

See the title page from 1674: what do you learn here?

Who was Andrew Marvell? What does he think of *PL*? of Milton? What about *PL* surprised Marvell? What is significant in the argument about rhyme for Milton's age? What about now?

What is the verse form? Who else used it before Milton?

PL is an epic. What is that exactly, and what other epics do we know in this class? What do they have in common with *PL*?

Read carefully, twice or thrice, the opening 26 lines. Identify elements of the epic opening: 1) statement of them involving a man, and a god (2) call to muse, (3) *in medias res* situation, (4) naming of protagonist.

Note Milton's various synonyms: Eternal Justice, Almighty Power, Eternal Father, others. Why the variants?

Name the EF's "one restraint" on Adam and Eve. Originally who was the angel who became Satan and then entered the Serpent? What caused him to rebel? Which deadly sin is he most frequently guilty of?

After the war in Heaven, what happens to the rebels? Describe where they are when *PL* opens. Look closely at ll. 44-49.

How long did the rebel angels fall? What is significant about the distance? What are their mood and condition once they land?

What is "darkness visible"? (l. 63). Except for flame, why is there no light in hell? Why is this prison needed, and when did the EF create it?

See Satan's first speech, ll. 84-124: why do these angels not recognize one another at first? What have they learned about the EF? How many of them rebelled? But even though they lost the war, Satan says, "All is not lost." Why not? For him, what is the worst ignominy?

And now what does he plan since war failed?

Who is Beelzebub, and what does he now think about the EF? According to him, what do the rebel angels face?

In ll. 159ff, Satan raises one of the main ideas in *PL*: can the EF possibly bring good out of evil? Please read closely 159-168.

How does Satan describe their present situation? How can he bring malice to all the good the EF creates?

Why is Satan so huge? As big as a whale, as big as an island? Note the epic simile beginning at 197 and continuing to 210ff. Imagine precisely how he looks.

When Satan leaves this lake of fire, where does he go? How? Why does he think “farthest from him is best”?

Several of Milton’s key ideas (in *PL* and in all of his writings) appear in ll. 254-263—what are they:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heav’n of hell, a hell of heav’n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; th’ Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heav’n.

The description of Satan’s shield constitutes another epic convention. What does the shield look like? Can you draw it?

The epic simile at 302-313 is one of the most famous in all of English literature. What does it compare? Why ironic?

The call to troops is another epic convention. How does Satan call them? Describe how they come—especially note the similes and epic similes.

What all has happened to the angels who rebelled? How does the EF punish them?

A catalogue of ships or a parade of troops constitutes another epic convention. Where do you see a parade of troops? What do we learn about these troops? In particular, we should not be able to characterize Satan, Beelzebub, Moloch, Chemos, Baalim, Ashtaroth, Astoreth, Thammuz, Dagon, Rimmon, Osiris, Isis, Orus, Belial, Titan, Saturn, Jove, Azazel. Whence come these names and descriptions?

Note the comparisons of Satan's armies to great warriors. What ironies do you see here?

Why all the pageantry? Even given all the banners, helmets, shields—all the dazzling array, what do the angels now look like—and why?

When Satan addresses them, he proposes another try. But first he flatters them—how? Why was losing the battle a good thing, according to Satan? Next he will use fraud or guile: why better than armed rebellion?

What rumors has Satan heard about the creation of new worlds? Why might those prove useful?

Who is Mammon? Describe the realm he now rules? Who is Mulciber, and what does he do? How do Mammon and Mulciber support Pandemonium?

Note the very ironic epic simile beginning about 768. How does it contrast to Homer's great simile about the bees?

At the end of Book I, what do the rebel angels look like? Sound like? What is the great "consult"?