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## ABSTRACT

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*'Nec ancilla nec domina': Representations of Eve in the Twelfth Century*

This thesis seeks to demonstrate the extent to which the figure of Eve operated in twelfth-century commentary on Genesis as a crucial means by which to examine some of the most fundamental and problematic areas of the hexaemeron and fall narratives.

Amid the twelfth-century's flourishing corpus of writing on the creation and fall of mankind, Eve emerges not as an expedient model of female iniquity or a credulous victim of diabolic casuistry, but as a valued equivalent and peer to Adam ('nec ancilla nec domina sed socia', in the words of Hugh of St Victor). Moreover, Eve lies at the heart of twelfth-century debate surrounding the challenging issues of how and why mankind was created, why the existence of sin and evil was permitted, the action of temptation and sin, and the composition of the created world.

However, there has been no substantial treatment of representations of Eve in the central middle ages, and modern scholarship has frequently been content to assume that medieval responses to the first woman are universally misogynistic. This thesis aims both to address this historiographical lacuna, and to examine the hitherto neglected function of Eve as a means by which to elucidate some of the major theological and philosophical preoccupations of this formative period.

In order to do this, the thesis examines representations of Eve as the first woman (Chapter I), the first wife/mother (Chapter II) and the first sinner (Chapter III) in a corpus of texts centred around six of the major twelfth-century treatments of Eve and the creation/fall narrative. These are Guibert of Nogent's *Moralia in Genesim*, Abelard's *Expositio in hexameron*, Hugh of St Victor's *De sacramentis*, Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and the Anglo-Norman *Mystère d'Adam*.

# ‘NEC ANCILLA NEC DOMINA’: REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

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SUBMITTED IN REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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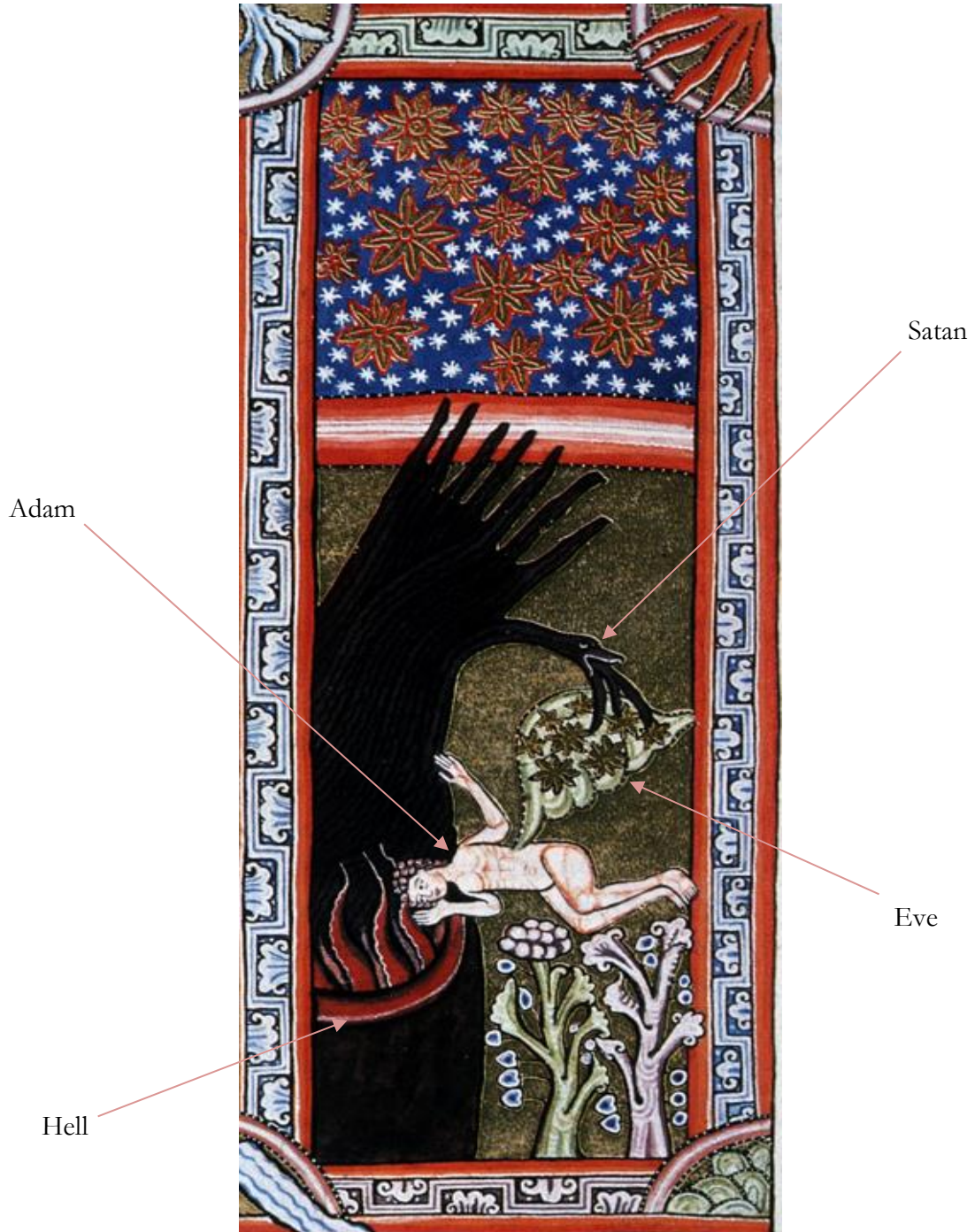
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The Creation and Fall of Mankind in Hildegard's *Scivias*



Rupertsberg *Scivias* (formerly Wiesbaden, Hessisches Landesbibliothek MS 1) folio 4r.

