

Satan's speech to eve



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Satan's persuasive speech begins with ethos, using lengthy attempts to seduce Eve by demonstrating his probity as one who has experienced the magnificence of the forbidden fruit. He commences by using an apostrophe, addressing the tree directly to magnify and animate its powers as the "mother of science" (680). This address is combined with a tricolon of "O sacred, wise and wisdom-giving plant" (687) to foreground the tree's immense power. Further, the sibilance of "discern/things in their causes, but to trace the ways of highest agents" denotes a tone of solemn reverence which hints that the tree is worthy of admiration and respect. Appealing to Eve through flattery, in addressing her as "Queen of this universe" (684), is highly manipulative, and forms an exclamatio, an element of pathos, as his elocutio conveys a false sense of heightened emotion. Satan follows this with a series of rhetorical questions, or erotesis: "how should ye? By the fruit?... By the Threat'ner?" (686-7). As readers, we can glimpse Milton's irony in this statement: it is the serpent, not God, who is clearly the "threat'ner" (687). But for the gullible Eve, this erotesis strengthens Satan's confutatio, discrediting his opponent's arguments, and eliminating the reasons why she should not follow God's rule. In an example of anthyphora, these questions are answered by Satan to demonstrate his own probity of having eaten the fruit and benefitted, rather than suffering. Satan's righteousness is emphasised by his anadiplosis, in "look on me, me who have touched and tasted" (687-89), as repeating 'me' enforces Satan's potency. Further, the alliteration in "touched and tasted" (688) provides an alluring sensory image to Eve, tempting her to experience the same sensory enlightenment. Using hysteron proteron in "life more perfect have attained than Fate meant me" (689-90), Satan claims a sense of ethos by emphasising the "perfect"

satisfaction that tasting the fruit has brought him. The vigilant reader can see that Milton is being highly ironic, as we have previously seen Satan, destined to be one of God's angels, cast out of heaven for his misdemeanours.

The orator proceeds to a phase of pathos, appealing to Eve's emotions and urging her to see that she must eat the fruit so that she can gain her desired knowledge. He starts this argument oxymoronically with the phrase "petty trespass" (694) in attempt to make the sin seem less significant, yet paradoxically praises Eve's "dauntless virtue" (694), inflating her ego with a false sense of noble courage. This further hints at Milton's irony, as Satan's flattery actually makes little logical sense. Further, the repetition and alliteration of "death denounced, whatever thing death be, deterred not..." seems to lessen the importance of death, obscuring its meaning and persuading Eve with false arguments. This continues in Satan's use of aporia and anthypophora, as he initially feigns doubt as to the justice of God in "Of good, how just?", then proceeds to tell Eve that evil is "easier shunned" when it can be known, and thus urges her to see that she must eat the fruit. This is more irony from Milton, as it is clear that Eve should be able to see, without eating the fruit, that Satan's speech is the true evil. Satan then proceeds to repeat 'not' in "not just, not God; not feared then" which works to remove Eve's emotions of fear that God would harshly punish her. This is followed by epanalepsis in "your fear itself of death removes the fear", creating circularity in Satan's speech to reinforce the notion of Eve's unnecessary fear and spurring her to cast aside such doubts. Satan emphasises this using anaphora, repeating "why" in a tricolon of clauses, "

why then was this forbid? Why but to awe, why but to keep to low and ignorant?”. This entices Eve to question God’s command, amplifying her sense of injustice to encourage her to reject God. This is cemented with the antithesis between “ dim” and “ opened and cleared”, which inspires Eve to eat the fruit to gain such visionary clarity and progress from her current state of ignorance. Using epanalepsis, the serpent’s pathos is finalised by emphasising the prospect of future knowledge, as he falsely claims Eve may soon be “ knowing both good and evil as [the Gods] know”. This is enforced by persuading Eve that she may be “ as Gods”, positioning her to have a false sense of the fruit’s power. The reader may see this as blasphemous and impossible, as Satan suggests Eve could become akin to the all-powerful Gods, yet the orator has successfully seduced Eve’s emotional state.

Finally, Satan’s argument shifts to one of logos, as he explains to Eve why she should reach beyond her current status and tries to reason that her fears are unjustified. Using polyptoton in “ ye shall die... death to be wished” (713-714), Satan changes transforms death into something inviting by changing its verbal form. Indeed, hysteron proteron in “ which no worse than this can bring” (715) foregrounds Satan’s faulty logic that nothing bad may come from Eve tasting the fruit. He employs erotesis, “ what are gods that man may not become as they, participating god-like food?”, to hint at the unfairness that humans are not able to reach the same elevated status as the angels. This disrespect for the angels and God should reveal to Eve that Satan’s argument is duplicitous, especially as Satan mockingly answers his own question with “ the gods are first”. He even further tries to dismantle Eve’s respect for God by derisively adding “ I question it” (720). The final

part of Satan's rhetoric relies significantly on four successive rhetorical questions, as he tries to derail God's dominance of Eve's logic. These questions use heavy enjambment, coupled with alliteration, especially in lines 724 to 726: " whose eats thereof, forthwith attains wisdom without their leave? And wherein lies th' offence, that man should thus attain to know?". This has an overwhelming effect and creates a fast, forward-moving rhythm in Satan's speech, working to spur Eve into eating the fruit.

