

'The narrative of Adam and Eve in Genesis is a perfect example of misogyny.'
Examine this statement using primary and secondary sources.

The story of Adam and Eve is part of the Genesis story of the creation of the world in the Old Testament. The story is the Abrahamic explanation of how humanity was created, containing the creation of Adam the first man "from the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:4-3:24) and Eve the first woman from "one of the man's ribs" (Genesis 2:4-3:24). Although there are many different interpretations of the Genesis story and there being many different translations of the Old Testament, for the purposes of this assignment the English New International Bible will be used.

Misogyny is prevalent in the vast majority of the bible, being an integral part of the genesis story, as women were apparently to blame for banishment from the garden of Eden. There are multiple points in the bible where women are seen as beneath men, for instance (1 Timothy 2:12) "but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over man, but to be in silence" and "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (1 Corinthians 14:32–35) which demonstrates clearly the idea that the bible promotes degradation and subjugation of women.

Interesting to mention is the story of Lillith being omitted from the book of Genesis but is made mention of in multiple texts such as '*the book of Adam and Eve*' 6th century, the Babylonian Talmud and Zohar Leviticus. The book of Adam and Eve is an extracanonical Christian text and makes mention of Lilith "the first Eve" (Mcdonald, 2009). In this book, Lilith was also created from the dust on the ground the same way as Adam and was meant to be his wife in the garden of Eden, and she was for a small part of time. It is with her equality that Lilith was unwilling to allow Adam dominance over her. She is portrayed as sexually promiscuous and would not lay beneath Adam, as she said they were made of the same dust and with such she should not be his lesser. This angered Adam and he told God of Lilith's "disobedience," and with such there are branching ideas of what happened next, but they share similar traits in that Lilith was banished from the garden of Eden as she was not subservient enough. In later texts Lilith is portrayed as the primordial she-demon, the mother of demons and an icon of Evil, all for not being submissive enough to Adam. This is relevant to the idea of Adam and Eve, in that Lilith was created Adam's equal, but was banished from not being subservient enough, and then Eve was created from a part of Adam and is portrayed as being more subservient and lesser than Adam, which highlights Abrahamic misogynist ideas of women's subservience to men and the idea that women being equal to men is evil.

With Adams first wife being banished from the garden, God created Adam a new wife or as stated in the bible “helper,” which was done so by taking a rib from Adam which was then used to create Eve. Adam then named Eve “woman” in the original King James bible and all such subsequent English copies and while insignificant, the word woman has deep misogynists' roots. This is due to the fact the term woman comes from old English ‘Wyman’ the wyf in substitute for the wo and meaning wife, meaning the word woman means ‘wife of man.’ (Macmillian dictionary) the idea that the English term for women is in fact misogynist, as the term used is correlating the idea that a female is ‘just the wife of a male’ limiting any freedoms they may have, which is then justified from a religious point of view through the King James bible. So even in the creation of women taking away any further aspects, they are seen as subservient, and without meaning if they lack such, painting a picture of misogyny from the second they were introduced. This also suggests that a woman only has value in being married. So, this act of misogyny is so rooted into current society as the term woman is used a term of identity despite its undertones.

With the story of Adam and Eve and the quote “so God created man in his own image” (Genesis 1:27) the idea that men are created in Gods image and women are a biproduct of man has been prevalent in all forms of Abrahamic religions. This idea enforces that men are closer to God, which has linked further along in the bible to (1 Corinthians 14:32–35) which is a text about how women should not speak in church, as they are not capable of knowing the will of God themselves without the help of a man. This integrates misogyny further into the bible with women not only supposed to be subservient to men, but also being less close to God, meaning that women were not allowed to be a part of the Church, they were only a “helper” to men. According to st Augustine “Men by themselves are the image of God, while women are not, they are merely men’s helpmates” This furthers the misogyny in religious societies, with the idea that women will always be lesser than men as they were made to be so, and it has been quoted by religious societies and the sorts as the reason women are subservient to men. This ideology is still seen in different denominations of the Abrahamic religions today, with women not being allowed to pray in the same room or even in the same way as men. For instance, in Islam women are not permitted to be in the same room as the men while praying at a mosque, as women are seen as a distraction from getting close to God. (Reda,2023) it is also in the Apostolic constitutions that men and women should be seated separately when in church. (New Advent, 2008)

The narrative has Eve the first woman interacting with the serpent, rather than Adam, the serpent being unanimously considered to represent the Devil, which suggests the idea that women are more likely to consort with the Devil than men. Not only is this an idea birthed in Genesis it is also an idea that was held onto for many hundreds of years, giving birth to the idea of witches leading to witch trials all over the world. The idea of women consorting with the devil for knowledge and power, using dark magic to curse good Christians and the sort, is sewed into many fairy tales and folk lore across Europe. With many scientific revelations made by women being considered