Hildegard Receiving and Dictating a Vision



(Rupertsberg *Scivias*, formerly Wiesbaden, Hessisches Landesbibliothek MS 1, frontispiece)

# INTRODUCTION

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During the early years of her lengthy career as abbess of the Paraclete, Heloise wrote to Abelard to request his assistance in teaching the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis.<sup>1</sup> In order to instruct her charges at the Paraclete, Heloise requested a treatise that would elucidate the exegetical and doctrinal complexities of the creation narrative; one that would focus on literal and historical interpretation of the text. Abelard's response came in the form of the *Expositio in hexameron* ('Exposition of the six-day work'; that is, the first six days of creation).<sup>2</sup> In the epistolary preface which precedes the *Expositio*, Abelard informs his estranged *amica*, addressed with the poignant epithet 'once dear in the world, now most dear in Christ', that she is right to emphasise the difficulty of teaching the hexaameron, and that he will attempt, as requested, to devote his expertise to explaining this complex material to her and to her 'spiritual daughters'.<sup>3</sup> Abelard describes the hexaameron as being one of the three most difficult areas of the Bible to interpret, and one which was so potentially controversial that, according to Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel, previous generations of scholars were prohibited

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<sup>1</sup> Constant Mews and John Marenbon both assert that whilst the exact dating of this request and its reply is unclear, the commentary was produced shortly after c.1133. The original letter sent by Heloise is no longer extant, but Abelard recounts her request in his reply. See Constant Mews, 'On Dating the Works of Peter Abelard', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* vol. 52 (1985) pp. 73-134, pp. 118-19; John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Abelard, *Expositio in hexameron: Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica* vol. 5, ed. Mary Romig and David Luscombe, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis* [hereafter referred to as CCCM] 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Abelard, trans. Wanda Zemler-Cizewski, *An Exposition of the Six-Day Work*, CCCM in Translation vol. 8, CCCM XV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 32. 'Supplicando itaque postulas et postulando supplicas, soror Heloysa, in seculo quondam cara, nunc in Christo carissima, quatinus in expositionem horum tanto studiosius intendam quanto difficiliorum eorum esse constat intelligentiam, et specialiter hoc tibi et filiabus tuis spiritualibus persoluam', *Expositio*, 4, 30 - 34.

from working on it until they were at least thirty years old.<sup>4</sup>

Describing the difficulties of interpreting the scriptural account of mankind's creation and fall, and the exegetical tradition of this task, Abelard declares that the textual inheritance faced by Heloise is so complicated that very few scholars have even attempted to compose a literal commentary on the subject.<sup>5</sup> Many have engaged in allegorical exegesis of the text, Abelard warns, but St Augustine is the only person ever to have produced a successful literal interpretation. Moreover, Abelard recounts that even Augustine himself declared that within his own literal commentary, 'more things are sought than discovered and of those that are discovered few are certain, in fact the rest are set down as if they were yet to be found out'.<sup>6</sup>

This prefatory letter thus offers a glimmer of insight into some of the methods and motivations which sustained twelfth-century interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis, and into the use of the Patristic commentaries which preceded and informed it. Useful information though this might be, it nevertheless seems quite far removed from the specific issue of how the figure of Eve might be represented in twelfth-century thought. However, it is helpful to begin by discussing this neglected and ostensibly unremarkable letter, because it provides a prelude to a remarkable representation of the first woman and the first act of sin. There are two suggestions discernible in the sections of the letter quoted above which set the scene for this portrayal, offering some early indication that the subsequent interpretation involves something rather more complex than a predictable assembly of caveats concerning apples, snakes and women of

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<sup>4</sup> 'Nam nisi quis apud eos etatem sacerdotialis ministerii, id est xxx annum, impleuerit, nec principium Geneseos, nec Canticum Cantorum, nec huius voluminis exordium et finem [i.e. Ezekiel] legere permittitur, ut ad perfectum scientiam et mysticos intellectus plenum humane nature tempus accedat', *ibid.*, 3, 25 - 29.

<sup>5</sup> 'Quanto eius difficultatem ceteris constat esse maiorem, sicut expositionum raritas ipsa protestatur', *ibid.*, 4, 39 - 40.

<sup>6</sup> *Expositio* trans. Cizewski, p. 32. 'Plura quesita sunt quam inuenta, et eorum que inuenta sunt pauciora firmata, cetera... adhuc requirenda sint', *Expositio*, 6, 53 - 54.

questionable virtue.

First, with the phrase ‘once dear in the world, now most dear in Christ’, Abelard invokes the idea of a fall from grace being followed by a merciful redemption.<sup>7</sup> This process of reversal is mirrored in the syntactical inversion of the antimetabolic phrase ‘by pleading you demand, and demanding you plead’.<sup>8</sup> Second, Abelard’s consistent emphasis on the deserved fame of Augustine’s work on Genesis – well known and notable for its description of the fallen Eve as ‘such a great good’ (‘tantum bonum’) – tacitly establishes a judicious Patristic precedent for his own redemptive representation of Eve and her transgression.<sup>9</sup> These two features of the letter allude to the conception of Eve in the text which follows them; a portrayal which is predicated on the premise that on account of her transgression, Eve became dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men. ‘In fact, one woman’, Abelard writes of Eve, ‘is now worth more to God, and appears more pleasing to him through merit than might many thousands of men, if they had persevered forever without sin’.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless of any preliminary suggestions or intimations, this seems an extraordinary claim to make. Eve’s transgression may have been redeemed by Christ, but nonetheless she seems a deeply unlikely candidate for outright praise. The Genesis narrative makes it indisputably clear that Eve was responsible for corrupting mankind,

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. the seventh letter to Heloise in which the same formulation is used in a similar reversal of the status of a fallen woman: describing the transition of Mary Magdalene from prostitute (a position with which Heloise also famously claimed to identify) to saint, Abelard writes ‘Libet denique, ut ad fideles seu christianas redeamus feminas, et divine respectum misericordie in ipsa etiam publicorum abjectione scortorum, et *stupendo predicare et predicando stupere*. Quid enim abjectius quam Maria Magdalene vel Maria Egyptiaca secundum vite statum pristinum? Quas vero postmodum vel honore vel merito divina amplius gratia sublimavit...’, ‘The Letters of Heloise on Religious Life and Abelard’s First Reply’, ed. J. P. Muckle, *Mediaeval Studies* vol. 17 (1955) pp. 253 – 281, p. 259. My italics.

