

J. Milton (1608 – 1674) - “Paradise Lost” - 1667 - *Satan's speech*

1 “Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”	“È questa la regione, è questo il suolo, il clima”
2 Said then the lost archangel, “this the seat	disse allora l’Arcangelo perduto, questa è la sede
3 That we must change for heaven, this mournful gloom	che ci tocca avere in cambio del cielo, questa triste oscurità
4 For that celestial light? Be it so, since he	invece della luce celestiale? sia pure così, se colui
5 Who now is sovereign can dispose and bid	che ora è sovrano può disporre e comandare
	<i>(in the fallen angel's words God comes very close to being a tyrant.)</i>
6 What shall be right: farthest from him is best	che cosa sia giusto; tanto meglio quanto più lontano
7 Whom reason hath equalled force hath made supreme	da colui che la ragione ha fatto uguale, la forza reso supremo
	<i>(reason equals Satan and God. Strength is the only difference between them.)</i>
8 Above his equals. Farewell happy fields	sui suoi uguali. Addio, campi felici
9 Where joy for ever dwells! Hail horrors! Hail	dove la gioia abita eterna! Salve orrori, salve
10 <u>Infernal world!</u> And thou profoundest hell	mondo infernale, e tu, profondissimo inferno,
11 Receive thy new possessor: one who brings	accogli il nuovo possessore: uno la cui mente
12 A mind not to be changed by place or time.	non può mutare secondo tempi e luoghi.
13 The mind is its own place, and in itself	La mente è luogo a se stessa, e in se stessa
	<i>(one's state of mind is more important than the physical place where one is.)</i>
	<i>Hell and Heaven are both found in the heart of the individual.</i>
14 Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.	Può fare dell’inferno un paradiso, del paradiso un inferno.
15 What matter where, if I be still the same,	Che cosa importa dove, se sono sempre lo stesso,
16 And what I should be, all but less than he	e che altro dovrei essere, tutto meno che inferiore
17 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least	a colui che il tuono ha reso più grande? Qui almeno
18 We shall be free; th’ Almighty hath not built	saremo liberi; l’Onnipotente non ha creato
19 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:	questo luogo per invidiarlo, e non ci cacerà di qui:
20 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice	qui potremo regnare sicuri, e per mia scelta (secondo me)
21 To reign is worth ambition though in hell:	regnare è degno di ambizione, anche se all’inferno:
22 Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.	meglio regnare all’inferno che servire in cielo.
23 But wherefore let us then our faithful friends,	Ma perché lasciamo noi i nostri fedeli amici,
24 The associates and co-partners of our loss,	i complici e i compagni che hanno condiviso con noi la nostra sconfitta,
25 Lie thus astonished on th’ <u>oblivious pool</u> ,	a giacere così attoniti sugli stagni dell’oblio,
26 And call them not to share with us their part	e non li chiamiamo ad avere con noi la loro parte
27 In this unhappy mansion, or once more	in questa infelice dimora, o a tentare ancora una volta
28 With rallied arms to try what may be yet	con armi riunite, quel che può essere ancora
29 Regained in heaven, or what more lost in hell?”	riconquistato in cielo, o cosa ancora può essere perduto nell’inferno?”

Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is speaking? **Satan is speaking.**
2. Is he alone? **No, he is not, since he is talking to the other fallen angels ("we" in line 3).**
3. What does he hail? **He hails the horrors of Hell.**
4. How does Satan react to the fall from Heaven? **He thinks it is better for him to be far from God (line 6).**
5. Does he feel equal to God? **No, he does not because God is stronger than he is (lines 7-8).**
6. Why is the power of reason so important? **Because it can make a Heaven of Hell and a Hell of Heaven (line 14).**

3) List any reference to the features of Hell and Heaven.

HELL: mournful gloom (line 3), horrors (line 9), Infernal world (line 10), oblivious Pool (line 25), unhappy Mansion (line 27)

HEAVEN: celestial light (line 4), happy Fields (line 8), Joy for ever dwells (line 9)

5 Underline any words or phrases in the extract in which Satan refers to God. Then choose one of the adjectives from the list below to characterize God as Satan sees him:

pathetic - heroic – proud – humble – ambitious - magnificent

6 What are Satan's feelings about his new situation? Mark the following statements as True or False.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. He thinks it is best to be near God. | False. |
| 2. He considers himself as intelligent as God. | True. |
| 3. He would rather be a king in Hell than a subject in Heaven. | True. |
| 4. He feels free in Hell. | True. |
| 5. He does not care where he is. | False. |
| 6. He asserts that the mind, or soul, has the power to overcome the environment in which it finds itself, and can make a Heaven of Hell. | True. |

7 Can you consider Satan an epic hero? Explain.

Satan can be considered an epic hero since he is a leader, he has got courage which makes him accept and face his defeat.