witchcraft due to a woman's inclination to consort with the devil. This is a misogynistic idea, in that only women are capable of being evil enough to speak to the devil and a man would never listen to the words of a serpent. This links into the previous idea that men are closer to God, but also suggests that women are closer to the Devil, which in of itself is misogynistic, but also does not make sense as if women are made from men, how can they be eviller than men if they are "of the same flesh and bone." it also suggests that women are more gullible, as the serpent easily deceived Eve into eating the forbidden apple. This idea that women are gullible and easy to fool is a common stereotype even today, and suggests the idea that women are somehow simpler than men. This may link into the ideas of why women were never seen as fit leaders, as they are easily tricked and or deceived. It may also be a reason as to why women were not fit to be part of the clergy, as they are closer to the devil, and are easier to be deceived by him, meaning that if they were given positions of power, they may lead others astray from God and lead them down sinful paths. This kind of misogyny is still prevalent today, with women still being seen as the "weaker" or "less intelligent" sex in some denominations. (NIH, 2008) On the other hand, there also seems to be a point being made that the idea of women being knowledgeable is also itself sinful, as the Devil being the icon of all evil, encouraging Eve to eat the apple to gain knowledge. This suggests that the idea of a woman wanting knowledge is evil as otherwise the devil would not want it, this further expresses misogynistic undertones. So, this suggests that not only is "women's stupidity" their evidential downfall, but it is also seen as an encouraged trait, as women should not crave knowledge and instead leave knowledgeable things to men. This is also seen throughout history with women not being given access to education, and that knowledgeable women were seen as witches and burnt at the stake, or in later years hung etc. (Nachman, 2010)

It is also widely believed that Eve deceived Adam into eating the apple causing the first sin and forcing humans out of the Garden of Eden. As in the narrative Adam actively blames Eve entirely "The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."" (Genesis 2:4-3:24) despite the fact the Adam knowingly ate the fruit, he still blames Eve, which has them been taken from then on blaming women. This idea that women are the sole reason that humanity was doomed to an eternity of suffering because of a woman has led to centuries of mistreatment and subjugation of women, with the excuse of women committing the first sin. This is despite the fact that Adam also ate the apple knowing he should not have further proving that the passage is misogynistic as only the woman in the situation is held to blame, while the man is seen as a victim of the woman's misdeeds. This idea that women are the original deceivers and caused the world suffering is still used as an excuse worldwide for the mistreatment and degradation of women. The narrative has given misogynists over thousands of years reasons to bare hatred toward women, such as Tertullian who said, "Women were the reason Jesus had to die on the cross; they were the "gate to hell," and a "temple built over a sewer" this idea that women have caused thousands of years of shame and suffering is genuinely believed, and there have been numerous accounts where

many famous scholars have blamed women for the wrongs in the world. Tertullian is a prime example of this, as he takes the narrative of Adam and Eve, in order to accuse women of the death of Jesus.

Throughout the narrative the premise of good and evil seems to have been gendered in way, as everything canonically bad has been done by a woman, which in of itself is sexist, but it goes further than that. Whilst being already said, there is an assumption that women are more likely to converse with the devil, it is also being suggested that women are in fact more than just that, they are in fact an embodiment of evil itself. While assumingly an outrageous claim many believed this to be true over the years, for instance St Alfred the great who said "Women have faulty and defective natures; their feelings drive them to evil while reason drives men to good. They are by nature lying, deceptive creatures; one must be on guard against every woman as if she were a poisonous snake and the horned devil." This highlights the idea that the bible promotes to stereotyping of men being naturally more inclined to doing good, with the opposite being an apparent truth for women. Considering these are sainted member of the catholic church making misogynistic statements such as that, it highlights the idea that the bible does sow the seeds of misogyny, in that many high-ranking officials have taken stories such as Adam and Eve seriously and acted in accordance with that.

The idea that women are as deceptive as the snake is seemingly found in the narrative which was taken by John Chrysostom archbishop of Constantinople as quite literal as he said "Amongst all the savage beasts, none is found so harmful as woman." this shows how the influence of the bible has led to extreme amounts of misogyny within the church which would then leak to the everyday people. When God finds out of the transgressions of the serpent and the woman he states thusly "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." which suggests the idea that in Gods eyes the woman and the snake were more to blame than Adam, and that the Eve knowingly sided with the snake. As he feels the need to make it so Eve and all her descendants would be cursed to hate and fear snakes, but makes no mention of Adam, and that is just the curse for the serpent not Eve. Eve then receives her own curse "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." (Genesis 2:4-3:24) So not only is Eve blamed for the shame of mankind, she also cursed twice, which then stretches to all her female descendants. This also highlights this idea that women deserve to feel pain through childbirth, as punishment for their apparent crime against God. It also permeates the idea that women deserve more pain and suffering than men, as they are cursed to supposed to feel it, which then leads to more misogyny as that then encourages the abuse of women as a form of atonement for the apparent sins of the first woman. It also proves that there is religious belief behind the idea that women are a man's property when they are married, as "your

desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” which is a highly misogynist ideology of men owning and controlling women. Not only is this seen clearly in the Adam and Eve narrative, but it is also still very commonplace in today's society with some denominations believing that the man needs to control the woman's actions for their own good, as they cannot be trusted to make their own decisions.

In conclusion the narrative of Adam and Eve has heavy misogynistic plots points and undertones, with women being blamed for the first sin and being portrayed as subservient to the whims of men. It is also important to note that Lilith who is portrayed an independent woman, was banished from the garden of Eden before a more submissive wife was created, and any mention of this independent dominant woman was completely removed from the bible, only leaving mention of the more subservient wife Eve, who was thusly blamed for the suffering of all humanity forever. Having said this, it is also important to take into account that while this narrative is clearly misogynistic, it is up to individual people to decide whether or not they will use religious texts in order to persecute women. With this in mind though, this text has been used by many prominent religious figures and by patriarchal figures as an excuse to degrade and force subservience upon women for centuries, pushing blame of the suffering of others from those who committed the deeds to a more convenient scapegoat by simply blaming women. It is clear to see that the narrative was written in order to promote the subjugation of women using a religious crutch.

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