<sup>8</sup> *Expositio* trans. Cizewski, p. 32. ‘Supplicando itaque postulas et postulando supplicas’, *Expositio*, 4, 30.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Non fieret, inquit, mulier. Hoc est dicere, non fieret bonum: quia et ipsa utique aliquod bonum est, et *tantum bonum*, ut Apostolus eam gloriam viri esse dicat; et omnia ex Deo’, Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* ed. Dorothea Weber, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* [hereafter referred to as CSEL] 91 (Vienna, Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 2.28. Italics mine.

<sup>10</sup> *Expositio* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. ‘Plus quippe una femina modo apud deum valet et gratior ei per meritum existit quam multa milia hominum facerent, si semper sine peccato perserverassent’, *Expositio*, 454, 2721 - 2.

and for destroying the earthly paradise of prelapsarian humanity. Eve's actions brought sin into the world, and with it apparently came the Christian archetype of the base and fallen woman – when dissecting the corpus of medieval misogyny, it seems logical to expect to find the figure of Eve at its heart.

Whether or not this misogyny was in fact endemic in medieval representations of Eve, it is widely assumed to have been so. The expectation of antifeminism dominates and distorts the only study ever published on the figure of Eve in the twelfth century: volume three of Georges Duby's trilogy *Women of the Twelfth Century*. Throughout this brief tract, the author maintains that high medieval representations of Eve reveal nothing more than the embittered vitriol of the male cleric, intent on using the gender of the first sinner to justify his intransigent insistence that

The woman could serve no purpose except to make children, “as the earth is a helper to the seed” - the image of a woman open like a ploughed field to a man, who alone was active, embedding the seed, coming immediately to his mind.<sup>11</sup>

Duby's expectation of misogyny, however objectionably it is expressed, is far from atypical.<sup>12</sup> It is widely assumed that medieval representations of Eve, particularly those formulated by twelfth-century male clerics, are almost by definition misogynistic, perpetuating the image of Eve as a weak and malleable plaything of the devil who lured man into damnation through her credulous disobedience. This expectation, and the way in which it distorts approaches to representations of Eve, has remained virtually unchallenged and unquestioned since Jean M. Higgins identified its problematic

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<sup>11</sup> Georges Duby trans. Jean Birrell, *Women of the Twelfth Century: Eve and the Church* (Cambridge: Polity Press and University of Chicago, 1998) p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), is particularly helpful on critiquing the expectation of misogyny and the way in which it is considered ubiquitous but is rarely analysed - passim but helpfully summarised in pp. 1-3. For specific examples and further detail, see historiographical survey below.

influence in a single article in 1976.<sup>13</sup>

Abelard's representation of Eve clearly presents something of an obstacle to the expectations with which the modern reader approaches medieval discussions concerning the first woman and the first sin. To find so optimistic a description of Eve, and the fallen human state that she represents, is both unexpected and unexpectedly challenging. Admittedly, Abelard is hardly renowned for shying away from controversy, but even so, his description clearly demonstrates that misogynistic loathing of Eve was not ubiquitous, even among the male theologians whom Duby is so swift to condemn.

Indeed, Abelard's arguments go substantially beyond the idea that Eve's sin was forgivable, or that she was a recipient of divine benevolence in spite of her sin. His analysis of the line 'masculine and feminine he created them' voices his conviction that the human soul, regardless of gender, is capable of reason and capable of engaging not only with divine love, but with divine wisdom.<sup>14</sup> He states clearly that Eve was dearer to God on account of her merit and inherent worth, even after she had transgressed the boundaries of divine mandate. The lines which follow this initial assertion go so far as to say that the first sin was in fact beneficial to humanity as a whole, stating that Eve was actually dearer to God *because* she sinned, since it was that first sin which necessitated the glories of the Incarnation and the Redemption. 'O happy fault' Abelard

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<sup>13</sup> Jean M. Higgins, 'The Myth of Eve: The Temptress' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* vol. 44, no. 4 (1976), pp. 639-647. The notes to p. 639 mention that 'this article is part of a book [Higgins] is preparing on *The Myth of Eve*'. To the best of my knowledge, this book has unfortunately never been published. It would be inaccurate to state that the problem identified by Higgins has never been challenged; see the two following exceptions: Alcuin Blamires' chapter on 'Eve and the Privileges of Women' in *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) pp. 96-125, and John Flood's *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and the English Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2011). However, as is discussed in further detail below, whilst both these texts do indeed offer alternatives to the conception of Eve as a vehicle of, and justification for, misogyny, both insist that representations of Eve can really only illuminate conceptions of gender. In addition to the fact that these are really only intended to be brief surveys, neither of these texts seeks to examine the more broadly influential theological, ethical or philosophical impact of the figure of Eve within medieval thought.

<sup>14</sup> 'Masculum et feminam creavit eos', Genesis 1.27. 'Capax est rationis et sapientie divini amoris particeps', *Expositio*, p. 61.

writes, quoting the Easter vigil, ‘that merited such and so great a redeemer’.<sup>15</sup> As far as Abelard is concerned, mankind would not have encountered Christ had it not been for Eve’s sin. Moreover, in defining what it meant to sin, Eve, necessarily, also defined what it meant to be virtuous. He maintains that Eve’s transgression improved human nature by providing the opportunity to become actively virtuous as opposed to remaining only passively sinless, since it is impossible to exercise genuine virtue without having experienced genuine temptation: ‘after [this first] sin we are better’, he writes, ‘for if there were no fight against adversity, where would be the crown of victory?’.<sup>16</sup>

#### MOTIVATIONS AND AIMS OF THE THESIS

The wider ethical and theological implications of Abelard’s claim will be discussed in greater detail below, but it is clear that, even at first sight, Abelard’s representation of Eve provokes numerous questions. The most obvious initial issue is that of how atypical Abelard might be in formulating so positive a representation of Eve, and in negotiating the apparent paradox of advantageous sin beyond the well-established notion of *felix culpa*.