Contextualization

Refer to 4.10 and explain if there are any reasons why Milton might have intentionally made Satan attractive.

Milton put a great deal of his own soul in Satan; in fact the poet himself was a rebel against the political authority of the King and the religious authority of the Church of England.

Connections

Have you found any similarities between Milton's Satan and Dante's Lucifer?

Student's activity.

Suggestions:

They both are presented as the kings of darkness and both Milton's Satan and Dante's Lucifer hate God greatly.

2 State the differences between Dante's Inferno and Milton's Hell as regards:

- location: Milton's Hell is below Chaos, Dante's Inferno is below Jerusalem.
- main features: Milton's Hell is not divided into different places as is Dante's Inferno where the damned souls live in different "gironi" according to the sins they committed during their earthly lives.
- inhabitants: Lucifer and the falling angels live in Milton's Hell, while the souls of the sinners reside in Dante's Inferno.

3 Compare the expressions used by Milton to describe Hell with those used by Marlowe in the Last Monologue of Doctor Faustus.

Student's activity.

Suggestions: The eternity of tortures is portrayed in the Last Monologue of Doctor Faustus, while the horrors, darkness and unhappiness of Hell are emphasized by Milton.

Sound Patterns

Paradise Lost is written in blank verse, i.e. unrhymed verse, usually in lines of 5 iambic feet. However, Milton varies:

1. the number of syllables in a line: lines 3, 4, 7, ...;

2. the number of stresses: lines 4, 7, ...;
3. the succession of unstressed-stressed syllables: lines 1, 2, 4,

2. Alliteration is a musical element frequently used. Circle all the examples you can find in the text. Here are some examples of alliteration: must/mournful (line 3), so/since (line 4), farthest/from (line 6)

3 Find examples of run-on-lines and end-stopped lines, i.e. with pauses in the sense and grammar at the end of the line.

Here are some examples of run-an-lines: lines 2, 3, 4, 5,

Here are some examples of end-stopped lines: lines 1, 12, 14,

4 How would you interpret the prevalence of run-on-lines in this extract? Tick as appropriate.

It creates an effect of monotony

It creates a feeling of expectation. ✓

The reader is urged to go on reading.

The long verse paragraph gives a sense of majestic movement.

Language and Meaning

1) Milton was a great Latin scholar. This can be inferred from the use of:

1. long sentences: most sentences are long;
2. deviation from the normal English order of word: lines 2,9;
3. latinised words: "the Region, ... Soil", line 1, "Possessor", line 11.

2) What is the effect achieved by the use of this Latinate syntax? Tick as appropriate.

It creates a grand style suitable to an epic poem. ✓

It increases magnificence.

It gives rise to a gap between past and everyday life.

4 Hell is described in contrast with Heaven.

1. Find all the antitheses and state which semantic area they belong to.

2. Then try to recognise the message they convey. Tick and give reasons for your choice.

They mirror the contrast between good and evil. ✓

They convey God's anger.

They describe Satan's tortures.

THE CHARACTER OF SATAN

The first dangerous quality of Satan emphasized by Milton is "obdurate (stubborn, obstinate inveterate) Pride", which proves his besetting (what most influences him) sin. The word is repeated again and again. To modern readers Pride often seems an admirable quality, but we must understand the word as Milton and his contemporaries did. From their classical ancestors, they had inherited a conception of Hybris (the Greek word for Pride) as a dangerous quality. Many of the most familiar stories of classical mythology were based upon the belief that Hybris was the sin most frequently punished by the gods. The idea is a reiterated (repeated) motif in classical tragedy, as well as in legends. In addition to this was the Christian emphasis upon meekness (mildness) and humility, according to which Pride was the most deadly of the Seven Deadly Sins. Everything had a rank in the so called "great chain of being". There is an 'order', an idea of "hierarchy", governing both Heaven and Earth as Milton and his contemporaries understood it: all beings in the universe are arranged according to higher and lower ranks, to "degree" in a ladder of Nature. In that scale, ladder or chain, men and angels all had ranks or degrees. As they were created, so they should be content to remain. Classical and Christian teachers combined in their warning to man to be content, not to aspire for a higher place, not to permit himself to fall to a lower rank.

