



Silenced Voices: Pandora, Sita, And Eve As Archetypes Of Female Blame In Patriarchal Mythology.

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ABSTRACT

This research does a comparative evaluation of three allegorical female characters—Pandora from Greek mythology, Sita from the Ramayana, and Eve from the Judeo-Christian tradition—to identify how the representation of their characters has been changed to maintain the dominance of the male gender. These female figures derived from very different cultural settings are conceptually very close in the end: all of them are accused to have committed the biggest sin that misplaces blame of the society, God, or males onto women. While Pandora, as per Hesiod's description, was a punishment made by gods technically erasing her previous status of a mother earth; Sita's experience with Agnipariksha shows how society and legal systems have turned virtue into a weapon for repression of women's agency; and Eve's link with original sin is a gradual theological imposition, especially by Augustine, thus consolidating the position of women in the hierarchy of subordination. The work is an interpretation of the view that blaming mechanisms—deterministic, societal, and theological—are different but intersect at the point of disempowerment of women. The feminist movement today and the newly interpreted versions of the characters speak out the once quiet voices, thus, myth still stands as an ever-changing cultural text that can be altered and challenged.

Index terms: Pandora, Sita, Eve, Greek mythology, Hindu mythology, Judeo-Christian tradition, Ramayana, Book of Genesis, Hesiod (Works and Days, Theogony), Augustine and Original Sin, patriarchy, archetypes of female blame, myth and gender, feminist literary criticism, comparative mythology, reception studies, cultural reinterpretation, feminist retellings, agency and voice, subjugation and resistance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Foundational myths keep a major position in the cultural imagination, operating as a society's sense of origins, values, and explanations for the human condition. Such narratives are not silent allegories but rather very deeply embedded cultural products that still influence the ideas of gender, power, and human nature of the people who inherit them. The woman is the one of the most frequent themes of those narratives in which heroes are the ones to bring about the world's loss, suffering, or displacement. Frequently, this character is depicted as "femme fatale" or as a deliverer of transgression, from which attributes she is the symbolic centre of blame. These are not simply stereotypes that mirror reality; they do have been formed with a certain purpose to provide, make more recognizable and keep going the patriarchal social structures.

The article compares the characters of Pandora from Ancient Greek mythology, Sita from the Hindu epic Ramayana, and Eve from the Judeo-Christian tradition. These women, who come from very different cultural and historical settings - Ancient Greece, Ancient India, and the Abrahamic world - still have many

similarities in common. Among other things, these three are the first human beings to suffer from the fateful consequences of their respective myths; thus, their stories have been charged with indictments that aim at disciplining female agency. The goal of this study is to explore these legends not only on the grounds of the source and development but also with regard to their conscious narrative design as patriarchal control mechanisms and as characters that have been subjected to redefinition in contemporary feminist scholarship and cultural production.

Understanding how myths attribute blame to different characters depending on their cultural context is key to unraveling the various myths surrounding the issue. In the myth of Hesiod, Pandora represents the divine determinism, a passive "engineered punishment" made by Zeus to balance Prometheus's theft of fire. At a cursory level, her myth explains the arrival of labor and suffering, but at a deeper level, it acts rhetorically to shift blame away from male defiance of divine authority and onto female existence. Sita's story, on the other hand, depicts the society's way of blaming. The controversial Agnipariksha episode makes her purity a subject of inspection, thus turning her into the one onto whom patriarchal honor and collective morality are offloaded for safekeeping. According to some scholars, this episode is most probably a later insertion, a narrative device aimed at silencing and subordinating the female voice within the strict code of virtues. On the other hand, the story of Eve is a theological framework for blame. The Genesis account itself is full of ambiguities, but the later theological interpretations—chiefly Augustine's doctrine of original sin—turned woman into the main source of ancestral guilt, making her error part of the very nature of humanity and salvation history.

Even though these three mechanisms were very different in the aspects of determinism, society, and theology, they had one common feature that went beyond their differences: they all shifted the blame for male deeds or for the general failure of society to a female character. These gods unveil the mythological nature of the not only as mere cultural reflections, but also as social control agents, which in this case require the gender hierarchies to be embedded in the religious, legal and moral consciousness.

However, myths are in no way unchangeable. The influence of modern feminist theory, reception studies, and current literary adaptations can be seen as a cultural reclamation project. Through questioning the contradictions of the original texts and picturing these archetypes as characters of strength and will, the faculty of contemporary times breaks down the blame and quite literally brings to the fore the voices that had been silenced. Such a reclaiming program signifies the dynamism and negotiability of myth with the implication that myths change along with the changing cultural values. As a result, they not only provide a critique of the patriarchal tradition profoundly dominant but also put forward a different perspective that redefines these women as the emblems of passing through the struggles and defying the odds.

