original story. She “takes off” to heaven, demonstrating a sense of urgency that does not necessarily belie violence. She neither fights nor bribes the angels. In this instance, she teaches the angels to do her bidding, which at the very least leaves open the possibility that she has God’s support in the endeavor. This does not seem likely, considering the full panoply of examples demonstrating God’s unwillingness to have his divine plan questioned or challenged. Still, the relatively mild connotations of “teaching,” along with the prefix of “God bless Mother Nature,” at least extend the possibility. But “God bless Mother Nature” begins each of the quatrains, and seems to serve in this role as a colloquial phrase of approval, a dodge against the more sinister actions that follow. He makes no other appearances, either before or after the heavenly war passage. Despite the quatrain’s opening, this is still an act of seemingly unprovoked aggression.

The next point of significance surrounding the passage—in all of its forms—is its celebratory tone. The Weather Girls announce the event as historic, using religious language—*Hallelujah!*—to express their approval. The passage does not have a first-person narrator, but the third-person narrator clearly sees Mother Nature as the protagonist of the story, sees the coup as beneficial. And the narrator does find the possibility of the takeover personally gratifying. “I’m going to go out,” she sings. “I’m going to let myself get absolutely soaking wet.” Inherent in this triumphalism of two women singing about the success of Mother Nature against the traditional role of heavenly hosts is a critique of the historical sexism of the bible, its theological interpretations, and practical consequences. A woman is taking over the understood role of men, in aid of offering God’s female creations something he has not adequately provided them. And so the song is not simply revolutionary in its use of violence. It demonstrates an inherent critique of Judeo-Christian dogma as it applies to gender relations—a functional denunciation of the bible’s treatment of women. “Every vow,” proclaims the book of Numbers, “and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void” (Numbers 30: 13). Here that decree has been reversed. “It’s Raining Men” presents a vision of women independent, using their power to create a virtual upper hand in negotiations with men. Men are being created for the pleasure of women, created by a woman to serve as functional dependents for those who have traditionally been seen as subservients.

This is a complete reversal of the portrayal of women as pulled from Adam's rib—a reversal that can only come through revolution. And that revolution can only come through implicit or explicit violence. Mother Nature, then, in her role as antagonist of God (whatever her motive), becomes a stand-in for Lucifer in biblical and literary reinventions of the war for heaven and the Satanic fall from grace.

But before the Devil appeared at the disco, the attempted takeover of heaven—by Lucifer or Satan or both—had a much longer, much less successful history. Lucifer and Satan, in fact, are not represented as the same entity in the Christian Bible.<sup>8</sup> In the Old Testament book of Isaiah, the prophet compares the glutinous, overindulgent king of Babylon to Lucifer, translated in different texts as “morning star,” “day star,” or “light-bearer.” In the Isaiah chronicle, Lucifer is cast from heaven for feigning to exalt his throne above that of God and is punished by being cast into hell.<sup>9</sup> The story of God's holy war with Satan comes in the New Testament, when Jesus notes his witness to Satan's fall from heaven (Luke 10:18) and when John gives a more explicit account of the heavenly war that resulted in such a fall. John's version provides no analysis of the motives behind the battle but portrays the contest as a fight between two sets of angels, led on the virtuous side by the Archangel Michael and on the evil side by Satan.<sup>10</sup> It would be Saint Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury (1034–93) who initiated the popular conflation of the two entities as one in the same (Anselm 193–232).

In every version of the heavenly war story—conflation, fiction, or otherwise—the Devil marshals a force of angels and battles another group of angels, defending the throne and honor of God. He loses and is cast down from heaven. In almost all accounts, whether the Devil is the aggressor or defending himself against a vengeful God, the impetus for the split is pride, noted in Proverbs to bring destruction.<sup>11</sup> Some early interpretations place the event before the creation of man, with Lucifer's refusal to bow before God's throne sparking Michael's vengeance, and thus war. But the Talmud moved the story forward, arguing that the Devil's rivalry was not with God, but with man. After Adam, God had a new favorite, and the angels were required to bow to God's most favored creation. Satan refused (his vanity now pointed in a new direction) and God threw him out of heaven (Rudwin 7–8). The Qur'an, too, places man at the heart of the contest, when Iblis refused to worship Allah's new creation and thus was thrust from the sky<sup>12</sup> (Russell, *Lucifer* 55).