The possibility of tracing a tradition of positive representations of Eve, or at least a tradition of constructing nuanced treatments of her transgression, may seem at first seem unlikely. However, whilst Abelard’s florid and outright praise of Eve is indeed something of a rarity, the *Expositio* is not alone in its formulation of a measured, insightful and even generous account of Eve’s creation and sin.

Examples of this level of exposition can be found in numerous texts roughly

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<sup>15</sup> *Expositio* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. ‘O felix culpa que talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem’, *Expositio*, 455, 2728.

<sup>16</sup> *Expositio*, trans. Cizewski, p. 113. ‘Post peccatum, meliores ex hoc efficimur... si enim nulla esset aduersitatum pugna, ubi esset uictorie corona?’, *Expositio* 454, 2718 - 2723.



contemporary with Abelard's *Expositio*. Throughout Hildegard of Bingen's treatment of the creation and fall narratives in her visionary opus *Scivias*, Eve is depicted as a white, wing-shaped cloud. The cloud is filled with stars which indicate the lives of her future offspring, immediately invoking Eve's status as 'mother of all the living' rather than her role as temptress and sinner, and she soars above the world in stark contrast to the terrestrial and prosaically human figure of Adam, already prone on the earth like the serpent whose blandishments he heeds.<sup>17</sup> The creation scene in the Anglo-Norman *Mystère d'Adam* has God stridently declaring to Adam that Eve has been created as 'his wife and peer', with an equal share in their status as the crowning achievement of the process of creation.<sup>18</sup>

Balanced and positive representations of Eve can also be found in some of the most significantly formative and widely-read texts of the high middle ages. Hugh of St Victor's *De sacramentis*, for example, describes Eve not as an inferior being but as Adam's equivalent, and a vital participant in their 'mutual association in love'.<sup>19</sup> He also states his approval of the frequently employed idea that Eve's being created from the side of Adam represents a typological precedent of the Church's being created from the side of the crucified Christ.<sup>20</sup> The *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard borrow Hugh's description of Eve as being created to be 'nec ancilla nec domina', 'neither slave nor mistress', to Adam, but as his equal, created from his rib to signify their parity.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Lombard echoes Abelard's assertion the fall allowed mankind to progress

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<sup>17</sup> Hildegard of Bingen ed. Adelgundis Führkötter and Angela Carlevaris, *Scivias*, Corpus Christianorum Scholars Version 43 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003) 1.2, 55-64. 'Mater... cunctorum viventium', Genesis 3.20.

<sup>18</sup> 'Co est ta femme e tun pareil', Leif Sletsjõe ed., *Mystère d'Adam: Édition diplomatique accompagnée d'une reproduction photographique du manuscrit de Tours et des leçons des éditions critiques*, Bibliothèque française et romane (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968) line 10. Translations are my own.

<sup>19</sup> 'In consortium... dilectionis', Hugh of St Victor ed. Rainer Berndt, *De sacramentis Christiane fidei*, Corpus Victorinum, Textus Historici vol. I (Münster: Aschendorff, 2008) 1.6, 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Lombard ed. Ignatius C. Brady, *Sententiae in iv libris distinctae*, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 4 – 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010) 2.28, 2. Hugh wrote that 'quia ergo viro nec ancilla nec domina parabatur sed socia; nec de capite nec de pedibus, sed de latere fuerat producenda', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 35.

spiritually, from remaining merely untempted to becoming actively virtuous, because it is impossible to exercise virtue without experiencing temptation, and without understanding the consequences of sin.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear even from these brief excerpts that sufficient evidence can be marshalled to demonstrate that whilst Abelard's praise of Eve might be forthright, it is not an isolated occurrence. Given the ingrained expectation of misogyny in medieval representations of Eve, this is in itself notable. However, when examining twelfth-century texts which devote a substantial amount of attention to the figure of Eve, it quickly becomes clear that discussions of Eve during this period are concerned with considerably more than conceptions of gender. A closer reading of the texts briefly excerpted above demonstrates that their representations of Eve reveal more about twelfth-century conceptions of human nature than they do about attitudes toward women.

This is not to suggest that twelfth-century responses to Eve are entirely free from the patriarchal mentalities of the era in which they originate. It should be made clear from the outset that the texts quoted above do not, even at their most generous, amount to a full scale vindication of Eve. None of these authors go so far as Abelard in praising Eve's sin. None of the texts, Abelard's included, are unequivocally in favour of Eve's actions. None of them argue that Eve's prelapsarian parity of status should be extended to women in general, and neither do they dispute the notion of the male and the masculine being stronger and more authoritative than the female and the feminine. The claims of parity and equivalence do not exempt Eve from her husband's governance, or challenge his axiomatically greater strength. It is vital to emphasise the fact that these are not feminist, or 'proto'-feminist, texts.

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<sup>22</sup> Lombard, *Sententiae*, 2.24, 1.

However, this does not mean that they contain nothing but the vacuous sophistries of misogynist polemic. Representations of Eve were both the subject and object of extensive disputation and debate during this period. They demonstrate a hitherto unacknowledged level of complexity and provide valuable insight into some of fundamental theological and philosophical questions of the central middle ages. The complexity and utility of these texts have been unfairly obscured by the inflexible insistence on gender and misogyny which persists throughout modern scholarship which reduces the medieval figure of Eve to a mere emblem of antifeminist prejudice. As will be discussed in the historiographical survey below, modern scholarship has frequently been content to assume that medieval representations of Eve reveal only entrenched antifeminism, particularly in the twelfth century. This assumption explains at least in part the absence of any substantial modern treatment of the figure of Eve in the twelfth century, or in the middle ages more widely. This thesis seeks to question this assumption, and to demonstrate that whilst representations of Eve do to some extent elucidate conceptions of gender during this period, the figure of Eve was principally employed in order to explore and critique the nature and status of mankind as a whole, in both its prelapsarian and fallen states.

The thesis thus has four principal objectives. It aims to demonstrate the twelfth-century figure of Eve to be a fundamental element of medieval theology and thought. It also aims to identify twelfth-century commentary on the creation and fall of mankind as a valuable and hitherto overlooked source of insight into the intellectual methods and preoccupations of this formative period. In addition, it aims to draw attention to the historiographical lacunae which exist in terms of scholarship on Eve and on medieval Genesis commentary more generally, and to offer some insight into the ways in which these mystifyingly neglected texts might be useful in elucidating twelfth-century

thought more widely. Finally, the thesis is intended to question the extent to which Eve functioned as a convenient antifeminist topos.