So this research depicts Pandora, Sita, and Eve as figures from different cultures that have something in common - the mechanisms of female blame which are dominant in these traditions, but at the same time it is also their reinterpretations that bring the change in the myths. It suggests that the survival of these legends is not because they are constant but because they are flexible, thus they can be used to either maintain or challenge male supremacy. By exploring such a struggle, the study makes a contribution to the wider field of mythology as a dynamically changing narrative, hence uncovering both its harsh aspects and the possibilities of liberation.

2. Pandora: The Beautiful Evil and the Engineered Punishment

2.1. The Hesiodic Origins: A Deliberate Act of Retribution

It is necessary to analyze Pandora's myth with respect to the main source from which the information is taken: the poems of Hesiod, particularly *Works and Days* and *Theogony*. The creation of her is not depicted as a normal occurrence but as a Zeus's sarcastic reply, a punishment for the Titan Prometheus that took fire from Olympus without asking. This fact is very important to understand her character as she is not something evil from the start but made so deliberately. The compilation of Hesiod elaborates on the detailed way they constructed her, a method that was both filled with accuracy and spitefulness. Zeus instructs the divine artisan Hephaestus to sculpt a gorgeous girl out of the earth and water. Other deities contribute to the "gifts" that in reality are curses. Athena involves her with the secrets of sewing, Aphrodite adorns her with beauty and "agonizing desire," and Hermes is given the task of implanting "dog's mind and thievish nature" together with "lies and wily words." This careful and planned existence brings to light that Pandora is a weapon, a "woe for men who live on bread." Her term which stands for "all-endowed" implies the present of the gods to her - presents that are a curse. She is launched towards Epimetheus, Prometheus's brother, who disregards the warning not to accept a gift from Zeus. When she opens the jar (later mistranslated as a

"box"), she unleashes all the miseries and evils into the world, leaving only Hope trapped inside.

2.2. The Mechanisms of Blame: Passive Tool vs. Agent of Agency

The blame mechanism in Pandora's story is, essentially, of a passive nature and is deterministic. She is not an actor of her own accord, doing a similar yet opposite way to what Eve does. Instead, she is a "divine weapon whose very nature is an engineered punishment." She did not have the ability to do otherwise, just like the gods who created her to cause destruction in humanity. Hence, the responsibility for this catastrophe is not on Pandora's shoulders but on those celestial beings who chose a woman as the bearer of a revenge against the male. Through this intricate rhetorical move, the blame for male disobedience is shifted from the latter to the female figure that is reset from the disobedience.

The most detailed research of the text of Hesiod depicts a complex narrative that is beyond a mere fable. The presence of internal inconsistencies, for instance, a "mismatch between Zeus's initial orders for Pandora's creation and the execution of those orders by the gods," is not just a textual error. Instead, these are the marks of a constructed myth, signs of its intentional fabrication. The characters' imperfections reveal the intent to create a piece of "political commentary," an attempt to legitimize a punitive social order in which men have to work and suffer. This indicates that it is an attempt to renovate the patriarchal social order with an old worldview getting replaced or overridden. The possibility of the details not being completely in agreement is what distinguishes a mode of storytelling as being of a deliberate construction rather than an organic, long-standing fable.

2.3. The Demoted Goddess: Uncovering a Suppressed Narrative

The relative interpretation of the Pandora story as relayed by Hesiod indicates that the myth of Pandora may have replaced a pre-patriarchal myth that was more old-fashioned. Albeit being disputed, the concept positions the first Pandora as a mother figure of fertile soil who later had her status "downgraded" in the myth to the first human woman who was created to trick the male-dominated Olympian gods. By this explanation, the construction of the myth gains deeper insight. The way in which Hesiod links Pandora to the underworld through her association with the jar and the underworld connects her with the traits of a typical deduction of the chthonic or earth goddess. One of the most reasonable theses is that the Greek patriarchal system did not just fabricate a myth to support its perspective, but also, it repressed and rewrote the story of a powerful female deity to suit its storyline. The portrayal of Pandora before the arrival of the Olympian gods points to a basic conflict where the female-centric worldview had been deliberately dismantled. This new account of the myth does not only serve as a basic explanation of human suffering but it is also a testimony of the patriarchal triumph and the deliberate "silencing" of a different version. Hence the contemporary recovery program is not just an alternative interpretation, but also a kind of archaeological narrative recovery.