The concept of heavenly war, whatever its genesis, highlights one of the principal theological paradoxes of every monotheistic religion: a holy, omniscient, all-powerful creator God presides over a creation in which evil is present. But if God is holy, omniscient, and all-powerful, then evil cannot exist. Its presence is a functional nullification of the monotheistic God concept.

The paradox could be solved by eliminating God's pure holiness, his omniscience, or both, but most theologians under the cope of the popular monotheistic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) tend to accept holiness and omniscience as a priori and instead attempt a maneuver around the evil paradox. Evil, in this formulation, could be a means toward the greater good. It could be the state of nonbeing (which is, in the final analysis, a semantic copout following the assumption that being itself, when experienced under the watchful eye of a holy, omniscient creator, must be good; anything not good, therefore, does not functionally exist). Evil, since it creates suffering, could be a method of punishing humans for their sins, perhaps for teaching them lessons. But the most common maneuver around the evil paradox comes from Augustine (Burton, *Satan* 16–17).

Augustine argued that goodness cannot exist without choice, so God created sentient beings with the ability to choose properly. Value statements about states of being such as “good” or “evil” are meaningless—impossible, in fact—without intentionality. (That said, intentionality can only go so far. It does not, for example, solve the problem of an omnipotent God, as omnipotence carries within it the ability to know the outcome of each intentional moral choice by every created being.) So God created angels. And Augustine's angels were just as fallible as humans. Many fell to solipsism. And though Augustine's angels did not attack, did not storm the gates of heaven, they did love themselves more than they loved God, causing their fall from grace. Humans, then, were God's second attempt (again leaving omnipotence to twist in the wind) (Augustine 380–411; Russell, “The Historical Satan” 45).

The historical Devil has taken a number of different narrative forms. He has been the fallen angel—the Frankenstein's monster—the creation of God that turned on his master. But he has also been portrayed as an entity completely independent of God (an effort to eliminate the holy omnipotent creator paradox; God cannot be blamed for creating evil if He did not create it, cannot be blamed for allowing evil if there is an element of the cosmos over which He does not have dominion).



Similarly, the Devil has also been described not as a physical entity, but rather as a symbol of human evil or fallibility. This conception is, more than anything else, a new point of entry for the Augustinian free will argument. Humans failed a test, and God gave that failure a name<sup>13</sup> (Russell, *Mephistopheles* 23).

But in the legend of the fall, the Devil is always the one who fails. And that failure has been interpreted by hundreds of writers through tens of centuries.<sup>14</sup> The first significant nonbiblical account of the fall came from the Carthaginian Blossius Aemilius Dracontius in his fifth century *De laudibus Dei*, followed by the early English poet Caedmon in the seventh century. Dutch playwright Hugo Grotius published *Adamus exul* in 1601, and Joost van den Vondel published his own version, *Lucifer*, in 1654. Poets Jacob Cats, Andrew Ramsay, Alvares de Azevedo, Luis de Camoens, Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, and Phineas Fletcher all covered the story in verse from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, James Thomson, Charles Swinburne, and George Du Maurier did, as well. From Freidrich Leopold Stolberg's *Jamben* (1783) to Giosue Carducci's *Inno a Satana* (1863), from August Strindberg's *Lucifer or God* (1877) to Richard Dehmel's *Lucifer* (1899), authors have struggled to make sense of the fight, to blur the lines in the sand between good and evil in an effort to see the Devil's point of view (Rudwin 9, 15). In the twentieth century, novelist Anatole France published his satirical novel *Revolt of the Angels* (1914), using the Lucifer myth as an allegory of French politics, reviving interest in the fall as a topic of popular debate<sup>15</sup> ("Revolt of the Angels" BR445). For all of these accounts, however, the most influential treatment of heavenly war came from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667–74).