#### THE CORPUS AND ITS CONTEXT

Interpreting the opening chapters of Genesis was an exegetical undertaking which had preoccupied Christian thinkers long before the twelfth century. As Abelard informs Heloise in the preface to his *Expositio*, the extant material concerned with interpreting the creation and fall narratives, particularly the influential work of Augustine, is so dense and problematic that ‘the very interpretation seems to require interpreting’.<sup>23</sup> The hexaemeral writings of the Church fathers became, essentially, a canonical textual body almost as respected as the Bible itself; reams of exegesis so fundamental as to require exegesis themselves.<sup>24</sup> Whilst Patristic commentary on Eve is subject to as many cultural sensitivities as the medieval, some of the more generous twelfth-century arguments about Eve comprise an element of the inheritance bequeathed to the medieval West by the early Church Fathers, in the main part from the Latin tradition.

For example, the idea that the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib can be read as a typological representation of the creation of the Church from the side of the crucified Christ was first discussed by Tertullian.<sup>25</sup> The notion that Eve’s being the first human to be created within paradise itself indicated her superiority in the order of creation,

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<sup>23</sup> *Exposition*, trans. Cizewski, p. 32. ‘...Ut ipsa rursus expositio exponenda esse censeatur’, *Expositio*, 7, 55. It is Augustine’s commentaries on Genesis to which Abelard and Heloise are referring in particular here.

<sup>24</sup> The only full length survey of Patristic hexaemeral texts remains that of Frank Egleston Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature: A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1912).

<sup>25</sup> ‘Si enim Adam de Christo figuram dabat somnus Adae mors erat Christi dormituri in mortem, ut de injuria perinde lateris ejus vera mater viventium figuraretur Ecclesia’, Tertullian, *De anima* ed. J. H. Waszink, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* [hereafter referred to as CCSL] 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954) 43, 62 - 64.

originates in the work of Ambrose.<sup>26</sup> However, by far the most significant identifiable Patristic influence on twelfth-century approaches to the figure of Eve was Augustine.<sup>27</sup> Particularly influential is his allegorical interpretation of Eve, in which Eve is presented as a component of every human soul, regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides.<sup>28</sup> As will become apparent in subsequent chapters, Abelard's high opinion of Augustine's exegesis of Genesis was widely shared - of all the extant Patristic writing on the creation and fall, none is so frequently alluded to, quoted, referenced and relied upon as that of Augustine.

Regardless of how well-trodden this exegetical path might have been by the central middle ages, the twelfth century witnessed a proliferation of interest in the narratives of the creation and fall. In his survey of the images which accompany high medieval hexaemeral commentaries, Johannes Zahlten has calculated that over the course of the extant twelfth-century evidence, there is a nine hundred per cent increase in texts concerned with the hexaemeron and fall when compared to that of the eleventh century.<sup>29</sup> John Flood has observed that the number of texts from this period which 'involve substantial treatments of Genesis is such that even an enumeration of them

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<sup>26</sup> Ambrose, 'Denique extra paradisum factus, hoc est, in inferiori loco, vir melior invenitur; et illa quae in meliore loco hoc est, in paradiso facta est, inferior reperitur', *Exameron & De paradiso*, ed. C. Schenkl, CSEL 32, 1 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1897), *De paradiso*, 1.4. Ambrose is also credited with writing the 'felix culpa' section of the Easter vigil which declares the fall to have been beneficial to mankind - on this attribution see Victor Y. Haines, 'The Iconography of the Felix Culpa,' *Florilegium* vol. 1 (1979) pp.151—158 and Gerard Lukken, *Original Sin in the Roman liturgy: Research into the Theology of Original Sin in the Roman Sacramentaria and the Early Baptismal Liturgy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973).

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*, and *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*. The last three books of the *Confessiones* also deal with Genesis but devote little attention to the figure of Eve. For Augustine's influence on medieval theology more generally see Edward King and Jacqueline Schaefer ed., *St. Augustine and His Influence in the Middle Ages*, *Sewanee Medieval Studies*, No 3 (Tennessee: Sewanee Medieval Colloquium, 1988) and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology, 600-1300*, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* no 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. *De Genesi ad litteram*, 3.22

<sup>29</sup> Johannes Zahlten, *Creatio mundi: Darstellungen der Sechs Schöpfungstage und naturwissenschaftliches Weltbild im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979) pp. 25-6. The accuracy of these calculations has been verified more recently by Conrad Rudolph in his 'In the Beginning: Theories and Images of Creation in the Twelfth Century', *Art History* vol. 22, no 1 (1999) pp. 3-55; see particularly p. 20, and notes 5 and 6 on p. 47.

would be a considerable enterprise and amount to a who's who of medieval theology'.<sup>30</sup>

Giles Gasper has more recently drawn attention to both the creativity and breadth of extant twelfth-century treatments of the hexaameron, and to the extent to which these texts have been curiously neglected by modern scholars.<sup>31</sup>

Interpreting the opening chapters of Genesis was an exegetical challenge undertaken by many of the most significant and well-regarded scholars of the central middle ages – in addition to the writers already mentioned, the impressive list of scholars who produced commentaries on Genesis during this period includes Rupert of Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis, Stephen Langton, Thierry of Chartres, Peter Comestor, Hugh of Amiens, Petrus Cantor and Robert Grosseteste.<sup>32</sup> As Abelard asserts, the difficult opening chapters of Genesis provide the key to understanding the nature and arrangement of the world ('dispositio mundi') in its entirety, and the volume of twelfth-century commentaries on the creation and fall narratives suggests that this interpretative challenge was readily accepted.<sup>33</sup> Amid the twelfth century's flourishing intellectual activity, exegesis of the hexaameron and fall provided both a vehicle and an impetus for submitting the enigmas of the creation and fall to systematic analysis, and the figure of Eve in particular raised numerous problematic questions regarding the nature of free will, why human beings are tempted, and indeed why sin and suffering

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<sup>30</sup> Flood, *Representations of Eve*, p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> Giles E. M. Gasper, "Oil upon the waters": On the Creation of Light from Basil to Peter Lombard', *Archa verbi* 8 (2011) pp. 9 – 31; see particularly pp. 9 – 11.