Successively repeating the device of erotesis also denies Eve the opportunity of considering Satan's argument with logical vigilance, thus encouraging her to act impulsively. The questions prompt Eve to see that there are vast gaps in her knowledge which will only be answered upon eating the fruit; this is revealed in Satan's conclusio, as he openly instructs her that " these and many more causes import your need of this fair fruit" (730-731). The orator finishes with short asyndeton and flattery: " Goddess human, reach then, and freely taste" (732). This tempts Eve by simplifying a monumental disobedience into an easy action of merely reaching and tasting. As a final attempt of manipulation, it is an illogical paradox that Eve may " freely taste", as she is stuck between being governed by God's commands, or being ruled by Satan's deception (732).

In Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, Ariel's speech uses rhetoric far less successively to persuade Belinda to avoid the charms of men. Unlike Satan, he does not follow a clear structure of rhetorical strategy and does not create a strong logical argument to sway Belinda's natural position.

However, the orator similarly begins his speech with flattery, claiming Belinda to be the " fairest of Mortals" (27), appealing to her vanity to inspire

engagement, just as Satan did in *Paradise Lost*. This line also employs enjambment, breaking the usual rhythm of the end-stopped lines, which creates a sense that Ariel is overcome with emotion and praise of Belinda. Similarly, by referring to Belinda as "thou" and "thy", Ariel addresses her almost as a deity, suggesting she is to be revered. Yet in his exordium, he uses paragon in "all the nurse and all the Priest have taught" to equate their positions, which perhaps makes his argument less successful, as it seems he relies on fairy stories of "airy Elves" and "Angel-Powers" as his confirmation, rather than presenting a logical argument as Satan does. Like Satan, however, his exclamation of "hear and believe! Thy own importance know" implores Belinda to realise her own prowess, and foregrounds the significance of knowledge. Similarly, the use of sibilance as Ariel hints that there are "some secret Truths from Learned Pride conceal'd" works to entice Belinda by suggesting that this wisdom is only revealed to those as special as she.

While Satan appeals to Eve through techniques of pathos, logos and ethos, the body of Ariel's argument, including its narratio, divisio and conclusio, is comparatively poorly grounded. Ariel focuses on describing the supernatural elements of *The Rape of the Lock*, yet in doing so his rhetoric seems to discredit his own argument: while he describes the sylphs with elevated terms as "light Militia of the lower Sky" (42), his words suggest that they are just as shallow as the women on earth. Repetition of "vanities" in the lines "when Woman's transient Breath is fled, that all her Vanities at once are dead: succeeding Vanities she still regards" (51-53) hints that the sylphs are equally trivial. This is further evoked in the parallelism of "when alive... after

Death survive" (54-55). Indeed, Ariel's frivolous tone in the anaphora of "what Sexes and what Shapes they please", along with the alliteration of "melting maids... Midnight Masquerades", typifies the jovial freedom the sylphs enjoy. This is a contrast to Satan's conformatio, which uses erotesis and forms of repetition to distort Eve's logic and emotions. Ariel's rhetorical questions, especially in his conclusio when saying "when Florio speaks, what Virgin could withstand, if gentle Damon did not squeeze her Hand?", seem to convey his approval for Belinda's misguided actions. It is as if, as a sylph, he understands feminine whims, and makes excuses for her foolish behaviour rather than trying to persuade Belinda to avoid male seduction. His flippant tone in the alliteration of "varying Vanities" and metaphor of "moving Toyshop of their Heart" suggest imprudent actions are merely expected of a young woman. This air of mockery is extremely different to Satan's seductive argument and makes it difficult to take Ariel's words seriously. Thus, while Satan uses ethos to claim his probity, Ariel's use of hysteron proteron to elevate his status in the lines "Of these am I, who thy Protection claim, A watchful Sprite, and Ariel is my name," actually has the opposite effect. Further, the tricolon in Ariel's language of "Heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where" compounds an awareness of his ignorance. Despite using the mirrored chiasmus of "Beware of all, but most beware of Man!" as a final attempt of persuasion, the ambiguity of "beware of all" simply emphasises his uncertainty. In comparison to Milton's Satan, Ariel does not successfully use rhetorical devices and structure, making it impossible to persuade his listener.

Works Cited

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