In Milton's hands, the image of the Devil functionally changes. No longer is he purely evil, purely vile. Milton's Devil has the vanity of the biblical story, but he is a fully drawn character with a sharp intellect and a reasoned mind about his station in the heavenly hierarchy. He knows from the beginning of his quest that the project is doomed, but he fights anyway, led by—however misguided it might be—principle. In Milton's hands, the Devil becomes a sympathetic character, distraught at his fall not solely for his own selfish ends, but sincerely empathetic toward those angels who fall with him and compassionate toward man, whom he has doomed in the endeavor:

To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquisht, rolling in the fiery Gulf

Confounded though immortal: But his doom  
 Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought  
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes  
 That witness'd huge affliction and dismay  
 Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.<sup>16</sup>

But though there is in Milton the most effective presentation of sympathy for the Devil, his is ultimately a Christian-inspired text. The Devil is, for all of his narrative wholeness, the bad guy, and Milton is careful to remind his reader that the war was ill-conceived and destructive. *Paradise Lost* is not a celebration of heavenly war. Through the luster of baroque prose, a firm denunciation of the Satanic act remains paramount (Revard 131–35, 138). When Jesus dies on the cross, for example, He “shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength/Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms” (Milton 597).

“It’s Raining Men” seems an unlikely descendent of this literary evolutionary line, and it differs from its forebears in two principal regards: authorial and demonic intent. Isaiah, John, and Milton all sought to further the Judeo-Christian project with the legend of the fall. It was, ultimately, a morality play demonstrating the insidiousness of pride and the eventual triumph of good over evil. Therefore, they seem to be saying, it would behoove any reader to choose the side of good, if for no other reason than its eventual, inevitable victory. The Weather Girls, however, do not leave listeners with the onus to choose sides. Mother Nature is no one to be feared, and God is caricatured through a common colloquialism. And if a listener does choose to side with one force or another, the song’s celebratory tone really only leads her in one direction. Like Milton, the Weather Girls demonstrate a sympathy for the Devil (Mother Nature) but do not offer any of the Christian qualifications of their seventeenth-century counterpart. Their sympathy is grandiose, boisterous—and it comes as a culmination, a third act dénouement rather than prefatory first act character development. While *Paradise Lost* leaves the reader ultimately lamenting the Devil’s plight, “It’s Raining Men” makes its listener openly root for God’s opponent. It makes the argument that God was wrong in designating water as the core constituent of vapor condensation, that making eligible bachelors the rightful material to gather in clouds and fight against pressurized convection is the proper way of things.<sup>17</sup> Mother Nature is fixing God’s error.

And so “It’s Raining Men” is an argument against God’s perfection and omnipotence. The Weather Girls do not base the imperfection of the world on human choice, however preordained. *Good* here is not defined through the necessary counter-presence of evil. Women do not make a conscious choice to turn away eligible men already available to them. They find the men God provides for them unsatisfactory and thus celebrate Mother Nature’s attempt to stand on their behalf. Here is the song’s other principal difference with its forbears. Demonic intent is unselfish. Whereas pride always plays a role in previous recitations of heavenly war, “It’s Raining Men” portrays a Lucifer-substitute acting out of concern for a group treated unfairly. The flaw in the combatants lies with God, not with the Devil, who makes a baroque, unselfish effort to buy, teach, or fight the host of angels, to stand as a representative of womankind on Earth. In *Paradise Lost*, angels stand with the Devil. In “It’s Raining Men,” the Devil stands with all of female humanity.