<sup>32</sup> Rupert of Deutz, *Commentariorum in Genesim*, PL vol. 167; Honorius Augustodunensis, *Hexaameron* and also *Elucidarium*, liber I, PL vol. 172; Thierry of Chartres, 'Hexaameron', in Nikolaus M. Häring ed., *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and his School* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971); Peter Comestor, ed. Agneta Swylan, *Scholastica Historia: Liber Genesis*, CCCM 191 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Hugh d'Amiens, ed. F. Lacoste, 'Un commentaire scripturaire du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: le *Tractatus in Hexaameron* de Hugues d'Amiens', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et littéraire de Moyen Âge*, vol. 25 (1958) pp. 227-294; Petrus Cantor, ed. Agneta Sylwan, *Glossae super Genesim* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1992); Robert Grosseteste, ed. Richard C. Dales and Servus Gieben, *Hexaameron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). There is no edition of Langton's commentary; Emmanuel Bain advises that MSs Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 355 and 14414 are the best extant manuscript witnesses; see Bain, 'Homme et femme il les créa': Le genre féminin dans les commentaires de la Genèse au douzième siècle', *Studi Medievali*, vol. 48, no 1 (2007) pp. 229-270, p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> Abelard, *Expositio*, 9, 72.

were permitted to exist at all.

The treatment of the figure of Eve in these texts reveals much about the developments and changes in the intellectual priorities and methods of this period, and the various ways in which the narratives of creation and fall were approached. Discussing the figure of Eve offered, or perhaps even demanded, the opportunity to examine and rationalise the state of mankind after the fall in a way which focused less on gendered divisions than on the universally significant issues of sin, virtue, temptation and the construction of the human soul.

The question of Eve's connection with misogyny thus obscures a potentially more significant area of discussion. The texts with which this thesis is concerned destabilise the apparent certainty that the figure of Eve provided a locus for gendered disapprobation, and thus they demand a more nuanced approach to twelfth-century conceptions of the first woman, sinner and mother than an inflexible insistence on misogyny can accommodate. If twelfth-century writing demonstrates evidence of a tendency to provide sympathetic readings of Eve, the implications of this surely extend to something rather more complex than an incipient vindication of women, or an early contribution to the much discussed *querelles des femmes*. Rather, as a cornerstone of one of the most significant biblical texts within Christian thought, Eve was crucial to explorations of sin and virtue, temptation and free will, the construction of the human body and soul, and the place of humanity within the divinely ordained hierarchy of the created universe.

This thesis focuses on a corpus of six key texts, most of which were quoted briefly above: Abelard's *Expositio in hexameron*, Guibert of Nogent's *Moralia in Genesim*, Hugh of St Victor's *De Sacramentis*, Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*, Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* and the Anglo-Norman *Mystère d'Adam*. The representations of

Eve discussed throughout this thesis date from the turn of the twelfth century to the 1150s, and therefore range chronologically from the beginning to the peak of high medieval hexaemeral output. These comprise six of the most substantial treatments of the hexaemeron and fall narratives produced in the twelfth century, and the various disparities and differences within this group of texts serves to highlight the extent to which the figure of Eve provided a keystone throughout twelfth-century responses to prelapsarian and fallen human nature. Despite their different genres, purposes and circumstances of composition, these texts are all marked by their profound concern with the figure of Eve, and they are united by their measured and analytical presentation of Eve as an emblem of mankind's state and composition. This thesis seeks to make clear that such complexity exists in representations of Eve which emerged from a variety of genres and provenances, and thus close reading across genres forms a crucial component of the methodology employed throughout.

The earliest of these texts, Guibert of Nogent's *Moralia in Genesim*, was begun around 1084, and completed, after some significant revision, around 1113.<sup>34</sup> Guibert is best known for his autobiography, *De vita sua*, and also his *Gesta Dei per Francos*, but his little-known Genesis commentary, with its revealingly evolving representation of

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<sup>34</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *Moralia in Genesim*, PL vol. 156. Translations are my own. There is some difficulty with dating the commentary and the different extant redactions of it. Guibert writes in his *De vita sua* that he edited and moderated the *Moralia* as a result of his contact with Anselm of Canterbury; see PL vol. 156 cols 875 C – 876 A. Guibert recounts in his autobiography that the *Moralia* was begun whilst he was at the abbey of St Germer de Fly. Anselm, then abbot of Bec, was a frequent visitor to the abbey at Fly, and Guibert describes the assiduous intellectual attention Anselm supposedly devoted to him, and the impact that Anselm's exegetical methodology had on his work in general; see *De vita sua*, cols 874 A – 875 A. Jay Rubenstein has demonstrated, based on the discovery of an earlier manuscript containing the *Moralia* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 529), that the later extant copies of this commentary represent a text significantly modified in the light of the formative teaching Guibert received from Anselm. As Rubenstein notes, the earliest complete copy of the *Moralia* is dedicated to Bishop Bartholomew of Laon, who did not become bishop until 1113, and thus BN lat. 529 is, he suggests, the earlier 1080s version of the commentary which Guibert describes as having been later revised. See Rubenstein, *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 28 and 39-44, and also Giles Gasper, *St Anselm and his Theological Inheritance* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004) pp. 67-8.



Eve, deserves more attention that it has hitherto received.<sup>35</sup> It is particularly useful for comparative purposes, since it predates the other texts employed here, in terms of chronology and tradition, and offers a sustained but rather less generous account of Eve and her transgression than the later treatments. Guibert's principal concern throughout the *Moralia* is tropological or allegorical exegesis, and the first two books of the text are devoted specifically to interpreting the creation and fall in this way.<sup>36</sup> His representation of Eve undergoes some significant development over the course of the text. The commentary demonstrates a shift in intellectual priorities, moving from a simplistic concern with corporeal temptation and lust, to a distinctly more nuanced analysis of the mechanics of free will and reason within the action of sin.