• **question** ▷ "hero"

YES:

- great energy / vitality / courage unquenched by defeat
- determination to continue his fight and undertake what the others dare not
- leadership and concern for his followers.
- heroic rebel who fights against the absolute power [of God] / advocate of freedom / champion of individualism [cfr. THE MIND IS ITS OWN PLACE] → NEW PROMETHEUS
- analogy Milton – Charles I as God] [fascination in Romanticism]
- symbol of passion against reason

NO:

Contradictions:

- ◆ every quality is working towards an evil end / "obdurate pride" / whole structure of the poem / physical and moral degeneration / very nature of classical epic / **conception of the universe:** idea of "hierarchy to be respected"

• possible **interpretations:**

- ◆ rebel angels are the supporters of Cromwell's Commonwealth
- ◆ State of innocence of Adam and Eve stay for Cromwell's Commonwealth
- ◆ Michael and his army stay for the Puritan army
- ◆ Fall of Man / Adam and Eve's loss of Paradise are the failure of Commonwealth
- ◆ Adam and Eve are weak and their sterile pride bring them not to respect God's law. The same as Cromwell's men, who misused their power / freedom (corruption)
- ◆ the Republicans have made "paradise" uninhabitable → they must submit to the king /_Message: we must learn to be worthy of freedom
- ◆ rebel angels are the supporters of Charles II

Give an account in English of the following notes in Italian...

Note sul Satana tassiano (1544-95 - *Gerusalemme Liberata* - *Jerusalem Delivered* (1575) utilizzabili in un confronto con il Satana miltoniano

Caratteristiche tradizionali:

aspetto mostruoso, orribile – “le gran corna” - fumi sulfurei – fiamme

novum:

- pur nella sua negatività c'è in Satana una forma di grandezza inquietante: statura gigantesca – “gran fronte” (segno di magnanimità) – **orrida MAESTA'** (ossimoro) che lo rende più SUPERBO
- orazione alle sue schiere: discorso solenne, intonato segue i criteri della retorica
- rivendica il valore e la dignità della ribellione degli angeli (“alta impresa”)
- sostiene che sia stato il caso, non un principio superiore di giustizia, a far vincere Dio
- accusa Dio di quello che chiameremmo oggi “Imperialismo”: una forma di potere che schiaccia il DIVERSO

- stessa accusa ai crociati che vogliono cancellare ogni pluralità di culti
- Satana rischia di diventare il difensore dei valori del pluralismo e della tolleranza (valori rinascimentali)
- il fondamento oggettivo della distinzione tra bene e male può essere messo in discussione
- si manifesta una segreta componente ribelle contro ogni autorità, contro ogni forma di potere

vuole presentare queste NOVITÀ come orribili bestemmie
 ma il dare la parola al demonio è comunque un acconsentire che venga espresso il suo punto di vista: segreta attrazione per il ribelle, per i valori del pluralismo, della tolleranza

inizia qui un modo nuovo di considerare Satana ripreso poi da MILTON (1608-74) nel suo “Paradise Lost” (1667)
 il fascino del “gran ribelle” sarà caro agli scrittori Romantici

SONNET XVII “ON HIS BLINDNESS”

1. When I consider how my light is spent,
2. Ere half my days, in this **dark** world and wide,
3. And that one talent which is death to hide
4. Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
5. To serve therewith my maker, and present
6. My true **account**, lest **he**, returning, chide,
7. “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
8. I fondly ask; but Patience, to prevent
9. That **murmur**, soon replies: “God doth not need
10. Either man’s work or his own gifts; **who** best
11. Bear his mild yoke, **they** serve him best; his state
12. Is kingly – **thousands** at his bidding speed
13. And post o’er land and ocean without rest:
14. They also **serve** who only stand and wait”.

a	Quando penso a come si sia consumata la mia vista,
b	prima della metà dei miei giorni, in questo mondo
b	tenebroso ed ampio,
a	e che un talento che è un delitto nascondere
a	vive in me senza scopo, sebbene la mia anima sia più
b	incline
b	a servire con esso il mio Signore, e a presentare
b	il mio resoconto sincero, nel timore che lui,, ritornando,
a	possa rimproverare,
c	“Dio esige la fatica che richiede la luce del giorno,
d	negando la luce?”
e	Scioccamente chiedo; ma Pazienza, per evitare
c	Quella lamentela, replica sollecita: “Dio non ha bisogno
d	Del lavoro dell’uomo e dei suoi doni; chi meglio
e	Sopporta il suo giogo lieve, è il suo miglior servitore; la
	sua condizione
	È reale – migliaia ad un suo cenno si affrettano
	E si affannano per terra e per mare senza posa:
	servono anche coloro che si fermano e aspettano.”