But it isn’t the Devil. It is Mother Nature. And in the use of a demonic surrogate to precipitate (no pun intended) this heavenly conflict, the Weather Girls take their place among the authors seeking a way out of the aforementioned evil paradox. (Even though, as mentioned above, the song invalidates any omniscience claims with its condemnation of God as an unsatisfactory facilitator of women’s needs. The importance of understanding the song’s situation in relation to the evil paradox is not to find consistency in its overarching message. It is instead to gauge its relationship to those attempts that have come before it.) The presence of evil is a functional nullification of the monotheistic God concept of a holy, omniscient, and all-powerful creator. The Weather Girls work around the problem through a presentation of the Devil as a unique reinterpretation of one of those early historical narrative forms: they create a being completely independent of God. Mother Nature is an entity (or conglomeration of a series of entities) stemming from a variety of different polytheistic faiths. There has never been room for a Mother Nature figure in the dominant monotheistic religions.<sup>18</sup> By using a counter-deity such as Mother Nature as a Devil-surrogate, “It’s Raining Men” places God in contest with a section of the universe that isn’t His. And God cannot be blamed for creating evil if He did not create it, cannot be blamed for allowing evil if there is an element of the cosmos over which He does not have dominion.

And so, “It’s Raining Men” participates in the long evolutionary line of religious and literary interpretations of the Lucifer myth. But it also

remains at the tail end of another, less austere evolutionary line—disco. But rather than demonstrate a lyrical commonality with its musical counterparts, the song veers sharply, providing significant religious imagery in a genre that almost categorically shunned political, social, or theological messages. This was a culture of narcissism. Disco reveled in artifice, pomp, and superficiality as a salve against the broader, depressing culture outside the club doors.<sup>19</sup> It celebrated drugs, sex, and dancing as viable goals in and of themselves. Americans were “seeking escapism,” noted a record executive in the late 1970s, “a respite, however fleetingly, from the seemingly insurmountable hassles of gasoline lines, high food bills, uncertainty about whether they will have enough heating oil to keep warm during the winter and the growing dilemma of trying to find and keep a roof over their heads”<sup>20</sup> (Joe 23–24). In this escapism-as-politics culture, there was little room for meaningful, message-oriented lyrical content. Such content was, in fact, shunned as overbearing and ultimately beside the point.

In November 1975, for example, Silver Convention reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 with their song, “Fly, Robin, Fly.”

Fly, robin, fly  
Fly, robin, fly  
Fly, robin, fly  
Up, up to the sky.<sup>21</sup>

The music was the message. The lyrical content was tertiary. In June of that year, the Bee Gees’s “Jive Talkin’” reached Billboard’s number one. In July, it was “The Hustle,” by Van McCoy and the Soul City Symphony. From KC and the Sunshine Band’s “Get Down Tonight,” (1975) to Johnnie Taylor’s “Disco Lady,” (1976) from Gloria Gaynor to Donna Summer and beyond, disco artists purposely created a medium largely devoid of lyrical content. Of course, lack of content was the point.

And so the Weather Girls’ “It’s Raining Men” deviates from the established disco pattern. It is not part of a larger religious project among disco artists. It has no corollary among its contemporary peers. It managed instead to cordon off its own unique space in the twilight of a dying genre, depicting—however subtly—a revolutionary retelling of the Lucifer myth in the face of a discipline that encouraged apathy as an abiding mantra. The message, at least in this instance, was more than just the music. The Weather Girls gave a decisive opinion

on the nature and function of the Devil. In so doing, they managed to find what Percy Shelley noted as “the weak place of the popular religion—the vulnerable belly of the crocodile.”