Similarly concerned with these issues is Abelard's *Expositio in hexaemeron*, written approximately twenty years after Guibert's *Moralia* around 1133.<sup>37</sup> The *Expositio* comprises a literal interpretation of each of the six days of creation, up to Genesis 2.25.<sup>38</sup> Almost half the text is devoted to the sixth day, for which Abelard also provides a brief moral and allegorical interpretation. Whilst Abelard is enormously well-known and much of his oeuvre has been extensively studied by modern scholars,

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<sup>35</sup> Other than Rubenstein's work on the *Moralia* outlined in the note above, there has been very little work devoted to the *Moralia*. It is mentioned in Rubenstein, 'St. Anselm's Influence on Guibert of Nogent' in *Anselm - Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of the 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop* ed. G. R. Evans and David Luscombe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) pp. 296-309, and in Gasper, *St Anselm* pp. 67-8. The short text on preaching which provides an introduction to the *Moralia* has been examined by Cizewski in 'Guibert of Nogent's *How to Preach a Sermon*', *Theological Studies* vol. 59 (1998) pp. 407-419.

<sup>36</sup> PL vol. 156, cols 31C – 84B.

<sup>37</sup> Eligius Buytaert's dating of the text to 1133 has recently been verified by Cizewski; see E.M. Buytaert, 'Abelard's *Expositio in hexaemeron*', *Antonianum* 43 (1968) pp. 163-194 and *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 11. See also Constant Mews, 'On Dating the Works of Peter Abelard', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 52 (1985) pp. 73-134.

<sup>38</sup> After the interpretation of the hexaemeron there is a 'continuatio' which carries on as far as Genesis 2.25 in the most complete of the four extant manuscripts, and Cizewski suggests, given that the continuation breaks off abruptly in all four of the extant copies, that Abelard may have intended the commentary to continue at least as far as the expulsion from paradise; see *Exposition* ed. Cizewski, p. 16-18.

his Genesis commentary has remained surprisingly neglected.<sup>39</sup> Like Guibert, Abelard places the figure of Eve at the ethical crux of his text. However, it is clear that Abelard conceived the exegesis of the creation and fall as a theological enterprise that was significantly different from Guibert's *Moralia*. Abelard's text is largely preoccupied with literal interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis; partly as a development of the work of Augustine, but mostly as an attempt to comprehend the mysteries of creation by examining the created things themselves. His representation of Eve reflects a shift from Guibert's focus on the individual soul to a focus on mankind as a whole, and the position mankind occupied within the carefully calibrated order of the created universe. As has already been mentioned briefly, Abelard's treatment of Eve occurs in the context of a broader debate about the nature of sin and the ethical processes which afflict the tempted soul; thus Eve emerges as a crucial part of a wider philosophical examination which evidently sits more appropriately alongside his work on ethics than it does alongside his views on women. Although the description of Eve as being dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men is clearly gendered, the issues which her actions raise are not. Eve's dilemma is re-enacted in every human soul which experiences temptation and confronts the choice between the act of sin and the act of virtue; virtue being, for Abelard, a conscious, deliberate and active mental and spiritual operation.

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<sup>39</sup> In addition to Cizewski's translation of the text and Buytaert op. cit., there is Eileen Kearney, 'Peter Abelard as Biblical Commentator: A Study of the *Expositio in hexameron*' in *Petrus Abaelardus (1079-1142): Person, Werk und Wirkung*, ed. Rudolph Thomas, Trierer Theologische Studien 38 (Trier: Paulinus, 1980) pp. 199-210. None of these focus on the representation of Eve. The text is also discussed briefly elsewhere in the context of Abelard's work more generally - Marenbon cites the *Expositio in hexameron* alongside the *Problemata Heloissae* as being indicative of the apparent level of theological sophistication which characterised teaching at the Paraclete, and questions Peter Dronke's suggestion that these texts are largely personal communications composed on the pretext of academic enquiry. He also convincingly suggests that the *Expositio* comprises a summary of what Abelard taught in the schools on the hexameron, refuting Eligius Buytaert's suggestion that the *Expositio* represents a simplification of this teaching in order to suit a 'wider' (i.e. less educated) audience. See Marenbon *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard*, pp. 77-79; Dronke, *Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1992) pp. 308-9; Buytaert, 'Abelard's *Expositio in hexameron*', p. 182.

Around the same time as that the *Expositio* was written, Hugh of St Victor constructed his monumental *summa*, *De sacramentis Christianae fidei*.<sup>40</sup> Long regarded as one of the most influential theological texts of the middle ages, several recent studies have emphasised the significance of the creation and fall narratives in this text and throughout Hugh's work more broadly.<sup>41</sup> *De sacramentis* discusses the hexaemeral narrative, and that of the fall and expulsion, as part of a wider theological enterprise concerned with providing a systematic analysis of the sacraments and their corresponding doctrine. Like Abelard, Hugh treats Eve's creation and sin as fundamentally instructive, although his approach differs in numerous significant ways. Hugh's account of Eve's creation places considerable emphasis on the notion of the Eve's prelapsarian parity with Adam. Like Abelard, he is an early proponent of the view that Eve's creation from the rib, rather than the head or feet, of Adam indicated that they were, in spite of their different levels of strength, essentially equal in the eyes of God.<sup>42</sup> Hugh's interpretation of the fall is preoccupied with the notion that Eve relinquished a privileged state of knowledge and awareness rather than with defining sin, or virtue, itself. However, when compared with Guibert's *Moralia*, the representations of Eve constructed by both Abelard and Hugh demonstrate an identifiable shift in intellectual priorities - Hugh and Abelard seek not only to interpret Eve's creation and sin, but to ask and explain why and how these processes occurred.

Similar in scope if not execution to *De sacramentis* is Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*, which Hildegard worked on for the best part of a decade between the years

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<sup>40</sup> For dating and manuscript tradition, see Berndt's introduction to his edition, op. cit. pp. 16-19.

