

Uncertainty and the sociable spirit: raphael's role in paradise lost

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Traditionally, epic poems paint the hero in a grandiose fashion, introducing them immediately and frequently using splendid language to create the image of a character that is meant to be revered. By placing Satan in the traditional place of the hero, Milton has created an abnormality that allows scholars to debate if Satan was truly meant to be the tragic anti hero of the story, or if the sympathy of the audience that comes with the character arc of an anti hero was intentionally fabricated to prove the depth of the danger and allure of Satan's charming rhetoric. From book I to book X of Paradise Lost, as Satan's self presentation devolves from one of an admirable hero fighting against an unjust god to a tormented soul trying to get petty revenge against his punisher, the one constant aspect of his identity was his alluring soliloquies. Satan's flamboyant speech in the first two books are what make him such an impressive and memorable literary figure. At this point in the story, his outward speech and inner turmoil have not diverged, and he genuinely believes in his bold speech and actions. However, it is not just the boldness of his speeches that wow readers, it is his uncanny ability to tell a story or present an idea in a way that overlooks key pitfalls and exaggerates the reward of a risk without seeming overly fantastic or unbelievable.

From book 1, we see Satan rise off a lake of fire and deliver his heroic speech that outright challenges God. Satan tells the other fallen angels that they can make ' a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n' and bolsters their support by saying, ' Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n'. On the surface, these words seem to be a type of insurance, that in this fight against God there is nothing more they can lose if they are strong willed, but upon further

inspection, it can be seen that Satan hides behind his words to fuel his ulterior motives. Because Satan's version of the story is told first, the audience is ignorant of the exaggerations and omissions that are hidden in Satan's magnificent speeches. This allows the reader to easily overlook the fact that the powers the fallen angels have in Hell come from God, who could at any moment strip them with ease. However sympathetic of a character Milton may have created in Satan with feeling of remorse and regret, his desire to do harm and push others to continuously do harm has been established from his very first epic speech. This is where the necessity of having Satan be such a well-spoken and larger-than-life character becomes important, without dynamic speeches, Satan would simply not be a forceful or convincing enough villain to plausibly drive the plot or pique a reader's sympathy and interest to the extent Milton required. Book IV is when the distinction between Satan's outward persona and inner turmoil manifests. Satan is magnificent, even admirable in Books I and II, but by book IV, he is changed. Where in the start of the poem he appeared divine and otherworldly he is now defined by human characteristics and thoughts. It is the humanity of his soliloquy that changes Satan's dynamic from one of respect and admiration to one of sympathy and understanding. While humans cannot relate to the pureness of the divine, we can relate to the regret and envy that coats every line of the speech. The power of Satan's illustrious speech is seen when he says "my dread of shame / Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd / With other promises.../ Than to submit, boasting I could subdue / Th'Omnipotent". In his admittance, he is able to garner the respect of the reader despite blatantly admitting that he will not submit to

the will of divine good. He has an uncanny ability of showing how the obvious good may not be the greater good, because when you look deeper into the theology of the statement, he is saying that by unwillingly submitting he will be creating an ever greater sin and moral downfall.

At first he deludes himself into thinking his misery is God's doing, but he then admits that he rebelled on account of his own free will, and that the only way to free himself from his torment is to embrace it. Satan then declares that Hell is wherever he himself is, making he himself Hell. Instead of allowing this to drive him down the path of repentance, Satan uses this thought to bolster his pride and wrath despite the constant despair he feels for possessing the two characteristics. In this soliloquy, Satan uses his mastery of language to earn the respect and pity of the reader despite the self-manifestation of his suffering and the outright acknowledgement that he is a tormented soul with no desire for vindication of his sins. The self-portrait that Satan creates in this soliloquy is one of a character who is upset and troubled by their alienation, but who nonetheless will not adjust his actions or beliefs to achieve salvation and would rather completely commit to sin. In essence, Satan is given such Shakespearean speech to counteract the preconceived notion that he is pure evil and sin. Milton knew that it would take an exceptional amount of rationale and intellect to portray Satan as the charismatic but tragic character the story requires.

As a character Satan must be much more dynamic than those of inherent good to be an enjoyable and relatable evil, as nobody wants to relate to the Devil. It is the brilliant interweaving of humanity and divine power that

strikes a unique blend of fear, admiration, and empathy in the reader, as the glimpses into his mind often present situations that people struggle with on a daily basis, just at a more supernatural level. The depiction of a magnificent fall from grace in a manner that is both absolute and interesting requires a large chunk of introspection and emotional distraught that could not be conveyed in the dull speech patterns used by the less magnificent characters such as Adam and Eve. It is important to acknowledge that as Satan's character degenerates, his motives for warring with God wane as well. At first, Satan wishes to continue the initial fight for freedom from what he viewed as an unjust God. Soon after his motive evolves into continuing the fight for glory and renown that could become of it. In book IV, the downfall of Adam and Eve, and subsequently all of humanity, is shown to simply be a way to pettily toy with God's plans. By the end of the story, Satan argues that his actions were just to impress the other demons in Hell, similar to how a toddler throws a tantrum to garner the attention of its parents. This regression of motives shows Satan's fall from magnificence in grace in a very literal fashion. Despite the degeneration of Satan's physical and mental fortitude, the one aspect of the character that remains unwavering is his convincing and alluring speech. Satan is given the most line density and arguably the most intelligent dialect in the poem for the purpose of inspiring pathos in the reader. Without the intense emotional swings and deep analysis of what would otherwise be irrational behavior there would be no link between the reader and Satan, and since Satan is the link between the books it would have been unwise of Milton to leave him as a flat character. Satan's passionate use of language makes him an entertaining and

intellectually stimulating character, bringing a much needed breath of humanity to an otherwise otherworldly story.