## Notes

1. Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Essay On the Devil and Devils.”
2. Radcliffe Joe, an earlier chronicler, agrees with Shapiro’s narrative but gives far more weight to the development of the specific American dance evolution from the big bands of the 1920s through the birth of rock and roll (Joe 12–21). Both, however, see disco and dance music as a vital protest, albeit a narcissistic one—dance as a form of revolt against war, depression, or other crises.
3. Paul Jabara and Paul Shaffer, “It’s Raining Men.”
4. Fantasy Records, founded by Max and Sol Weiss in 1949, had undergone many reinventions over the years. The label recorded jazz, poetry, comedy, and rock and roll. By the mid-1970s, Fantasy was also publishing popular music and disco (Larkin 1408–09).
5. Bob Esty and Paul Jabara, producers, Columbia Records, catalog number 44 03181, 1982.
6. “It’s Raining Men,” <http://www.lyricsdownload.com/weather-girls-its-raining-men-lyrics.html>. This version is also used by <http://www.lyrics4all.net/t/the-weather-girls/u/its-raining-men.php>.
7. “It’s Raining Men.”
8. The name *Satan* itself indicates its functional difference. The Hebrew *śtn* and the Greek *diabolos* both translate as forces of opposition. So Satan himself can have no other function than that of an adversary. His existence is purely contingent upon the presence of an opponent, in this case God (Forsyth 4).
9. “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! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit” (Isaiah 14:12–15).
10. “And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child” (Revelation 12: 7–13).
11. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16: 18).
12. “So (when He inspired into him His revelation) the angels submitted one and all. But Iblis did not, he behaved arrogantly for he was of the disbelievers. God said, ‘O, Iblis! What prevented you from submitting to him whom I have created with My own special powers (bestowing him with the maximum attributes). Is it that you seek to be great or is it that you

- are (really) of the highly proud ones (above obeying My command)?' Iblis said, 'I am better than he. You created me from fire while him you created from clay.' God said, 'Then get out of this (state); you are surely driven away (from My mercy). And surely upon you shall be My disapproval till the Day of Judgment'" (Qur'an 38: 73–78).
13. Of course, theologians have also gone the opposite way, positing the Devil as an aspect of God himself, but that sort of dualism does little to exacerbate the theological analysis of "It's Raining Men."
  14. Along with the literary manifestations of the Lucifer myth cataloged below, it is also of no small significance that corollaries of the story have appeared in a variety of other ancient religious/mythological contexts. As Maximilian Rudwin has noted, "The opposition of Lucifer to the Lord has an analogy in that of Vrita to Indra in Hindu mythology, of Ahriman to Ormuzd in Persian mythology, of Set to Horus in Egyptian mythology, of Prometheus to Zeus in Greek mythology and of Loki to the gods of Asgardh in Scandinavian mythology" (Rudwin 2).
  15. For more examples, see Mildred McCollum and Betty Flora, "Arts and the Devil."
  16. John Milton, 10.
  17. Of course, there are other problematic consequences of this type of imagery, completely unrelated to its theological implications. What would the survival rate of the falling men be? If they were more likely to survive when hitting bodies of water, would there be a run on river banks and beaches? What would such a run do to the economy? The roads? Would the catastrophic horror of having dead men splattered all over the ground kill the libidos of these ravenous women? If not, does that prove that Mother Nature was, in fact, evil all along? It is important, perhaps above all else, that in these endeavors to parse meaning and significance from the broader popular culture, we scholars not take ourselves so seriously. Imagining a group of confused men falling from the sky and a group of expectant women waiting below is funny. The song presents stark theological consequences and takes its place in a long literary line, but it is still funny.
  18. For more on Mother Nature and the amalgamation of goddesses and natural life, see Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*; and *The New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*.
  19. As Peter Shapiro—a staunch defender of disco's musical viability and importance—has argued, "Disco is all shiny, glittery surfaces; high heels and luscious lipstick; jam-packed jeans and cut peccs; lush, soaring, swooping strings and Latin razzmatazz; cocaine rush and quaalude wobble. It was the humble peon suddenly beamed up to the cosmic firmament by virtue of his threads and dance moves" (Shapiro 3).
  20. The executive Joe quotes remains anonymous, cited only as "the head of one disco-oriented record label" (Joe 24).
  21. "Fly, Robin, Fly," by Fred Bronson, 421.

