

PARADISE LOST BOOK IX MINI-ESSAY: THE MUTABILITY OF SATAN'S
SOUL

by

Student Name

Mrs. Hall
AP Literature and Composition
November 21, 200-

In *Paradise Lost*, Satan travels from hell, through Chaos to Earth and finally to Eden. Throughout his journey, Satan strives to move physically higher without realizing that at same time his spiritual essence is degrading further.

When he is first cast down to hell, Satan convinces himself that the change is not entirely negative. He says, “the mind...can make a heav’n of hell, a hell of heav’n” (Book I 254-255). He believes that he and the other fallen angels are unchanged, so they can make a new kingdom in hell. They can make a heaven of their fallen state, with Satan as their god. Satan fails to realize that the angels’ banishment to hell is only part of the punishment for rebellion. The real change occurs within their souls.

Although he is trying to lift himself from his fallen state, when Satan goes to Earth to seduce man, he further corrupts his own soul. The narrator explains that while he has physically escaped from hell, “hell within him, for within him hell he brings” (Book IV 20-21). Satan experiences hell within himself soul because his soul has essentially changed. Instead of being able to make a heaven of his hellish surroundings, Satan is in hell no matter where he is.

Satan journeys to Eden, where his spirit is its lowest. When he finds Eve alone in the garden, Satan is astonished by her innocent beauty, “but the hot hell that always in him burns, though in mid-heav’n, soon ended his delight, and tortures him now more, the more he sees of pleasure not for him ordained” (Book IX 467-470). The hell that is inside of his soul reminds Satan to hate and envy Eve, and recommits him to man’s downfall. Satan is the farthest away physically from hell as he is able to be, yet his soul is so corrupted that in Eden he suffers the most because Satan’s degradation is spiritual, not physical. His soul sinks even as he rises.

Satan is tormented with the hell that he carries in him; he has become hell itself, a fact he does not realize until he has traveled from hell to Eden in an attempt to flee hell that escaped it physically but not spiritually.