The text under analysis is taken from the first book of Paradise Lost, John Milton’s greatest epic poem, written in 1667, after the Restoration of the monarchy. In particular, it focuses on Satan’s arrival in Hell, after he rebelled against God and was sent away from Heaven. However, Satan is not alone, but he is accompanied by other archangels that lost Paradise.

The text is an extract of Satan’s speech at his arrival in Hell, in which he shows his reaction to the sight of Hell, then compares it to Heaven and finally compares himself to God.

The speaking voice starts says: “Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,’ /Said then the lost archangel, `this the seat/ That we must change for heav’n, this mournful gloom/ For that celestial light?”

Who is speaking is Satan, the reader could understand it from ”the lost archangel”, the expression lost Arch Angel is a clear reference to the figure of Satan, the archangel who, followed by others, went to meet the divine curse after bringing the first man and the first woman to disobey the will of God taking the apple of knowledge. Satan is called lost because his arbitrary action led him to the loss of something that belonged to him, because heaven was his home of law. The intrusion of the same narrator reinforces the hypothesis of a dialogue: then presupposes the existence of an earlier part of the speech or at least a second person listening.

He speaks from the hell “Is this the region…light?”,Satan's speech opens with the expression of some of his observations about the hellish place in which God has relegated him. Hell is called region (group of souls), soil (physical location), climate (living conditions) and home (archangel awareness of his condition of exile from paradise) and it has a negative connotation: Satan calls it a mournful gloom, a sad obscurity. This negative connotation contrasts with the subsequent positive view about heaven, contained in the same period, which is presented as the exact opposite of hell. Celestial light, in addition, opposes the previous darkness to heaven's light and defines paradise as something celestial, part of God and therefore infinitely good.

In the first five verses the reader can feel the awe / sarcasm of Satan, he in a sense stà continuing to defy God. In this case you can not tell if the devil intends that the place where it ended is too little, compared to what he did, or excessive in any case he continues to challenge him.

This is possible to understand even the wonder rhetoric that arises later: "Who now is sovran can dispose and bid?". He describes God as "sovereign", which considering the aversion of Milton to the monarchy is to be understood in the negative. A sovereign is the one who commands and submits all to his will, a totally different picture from what is usually expected of God.The presumption of a listener is confirmed, always in the first sentence, by the presence of the first person plural (we).

The speech goes on with a question. This means that it is a dialogue, or at least a soliloquy. The character who utters such a dialogue is explained in the second verse, where a specification by the narrator allows the reader to understand the identity of the speaker. It conveys Satan’s surprised reaction, conveyed through the repetition of the adjective “this”. The question also carries the description of the setting, negatively connoted by the archangel: when describing Hell, Satan appeals to the sense of sight, as suggested by the word “gloom” (emphasized by the contrast with “celestial”), but also to physical perception, as suggested by “soil” and “clime”. Satan’s surprise, however, doesn’t prevent him from accepting God’s punishment: he accepts the idea of being in Hell, indeed he feels it closer than Heaven (“this mournful gloom […] that celestial light”), and therefore says “be it so”. In the following lines, Satan provides to the reader what may be the reason of his acceptance – God’s omnipotence: God is described as an almighty, supreme Sovran, as the only one who can decide what is wrong and what is right, while Satan can’t do anything but obey him. Therefore Satan is forced to leave Heaven, and his farewell is full of nostalgia: again, he compares the joyful and happy world he has to leave, to the dark and profound one that is waiting for him. Satan welcomes hell, but at the same time connotes it negatively: in particular, the negative connotation is underlined by the repetition of the letter “h” (“hail”, “horror”, “Hell”). Also, Satan presents himself as the new Possessor of Hell. Here starts the comparison between himself and God: if God is Heaven’s Sovran, then Satan is Hell’s Possessor, which puts them on the same level. As he did with God, Satan describes his own qualities, saying that he is someone who doesn’t change his mind: his ambitious attitude makes Satan very close to a human being, but also very close to a hero. He is self conscious about his strength, since he says he is able to turn Heaven into Hell, and Hell into Heaven. In the following lines, Satan turns upside down the positive connotation of previous description of God: by saying “at least here we are free”, Satan hints to the word “Sovran” and implies that God is a sort of heartless tyrant, indeed he decides by himself what is good or not. In Heaven, one is forced to serve him, while anywhere else he can do what he wants: in Hell Satan is free to reign, and he prefers to reign anywhere, even in a disgusting, horrible, dark and scaring place, than being subdued to God. On the other hand, he still doesn’t doubt of his superiority, and still calls him “greater” and “almighty” -  as said before, Satan puts himself on the same level of God, but only feels inferior because he has less power. In the last lines, Satan shows all his determination and he appears to accept his destiny not because he’s forced by God, but because he doesn’t want to be subdued to him, but wants to be free and to satisfy his desire of power and his ambitions.

Here, Satan can be interpreted from two points of view: first of all, his loss of Heaven, his punishment, his tragic condition and his defeat make him a hero, someone who has greater abilities than other but has to face tragic events (including death); other characteristics that make him a hero are courage, self-confidence and pride. On the other hand, his desire of not being under God’s sovereignty, his desire to escape and his willing to satisfy his own ambitions makes him very close to a human being, rather than a hero, since he chooses to reign in Hell and opts for an easier solution. His desire of being free also embodies the ideal of freedom typical of Puritanism, to which Milton belonged.