

Discuss Satan as a Renaissance Hero

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What impression of Satan do you form from your reading Book-1 of “Paradise Lost?”

Or, How does Milton portray Satan's character in Book 1 of “Paradise Lost?”

Or, Do you consider Satan the hero of Paradise Lost, Book 1? Show arguments in favour of your answer.

Or, Discuss Satan as a hero possessing Renaissance qualities.

Or, Discuss Satan as a Renaissance hero.

John Milton (1608-1674) is famous for his most popular epic, “Paradise Lost” (1667). In the epic poem, he describes the fall of Satan and the exclusion of Adam and Eve. In the Book 1 of “Paradise Lost”, Milton sketches Satan as a hero of the Renaissance. Milton defines Satan as the most powerful figure of the Renaissance. Let's go far and find out the features that can prove Satan to be a Renaissance hero.

Adventurous Attitude: To present the character of Satan in front of the readers, Milton displays the chivalric and adventurous outlook of Satan. He is such a character who cannot bear to be a servant. He is a character who likes to lead. As he says,-

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

The above lines prove that Satan can live in a place like Hell. It is impossible for him to live in Heaven as a servant, though Heaven is a place of eternal peace.

Heroic Leadership: One of the features of the Renaissance is heroic leadership. It is developed through Satan so finely by Milton. Satan, as a leader and true protagonist, chooses to accept the harsh situation of Hell. He acts as a hero to the other fallen angels. Hell is now Heaven for him because at least no one is here to rule over him. He will reign here. He is the only king of this place. Meanwhile, Satan says,-

Farewel happy Fields

Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail

Classical Model:

There was a trend in using the classical model of the character in English poetry. So, Milton also uses Satan as the classical model of his epic poem. To prove him as a classical model, Milton describes the objects Satan bears. For example, the shield and the spear that Satan carries have been compared with the moon. Milton says,

Hung on his shoulders like the moon.

Milton also compared Satan with the largest sea-monster Leviathan, to imply his power.

Morality and intellectuality: From this point, Satan stands as a great political figure. He possessed with unbeatable courage, stubbornness, and lust for revenge. His indomitable wish and undying lust for revenge can be clearly traced in the following lines that he tells Beelzebub,-

To be weak is miserable,

Doing or suffering

Satan's determination to reign is proved in the above lines. He does not know anything except do or die. It reveals that either you stand against your opponent or you accept your slavery.

Riot against the authority: There was also a trend in the Renaissance, that is to revolt against the authority of the church. To create the character of Satan, Milton also forged the exact flavour in him. Likewise, he also stands against God. He works as a rebel alongside the monarchy of God. In his declaration of the assembly of the fallen angels, it is clear that he has a strong hatred for God. Like the fallen Angels, he wants a war, whether it would be open or secret, against the Almighty.

To sum up, the character of Satan in "Paradise Lost- Book I" is, of course, evil, but also a dominating Renaissance character at a time. It can be said that he stands as a representative of the eternal evil. He has indomitable will power, stubbornness, courageous mind as the leader of the fallen angels.

