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Eve and Her Father

Eve- the first woman created by God from a piece of Adam's rib- has become a popular archetype in literature. She is pure and innocent until tempted by sin and cast out of the garden of Eden, giving her a complexity not found in many other female archetypes. There is a juxtaposition of wholesomeness and indecency that she embodies. Countless authors have based their female protagonists and heroines on Eve, and it appears that Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Joyce are no exceptions in their short stories "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "Eveline" respectively. Both Hawthorne's and Joyce's protagonists, Beatrice and Eveline, are commonly identified as these Eve-type figures, yet the people in literature they most closely resemble are either another character in the Biblical tale or not found in the garden at all. The intertextual references the authors use to create Beatrice and Eveline, as well as their similar relationships with oppressive fathers, help explain and define their motives throughout their respective stories.

In the garden of Eden, Eve has typically been considered to be the one at fault for the first sin- she was tempted to eat the forbidden fruit and got Adam to follow suit. "Biblical interpretation has often connected Eve's transgression with sin and death", yet there are many who argue her the victim (Karsak). This adds to the paradoxical nature of the Eve archetype; it has become so popular due to the many interpretations of both her character and the story of the garden itself. One interpretation is that "there was no sin in the garden of Eden" (Karsak). In this case, Eve was the transgressor succumbing to and spreading sin. Eve was the reason she and Adam were tossed out of the garden. It can also be said that Eve, alone, was not the sole cause of sin in the garden. "The sin of the woman was said to be stupidity...the man lay in his bad decision-making. The serpent was said to symbolize that part of the human being which escapes our control" (Karsak). This explanation implies that there was already sin in

the garden and that Eve was not necessarily at fault- "...the serpent, the man, and the woman were seen to represent the three relationships to sin: the serpent that part of us which is victim, the man that part of us which is responsible, the woman that part of us which is guilty" (Karsak). With something like *The Bible* that can be interpreted in so many ways, it provides a great way for authors to adapt the resulting archetypes to fit characters as needed. That, however, does not mean that there are not certain characterizations that fit better than others.

Familial relations, like biblical allusions, have also been a common source of inspiration for authors- they are able to provide both circumstantial plot and motivations for the characters. Relationships between mothers and their sons, mothers and their daughters, and fathers and their sons are perhaps the most popular and most talked about or understood, but Hawthorne and Joyce explore the relationships between fathers and daughters. The authors take the relationships the female protagonists have with their fathers, and use that to shape them- a woman's father is her "'first love,' regardless of her experience with her father" (Perkins). There are several types of relationships a girl can have with her father, and each have a different impact on her life and future relationships. The kind of father that Beatrice and Eveline have is domineering. Because of this, the two protagonists can only identify their fathers in certain aspects- their cognitive egocentrism, or the tendency to push their views and mentalities on others as well as the inability to see different viewpoints (Perkins). Daughters of these men tend to feel emotionally distant, something that is generally seen in relationships when "one person in the relationship is domineering, tyrannical, and perhaps feared" (Perkins). Women with domineering fathers also tend to see themselves as polar opposites of their father, something that is not to be unexpected and can be seen in both short stories (Perkins). While Eveline's father is an abusive drunk, she is able to be the maternal figure in her family's life that provides support and stability; Rappaccini is essentially a mad scientist, while Beatrice plays an innocent student unaware of her teacher's doings, a young girl cut off from the world. These dynamic differences between the parents and their children influenced their relationships with the men in their respective stories as well. It is generally stated that "women with abusive or absent fathers have difficulty with men and often choose husbands who abuse or abandon them" (Perkins).

While in their respective stories, it was the women who ended up doing the leaving, the general characteristics of the men would not make the situation of them leaving unbelievable or unimaginable. Beatrice's Giovanni was young and beautiful, what appeared to be a stereotypical heartthrob. Albeit, he was what appeared to be a caring considerate heartthrob, but the striking young man is often assumed to be a womanizer. Frank was a sailor, a man whose profession is to leave for months or years at a time. Sailors too are stereotyped to be promiscuous and rowdy when they are docked. Neither one makes what one would consider to be an ideal husband. However, it is not the daughters themselves that choose this, it is the familial relationships between fathers and daughters that shape the daughters and the relationships they have with other men.

