

Satan's speeches

As a reader of Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book-1, it is usual that one will mistake Satan as the epic Hero, because of his strong speeches. The impression that one gets after examining Satan's speeches is that of nobility and greatness. But if we carefully examine Satan's speeches we will find that he is the personification of evil.

Beelzebub is the first person to whom Satan addresses "and till then who knew the force of those dire arms?" Satan tells that God eventually proved stronger because of his power of Thunder. He then tells that he is not repentant of his rebellion against God, and his mind is "fixed". "What though the field be lost? All is not lost: the unconquerable will, and study of revenge, immortal hate, and courage never to submit or yield"- This speech gives Satan a true heroic stature, he says that they did not lose everything, they still have their unconquerable willpower, and courage never to submit or surrender.

Satan's second speech is again made to Beelzebub, he says "to be weak is miserable, doing or suffering", this speech undoubtedly has heroic texture in it, but immediately after this speech Satan's evil nature comes out, when he says "to do ought good never will be our task, but ever to do ill our sole delight". If God seeks "to bring forth good" out of evil they will still find means of evil. With such a statement only a handful of readers and critics can sympathize with Satan.

Satan's third and the most important speech is also made to Beelzebub, his only listener. The third speech of Satan is very popular and impressive, it acts on the conscience of the reader. In this speech Satan shows his love of freedom and hatred of slavery. He refers to himself as a "new possessor" of hell and claims to be "One who brings a mind not to be changed by place or time," he further talks about the power of mind "the mind is in its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven". His love for freedom

is depicted in his speech where he says. "Here atleast we shall be free" "To reign is worth ambition though in hell, it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven". Such remarks undoubtedly will inspire and impress any reader.

Satan fourth and fifth speech is addressed to the fallen angels. These speeches undoubtedly shows Satan's leadership quality and power of his words. Satan refers to fallen angels as "princes, potentates, and warriors". Satan with his words made the fallen angels ashamed for their immobility. He further flatters fallen angels by referring them as "power matchless, but with the Almighty"

Blake said that, in writing Paradise Lost, Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it. Undoubtedly the portrayal of Satan through his speeches are grand and worthy of the highest admiration, but also we cannot skip the hollowness of Satan's evil character, presented by his own speeches and comments on the character of Satan by Milton himself.

I can help you get started so you can write a note on Satan's speeches on your own. We'll use Satan's first speech in [Book I](#) (excerpt above) to orient you in terms of analysis; you can then analyze more speeches for greater insight and detail.

There are three things that Milton wants to stand out in particular for the reader in this first introduction to Satan, things that will remain relevant to Satan's other speeches. The first is Satan's emotion. The second is Satan's assertion of his right to independent will. The third is his commitment to revenge and hatred.

We see his emotion in the shock and surprise with which he surveys the scene before him

But O how fall'n! how chang'd

From him, who in the happy Realms of Light [...]

Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd

In equal ruin:

Milton is adding a significant innovation to the [characterization](#) of Satan by having him demonstrate emotion. That Biblical accounts of angels may show them expressing emotion is generally overlooked.

We clearly see Satan's assertion of independent will in his line:

All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,

Satan, though fallen, continues to assert his right to wage war against God and demand equal or higher place with him. This is a characterization that, when combined with emotion, produces a representation of him that is human-like.

We also clearly see Satan's commitment to revenge and hatred, which is coupled with confirmation of independent will:

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield:

Milton here provides Satan with a motive to carry him through the ensuing story that will unfold and involve Adam and Eve. Without this motive--if left with something non-human, like an instinctual reaction--Milton couldn't have painted the vivid illustration of Paradise lost as he has done.