2.4. Modern Reinterpretation: From Misogynistic Vision to Feminine Complexity

Through the lens of contemporary feminism and feminist critiques, Pandora's portrayal as a single villain has been undermined and questioned. The contradiction of her outer splendor and the deception inside her that was totally ironic is being reviewed now not as a hateful stereotype of women but as a symbol of feminine intricacy. Translations of the past, for instance, Natalie Haynes's Pandora's Jar, incorporate a new perspective on the traditional blame narrative, casting the myth anew in different genres. The rhetorical recovery from being a mere passive agent of divine retribution gives her back a voice.

3. Sita: The Burden of Purity and the Social Scapegoat

3.1. The Traditional Narrative: The Test of Fire and the Ideal Wife

The Ramayana shows Sita as a woman of great devotion and faithfulness throughout the story, her sacrifice, patience and submission being the main virtues she possessed. Meanwhile, the most debated incident of her life is the Agnipariksha or Trial by Fire. After her saving from Ravana, Rama does not accept her and keeps on doubting her purity. For confirmation of purity, Sita gets into the fire and it is from the Fire God that she receives the support and hence she comes out of the fire as if she had never been inside it. The event depicts her suffering as a requirement for Rama to be able to perform his kingly and guardian duties. Her own virtue

is not enough; public recognition is required. The task of maintaining honor and social order is thus entirely on her, hence she is made the scapegoat for the male authority's failure.

3.2. Deconstruction of a “Flawed” Narrative: A Later Interpolation?

A critical point of view indicates that the Agnipariksha scene might have been added at a later time, showing different stylistic features from the rest of the Ramayana. Hence, if this is the case, Sita's misery might not have been in the initial story but a deliberate change to the plot that supports the dominance of male chastity. The irony here is quite amazing: Rama claims that she is innocent and at the same time he makes her prove it publicly, thus the social expectation is transferred to her. This way of blaming is different from that of Pandora, who was punished by the gods, as the source of this blame comes from the society and law rather than from divine command.

3.3. Modern Reinterpretations: From Submission to Agency

Modern literature and feminist theory have redefined Sita from a character of submission to one of determination and strength. Fire ordeal is re-explored as a brave rebellion against the suffocating traditional values, and her being a lone parent implies unconquerable power. Female community now draws power from her as a feminist figure who has survived male-dominated systems, and the narrative of her suppressed life being transformed into one of self-determination and struggle has been reinstated.

4. Eve: The First Transgression and the Blueprint of Sin

4.1. The Ambiguous Genesis Narrative and Culpability

If we look at the story of Eve in the Book of Genesis, it is typically perceived as the starting point of the female blame line, still in the very text the inconsistencies are quite evident. One of the most controversial points of the story is that the ban not to eat from the tree of knowledge was given to Adam only, not to Eve. This fact makes it unclear who is the main responsible for the transgression. Besides, the narration does not refer to the event as the “first sin,” “violation,” or “rebellion,” but the characters’ disobedience to God, which entails the imposition of the penalty on both of them. Adam has been assigned the task to cultivate the ground but Eve will experience pain in giving birth and will be oppressed by her husband. It is worth noting that Adam was “with her” when she ate the fruit, nevertheless, he in his attempt to justify himself transfers the blame to both Eve and God: “The woman whom you put here with me, she gave me the fruit...and I ate.”

4.2. The Theological and Cultural Evolution of Blame

Later theological developments, especially Augustine’s doctrine, led to the change of Eve to be the personification of “original sin”. After this redefinition, the first disobedience was seen as a single female fault, and this fault was inherited by all the human race. This modification signaled the institutionalized link between the female gender, sex, and the feeling of guilt, thus a theological sanction for the domination of the females. Various translation methods and interpretative approaches deeply rooted this storyline, and they most of the time portrayed Adam as a non-active participant to downgrade his blame. The excessively focusing on the “curse of Eve” issue has led to the neglect of the parallel condemnation of Adam to labor. As a result of these developments throughout the centuries, Eve was gradually transformed into a model of “fallen women,” thus she became the source of the virgin/whore dichotomy and the characterization of women as the cause of the downfall, the deceivers, and the tempted ones.

4.3. Modern and Feminist Reinterpretations: From Sinner to Hero

Feminist versions have been the change of Eve's tale by considering her deed the proof of her power, and not the proof of her guilt. Actually, the first woman choosing to consume the tree's fruit might as well be showing her desire for knowledge, autonomy, and defiance against the rules that were imposed on her. Giving the fruit to Adam could be interpreted as an act of support, instead of betrayal, thus, making a point at coexistence instead of a relationship based on a power imbalance. Contemporary rewritings acknowledge Eve as woman of bravery, of confrontational spirit, and of intellectual quest - a female who questioned not only God's will but also the patriarchal structure. As a result, we get not the stereotypical sinner but the defiant, antagonistic character whose repercussion might be perceived as becoming rather than exalting.