At first glance, the garden that Hawthorne's Rappaccini created appears to be an Eden, full of vibrant and exotic plants. Beatrice Rappaccini, too, is immediately described as beautiful with a voice reminiscent of tropical sunsets and "deep hues of purple or crimson and of perfumes heavily delectable" (Hawthorne 369). She is naïve and innocent, having been kept in the confines of the garden and her father's care. It is not hard to see why she is immediately identifiable as an Eve in her Eden. However, upon closer inspection, it can be observed that the garden is in a state of disorder, almost as if it were an anti-Eden full of death and poison instead of life. The center fountain is "so woefully shattered that that it is impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of the remaining fragments" (Hawthorne 367-368). The plants, too, are not what they appear to be. Hawthorne rarely uses them in his works as mere decoration- their most salient use is to reflect Beatrice's true disposition (Boewe 37). Because of the plants, there is no other life besides Rappaccini and his daughter in the garden. Should some poor creature find its way in, the perfumes and nectars quickly kill it, as was the case with the small orange reptile (Hawthorne 373). One plant in particular, a shrub with purple blossoms, Rappaccini can only handle with great amounts of protection due to its toxicity. Beatrice refers to this shrub as "...my sister, my splendor..." and affectionately nurtures and embraces the plant with no precautionary measures (Hawthorne 370). Her lack of the same protection her father requires is due to Beatrice's equally toxic nature, having been exposed to the poison her entire life. The purple-flowered shrub was created by

Rappaccini and was born on the same day as Beatrice. Her father has turned her into a literal femme fatale by giving her small amounts of the various poisons until her body was so full of the toxins that she became immune. Therefore, Beatrice now also contains the same paradoxical values of the garden- a pure and innocent mind, a beautiful and even sensual body saturated with poison (Boewe 39). She has become an extension of the garden itself.

By continuing the approach that the garden is an Eden of sorts, its creator, Rappaccini, would assumedly take the role of the God he so desperately tries to be. Since the garden is truly a polar opposite of what the garden of Eden was, “it is more tempting to think of him as Satan...” (Evans 186). Rappaccini is constantly dealing with science and creating things that nature did not intend, whether it be different species of plants or a sort of super-human that cannot be poisoned. Science itself has been viewed in the past by the church as heresy and been condemned. Rappaccini merely plays God, creating things as he pleases without any real care for the consequences. By becoming this false idol, he feels entitled to keeping his daughter, his experiments, contained under his constant supervision. The story of Adam and Eve “furnished Hawthorne with a convenient analogy for showing what must happen to man when, in the pride of his intellectual achievements, he attempts to usurp the function of God” (Evans 188). With this idea, the entire garden of Eden scenario can also be reversed to fit Hawthorne’s story more accurately. If Rappaccini is a Satan-figure, as opposed to a God and the garden is a place of death, that would also mean that Beatrice is an Adam instead of an Eve. Rappaccini created his daughter, the first person to have the immunities, to be full of poison, or evil of sorts. She is compliant and obeying, never having known anything else, much like Adam in the very beginning. Rappaccini, however, later exposed Giovanni to the same toxins as Beatrice in order to create a companion for her (Evans 186). This want or need to also create a companion for the life you have made is the very same reason God created Eve. Like the rib that was taken from Adam, the same poisons that Beatrice excreted became the source for Giovanni’s transformation. Giovanni is also the one who is essentially tempted and corrupted by the outside world by exposing Beatrice to and giving her the antidote which ultimately kills her. Much like

how everything and everyone else's roles have been reversed, this antidote which is associated with healing and purification is what causes the tragedy that releases Beatrice from the world.

Much like Beatrice, Eveline has many qualities that may suggest that she is based off of, or at least contains many of the same traits as, the Eve archetype. Perhaps the most obvious is her name. Eveline has been considered a diminutive of Eve, "which derives from the Hebrew *Chavva* for 'life' or 'living'" and is something that Eveline desperately wishes to do (Dilworth 457). For the greater part of the story, Eveline agonizes over a decision about whether or not to go live life on her own with Frank, away from her father and family. Yet, by saying that Eveline is a form of Eve, the Irish Gaelic *Eibhilin* which is etymologically linked to Eveline, is not taken into consideration. *Eibhilin* is a form of Helen, which immediately brings images of Helen of Troy to mind (Dilworth 457). This means, that instead of alluding to *The Bible* and the story of Adam and Eve, "Eveline" alludes to *The Iliad* and the flight of Helen of Troy. Once this is realized, the parallels between the two are unquestionable. Eveline, like Helen, is given the opportunity to sail away with Frank, Eveline's Paris. Eveline's Troy is Buenos Aires, and she too was told that she would live there as his wife rather than a lover or mistress (Dilworth 457). Despite the blatant similarities to Helen of Troy, Eveline does have her differences as well. Eveline is a "timid protagonist, paralyzed by ambivalence at the moment of embarking" and most importantly, unlike Helen, she never leaves (Beck). She promised her dying mother that she would take care and keep her family together as long as possible, and so she would sacrifice her wages as well as being "responsible for two younger children, and subject to a domineering father" (Beck). She is hopeful, believing that Frank is going to be her savior, giving her the freedom take her away from her abusive father. Frank's name, too, holds significance in this aspect. "For her, Frank represents the freedom his name signifies, deriving as it does from the Teutonic, *Frank*, for 'free,' the name Francis meaning 'free-man' " (Dilworth 458). She is hopeful and optimistic, yet it is not Frank that she really wants. "Eveline desires freedom, not the man" (Dilworth 458).