## Works Cited

- Anselm of Canterbury. "On the Fall of the Devil." *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*. Eds. Brian Davies, and Gil Evans. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. 193–232.
- Augustine. *The City of God*. New York: Modern Library, 1950.
- Bullis, Helen. "Revolt of the Angels." *New York Times* 18 Oct. 1914: BR445.

- Bronson, Fred. *The Billboard Book of Number One Hits*. 5th ed. New York: Billboard, 2003.
- Forsyth, Neil. *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987.
- Hadad, Claudette Jabara, and Henry Hadad. "Biography." Olga Music Inc. 20 Aug. 2005. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.pauljabara.com/home.html>>.
- Holy Bible*. King James Version.
- Holy Qur'an*. Trans. Amatul Rahman Omar and Abdul Mannan Omar. Hockessin, DE: Noor Foundation-International, 1997.
- "It's Raining Men." 1 Feb. 2002. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.lyricsdownload.com/weather-girls-its-raining-men-lyrics.html>>.
- "It's Raining Men." 20 Mar. 2003. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.lyrics4all.net/t/the-weather-girls/u/its-raining-men.php>>.
- "It's Raining Men." 9 Aug. 2003. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.lyricscrawler.com/song/45692.html>>.
- Jabara, Paul, and Paul Shaffer. "It's Raining Men." *The Disco Collection*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1982. 10 May 2008 <<http://www.musicnotes.com>>.
- Joe, Radcliffe A. *This Business of Disco*. New York: Billboard, 1980.
- Knutzen, Eirik. "Un-Hip, Un-Hip, Hurrah!" *The Toronto Star* 27 June 1987: S16.
- Larkin, Colin "Fantasy Records." *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music, 2nd Edition, Vol. 2, Clarke, Kenny-Gleason, Jackie*. Ed. Colin Larkin. New York: Stockton Press, 1995. 1408–1409.
- . "Weather Girls." *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music, 2nd Edition, Vol. 6, Threepenny Opera-ZZ Top*. Ed. Colin Larkin. New York: Stockton Press, 1995. 4408.
- McCollum, Mildred, and Betty Flora. "Arts and the Devil." *The English Journal* 49 (1960): 464–468.
- Milton, John. "Cook 1: The Argument." *Asimov's Annotated Paradise Lost*. Ed. Isaac Asimov. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974.
- Morgan, Roberta. *Disco*. New York: Bell Publishing, 1979.
- Perrone, Pierre. "Obituary: Izora Rhodes-Armstead, Singer with the Weather Girls." *The Independent* 27 Sept. 2004: 35.
- Revard, Stella. "Milton's Critique of Heroic Warfare in *Paradise Lost* V and VI." *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 7. (Winter 1967): 119–139.
- Romanowski, Patricia, and Holly George-Warren. "Weather Girls." *The New Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll*. Eds. Patricia Romanowski and Holly George-Warren. New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1995. 1062.

- Rudwin, Maximilian. *The Devil in Legend and Literature*. New York: AMS Press, 1931.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1981.
- . *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984.
- . “The Historical Satan.” *The Satanism Scare*. Eds. James T. Richardson, Joel Best, and David G. Bromley. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991. 41–48.
- Shapiro, Peter. *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2005.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. “Essay On the Devil and Devils.” *Shelley’s Prose, or The Trumpet of a Prophecy*. Ed. David Lee Clark. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1954. 264–275.
- Sjoo, Monica, and Barbara Mor. *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*. New York: Harper, 1987.
- , and ———. *The New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1987.

**Thomas Aiello** is an assistant professor of history at Valdosta State University. He is the editor of *Dan Burley’s Jive* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2009) and the author of the forthcoming *Bayou Classic: The Grambling-Southern Football Rivalry* (LSU Press, 2010) and *The Kings of Casino Park: Race and Race Baseball in the Lost Season of 1932* (University of Alabama Press, 2011).