5. Comparative Analysis: Weaving the Threads of Blame

While their origins are vastly different and the myths of Pandora, Sita, and Eve come from three different cultural traditions, the Three Rhetorical Similarities are shared by these myths: Firstly, in one way or another, through each mythic figure, woman is depicted as the source of the whole world's or society's misfortune. Secondly, this character fault gender-wise is not by chance but uncovers that patriarchal regimes use mythic stories to reoccur the idea of female blame counterparts to make it look like they are guilty of the offense. Thirdly, however, these archetypes differ in the ways they share the mechanisms, purposes and even later reinterpretations of blame.

5.1. The Mechanisms of Blame: Passive vs. Free Will vs. Societal

The blame those characters were given- Pandora, Eve, and Sita -were from three different cultural traditions that used these characters to control women. In the Pandora myth, blame is presented in a passive way: the woman was intentionally designed, a "new thing" by the gods, as a punishment for men. She was not built as an autonomous agent but as a vessel by which the gods execute their revenge. Oppositely, Eve is a figure of blame couched in the language of choice. The fruit she took is described as a free will exercise, but the story is so constructed that Adam's fault is pushed onto her, so she becomes the symbol of original sin. Sita's fault is the mainspring of social issues, so the blame is not for a cosmic disaster but for the loss of public honor and propriety. It is said that she dramatizes the theme of unchastity, not sexual offense, after her captivity. The patriarchal systems' three strategies (deterministic, voluntarist, and societal) which they use to adapt the myths for the purpose of maintaining the obedience, such as Pandora being the explanation of the divine punishment, Sita being the enforcement of the communal morality and Eve being the legitimization of theological hierarchies, are here displayed.

5.2. The Role of the Male Counterpart: Victim, Judge, or Blame-Shifter

In every scenario, the male character is necessary to the blame process, not as a spectator but as a co-operator. Epimetheus, Pandora's mate, is a non-resisting partner; he takes her and the "gift" of suffering without objection, thus making him more a victim than a co-actor. Nevertheless, Adam is playing an extremely more active role. After the incident of disobedience, not only was he there, but he also did the act with her, and immediately he put the blame on Eve and even on God; thereby, he turned into a model of blame-shifting that is central to later theology.

Moreover, Rama has still another way of operating. As Sita's husband, he becomes the judge who asks her to publicly prove her innocence. Unlike Epimetheus or Adam, he is not depicted as one of the victims of her deeds but as an arbitrator whose power comes from societal norms. These men signpost that women are never solely blamed; their culpability is designed, exacerbated, and maintained by male counterparts.

5.3. The Societal Function of the Archetype

The cultural aspects of each story highlight their function of preserving the patriarchal system to the same degree. The myth of Pandora serves as one of the ways to justify the heavy burden of male labor and the institution of marriage, showing females as attractive yet harmful beings that are inevitable. The story of Sita legitimizes the dominance of virginity and self-sacrifice, thus raising the requirement that women should represent the ideal of morality in order to keep the social order intact. More general in nature, Eve's tale offers a divine rationale for pain, death, and women's oppression, at the same time, it confers the male superiority as a God's will. Thus, each legend is performing different functions—cosmic, social, and theological—yet, they are all in agreement with the idea that myths have the power to change the gendered blame into structural oppression.

6. Conclusion: The Enduring Power of Myth and the Act of Reclaiming the Voice

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From the past to present, myths have been alive. Their survival is not only because of their power to limit but also due to their flexibility for reshaping. Contemporary feminist academics and creative adaptations uncover the cracks of these archaic stories, turning characters that were a source of weakness or sin into the ones that represent strength, wisdom, and freedom. While reclaiming, the idea of the universal female guilt being challenged, revealed as dependent on the context, being constructed, and thus open for dispute.

These reinterpretations of the myths are not only significant in the sphere of literary criticism but also have a very important role in the understanding of the nature of myth as a cultural grammar that reflects social values and the fact that it is a political act to reclaim these voices. The change of the myths of Pandora, Sita, and Eve by modern scholars not only confront the domination of male authority but also become the co-creators of new cultural fantasies. This continuous interaction between past and present gives the impression that the narrative can be a very powerful tool of transformation: on one hand, myths could have been created in order to silence women, but on the other hand, they can be recited to make women heard louder.

Therefore, these characters' retrieval is not only a scholarly endeavor but also a cultural requirement. Transforming Pandora into a character beyond a source of suffering, Sita, not only as a victim of virginity, and Eve, not only as the generator of sin, is to challenge those systems that have been giving women's identity by fault for a long time. Moreover, it means declaring that the right to tell stories is still one of the strongest places of freedom.

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