2: Why **dark**?

4: *my soul more bent*: what word is missing?

6: **account** of what?

6: **he** refers to...

9: Which **murmur**?

10: **who** refers to...

11: **they** refers to...

12: **thousands** of whom?

14: **serve** whom?

1 Which is the main clause?

2 The principal subordinate clause begins with "When I consider" and finishes at the end of line 6 "chide". Inside it are other important subordinate clauses. What are they? Write them down and count them.

As you will have realized, the first part of Milton's sonnet poses a question arising from a particular state of mind and the second part offers an answer.

The division in thought and attitude is paralleled in the rhyme scheme and in the sentence structure.

3 Focus your attention on the octave:

a) Who is speaking? b) What is he asking?

4 Focus your attention on the sestet:

a) Who replies? b) What is the essence of the reply?

5 The last two lines include a striking metaphor. What is being compared to what?

6 About the whole sonnet: What is the poem about? Summarize the debate and its resolution.

7 How would you describe the language in this poem? Choose from the following adjectives, simple abstract sensuous evocative formal complex dignified emotive restrained

KEYS:

2: *dark* because the poet is blind. 4: The verb 'is' is missing. 6: the *account* of how he has put his talent to use; 6: *he* refers to God, to the Lord of the biblical parable of the talents.

9: *That murmur* points back to the foolish question he asked in line 7.

10: *who* refers forward to "**they**" in the following line; the usual word order would be: **they who bear his mild yoke best serve him best.**

11: *they* refers back to "who best bear his mild yoke". 12: *thousands* of angels. 14: *serve* God.

1 Which is the main clause? "**I fondly ask**".

2 The principal subordinate clause begins with "When I consider" and finishes at the end of line 6 "chide". Inside it are other important subordinate clauses. What are they? Write them down and count them.

a) "**how my light is spent...**" (line 1);

b) "**and that one talent... lodged with me useless**" (lines 3-4);

c) "**which is death to hide**" (line 3);

d) "**though my soul... account**" (lines 4 - 6);

e) "**lest... chide**" (line 6).

They are five.

Note the imitative function of language: the structure of syntax mirrors the complexity of the poet's moral struggle.

As you will have realized, the first part of Milton's sonnet poses a question arising from a particular state of mind and the second part offers an answer.

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Table that summarizes the main features of Milton's sonnet:

line	RHYME SCHEME	STRESS PATTERN	SENTENCE STRUCTURE	THEMATIC PATTERN
1	A	The basic metre is the iambic pentameter	Involved structure	Question: the poet 'fondly' asks. State of mind: complaint; the poet rebels against his blindness.
2	B			
3	B			
4	A			
5	A			
6	B			
7	B			
8	A			
9	C		Easier structure	Answer: 'Patience... replies' State of mind: resignation; the poet accepts his blindness
10	D			
11	E			
12	C			
13	D			
14	E			

3) Focus your attention on the octave:

a Who is speaking? **The poet is speaking.**

b What is he asking? **He asks whether God expects "day-labour" from the poet who has lost his sight.**

4) Focus your attention on the sestet:

a Who replies? **Patience replies.**

b What is the essence of the reply? **The essence of the reply is that the best way to serve God is humbly to accept the tasks he asks us to perform and perform them to the best of our ability.**

5 The last two lines include a striking metaphor. What is being compared to what?

The kingdom of God is compared to a terrestrial kingdom with many employees travelling far and wide in its service.

6) About the whole sonnet: What is the poem about? **Renaissance sonnets were mainly love poems. This sonnet deals with personal emotions and situations. He is debating with himself how his blindness can be squared with his faith in God. His conclusion is that those who want to serve God "best" should accept all that is sent as emanating from God's Will without questioning His decisions.**

Summarize the debate and its resolution. **Milton asks in the octave how he can serve God properly in his blindness since it hampers the use of his poetic gift. He answers his own question (in the form of a personified Patience) by saying that God can be served in many different ways. We must accept the destiny he has decided for us and serve him to the best of our ability.**

7) How would you describe the language in this poem? Choose from the following adjectives, simple abstract sensuous evocative formal complex dignified emotive restrained