Eveline's struggles throughout the story are demonstrated through her reflections- her motivations and actions can be traced to memories, both good and bad, and to relationships with her family. The

relationship she reflects on most is the one she has with her father. He is an “authentic Dubliner. Given to drink, he ‘was usually bad on Saturday night.’ Then he would be capriciously tyrannical, first refusing money for the household and finally giving in but blaming Eveline for the delay in buying Sunday’s dinner” (Beck). Despite abusing her, Eveline tried to remember the good in him as well. Memories of spending time with him and the rest of the family as a child recounting that, “Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive then” (Joyce 616). She was young, and a girl, so even when her father was abusive, he would go after her brothers. However, “she had nobody to protect her” now, and she “sometimes felt herself in danger of her father’s violence” (Joyce 617). Despite her father’s increasing abuse towards her, she still struggles with the decision to leave Dublin with Frank. She even pities him and denies the abuse. The horrible things her father does are soon forgotten or put aside with thoughts like he “was becoming old lately...he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice” (Joyce 618). Putting the abuse aside or rationalizing it is not an uncommon occurrence with abused and battered women. It’s almost as if Eveline has Battered Woman Syndrome- an array of signs and symptoms exhibited by women who have been abused for an extended period of time that can leave a woman feeling unable to leave the abusive relationship or setting. This feeling of helplessness could be one of Eveline’s biggest reasons for not sailing to the other side of the world with Frank. The other motivating factor keeping her with her father is the promise she made to her dying mother. She promised “to keep the home together as long as she could” (Joyce 619). Leaving her family, her two younger siblings, would not only split up the family, but leave the youngest children with no protection from their father. Her desire to not allow her father from treating her siblings the way her mother, older siblings, and she had been treated could certainly be a huge motivational factor for leaving. It was probably a combination of the two that caused her to freeze up, clutch “the iron in frenzy”, and not board the ship with Frank (Joyce 620).

Eveline’s father was dictatorial, and his influence on her life affected everything from her choice in men to her actions. She fell in love with a sailor and was about to run away with him, yet due at least partly to the power her father holds, she is unable to leave. It also becomes obvious that while Eveline

may share some of the same qualities with Eve, Helen of Troy is a much better reference. The situations Eveline has to the latter are unmistakable- both had tyrannical fathers, both fell in love and were promised marriage to a man that would whisk them away to a foreign land, and Eveline is even a variation of the name Helen. Once this is realized, it almost becomes asinine to think that Eveline is an Eve-figure.

Beatrice Rappaccini's comparison to Eve is, however, much more understandable. Looking at "Rappaccini's Daughter" as whole, obvious references to the garden of Eden can be found- Rappaccini plays God with his creation Beatrice, and later Giovanni, in his garden filled with exotic and beautiful plants. By looking at the story in closer detail though, it becomes much more obvious that the roles, as well as the situation as a whole, have been reversed. The garden is full of poison and unnatural plants, making Rappaccini a more Satanic than God-like figure; Beatrice was created first followed by Giovanni from the same poisons as her, making her Adam and Giovanni Eve. Giovanni was also just a young, attractive man that Rappaccini pushed Beatrice towards, a man she may not have chosen were her relationship to her father any different. After reading Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" and Joyce's "Eveline", it becomes evident that closer inspection is needed into their characters and motivations. Both women contain a complex and paradoxical nature, and both women are clearly alluding to older characters in literature. It is natural to assume that they are like Eve, but Eve can be interpreted in so many ways that it becomes difficult to decide who is truly alluding to her. The fact that there are characters like Adam and Helen that fit the individual characters of Hawthorne and Joyce more effectively, it becomes easier to say that neither protagonist is a true Eve.

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