<sup>41</sup> Boyd Taylor Coolman, *The Theology of Hugh of St Victor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp. 31-78; Paul Rorem, *Hugh of St Victor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) pp. 38-52, 69-72, and 75-79; Coolman and Dale M. Coulter eds, *Trinity and Creation: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Richard and Adam of St Victor*, Victorine Texts in Translation (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 35.

c.1141 and c.1151.<sup>43</sup> *Scivias* is difficult to attach to any particular genre, but can best be described as a very early theological *summa* executed in the form of a series of visions beginning with the creation and fall, in which the author claims to have been a conduit of the word of God. However, *Scivias* is generally approached as uniquely visionary text composed by a marginalised female mystic who supposedly provides ‘a rare feminine voice soaring above the patriarchal choirs’.<sup>44</sup> Hildegard’s representation of Eve as a wing-shaped cloud in *Scivias* has attracted some scholarly attention, which has largely served to isolate the text even further by failing to contextualise Hildegard’s interpretation alongside comparable contemporary commentary on the creation and fall narratives.<sup>45</sup> Disproportionate emphasis on Hildegard’s gender and her supposed originality has obscured her exegetical work, overshadowing the extent to which her interpretation of the creation and fall both reflects and engages with the principal concerns of other twelfth-century commentaries on Genesis. The representation of Eve as a wing-shaped cloud is unusual, but the theological concerns which precipitated it are

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<sup>43</sup> Newman has commented on the similarity between these two works, stating in her Introduction to the Bishop and Hart translation that ‘Read as a visionary work, *Scivias* is unique; read as a compendium of Christian doctrine, it takes its place alongside many similar works of the period. The closest parallel is provided by Hugh of St Victor’s *summa*, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith...* As an early scholastic who was also noted teacher of contemplation, Hugh bridged the gap between the older monastic theology represented by Hildegard and the newer, more systematic mentality of the schools’, *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 23. The concrete distinction between ‘monastic theology’ and ‘scholastic theology’ is dubious, and it is chronologically impossible for Hugh to bridge any gap between Hildegard’s ‘older monastic’ theology and that of the schools, since *De sacramentis* was completed almost a decade before *Scivias* was even begun. Nonetheless Newman is right to locate *Scivias* in the context of twelfth-century theology rather than treating it as an isolated and atypical text. However, as can be seen in the note below, Newman, unfortunately, does not do so consistently.

<sup>44</sup> Newman, Introduction to *Scivias* ed. Bishop and Hart, p. 10. She also makes the questionable claim that ‘If Hildegard had been a male theologian, her *Scivias* would undoubtedly have been considered one of the most important early medieval *summas*’. Caroline Walker Bynum’s preface to the Bishop and Hart translation claims that Hildegard presents ‘the wellings up of profound female experience’, *ibid.*, p. 5. See also Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine* (California: University of California Press, 1987). Peter Dronke, Charles Burnett, and Constant Mews have produced more nuanced studies of Hildegard’s theology and its context - see Dronke and Burnett, *Hildegard of Bingen: The Context of her Art and Thought* (London: Warburg Institute/University of London, 1998) and Mews, ‘Religious Thinker: “A Frail Human Being” on Fiery Life’ in Newman ed., *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World* (California: University of California Press, 1998) pp. 52 – 69.

<sup>45</sup> See Rebecca Garber, ‘Where is the body? Immitability in Hildegard’s Images of Eve and Mary’, *Feminine Figurae: Representations of Gender in Religious Texts by Medieval German Women Writers* (London: Routledge, 2003) pp. 33-60. Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, pp. 89-132.

not. Hildegard is not the only medieval female author whose work has been affected in this way, as Fiona Griffiths has perceptively observed:

In the past, it was common for women to be excluded from studies of medieval writing (as they were from studies of medieval society more generally). Since the 1970s attempts have been made to remedy this exclusion. However, since they have focused primarily on the addition of women as ancillaries to a traditionally male canon... these attempts have tended simply to perpetuate women's exclusion - both by defining women in opposition to the mainstream and by arguing for their involvement in a separate and even subversive discourse.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, Hildegard is examined here as another commentator on the hexaemeral and fall narratives rather than as 'a medieval female writer'. The differences between the *Scvias* and the other texts discussed here are principally disparities of execution rather than content, and Hildegard's major concerns regarding Eve's creation and sin have much in common structurally and thematically with other major treatments of the figure of Eve composed during this period.

Lombard's *Sententiae* (c.1150-5) represents, alongside Hugh's *De sacramentis*, the 'mainstream' of twelfth-century intellectual and theological writing, and their representations of Eve, whilst they have not attracted a great deal of attention in modern scholarship, would nonetheless have been easily accessible and widely read during the twelfth century and the later middle ages. Lombard shares Abelard's and Hildegard's interest in the idea that Eve's sin 'improved' mankind's standing in the eyes of God.<sup>47</sup> Lombard's earlier clarification of this idea also reveals that even Abelard's apparently unprecedented assertion that Eve's sin made her dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men, actually has its roots in Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*.<sup>48</sup> The hugely influential *Sententiae*, composed during the early to mid-1150s, are Lombard's magnum

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<sup>46</sup> Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Lombard, *Sententiae*, 2. 24, 1.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter III, section I below.

opus, representing high medieval theology at its most systematic and enquiring.<sup>49</sup> Lombard not only addresses the questions Hugh and Abelard sought to ask; he presents a series of authoritative answers. Giulio Silano has written that Lombard's *Sententiae* is best viewed as a medieval casebook whose function was to present an 'anthology' of authoritative potential responses to difficult or frequently raised theological questions.<sup>50</sup> The text thus reflects which sections of the creation and fall narratives were considered particularly significant during this period, and the amount of attention Lombard devotes to the formation and fall of Eve is indicative of her significance. In particular, Eve is a vital component in Lombard's exposition of the way in which the human soul is constructed. According to the *Sententiae*, every soul has an 'Adam' element and an 'Eve' element, and whilst the figure of Eve functions within this discussion as an allegorised representation of the soul's will rather than its reason, it is nonetheless clear that this composition of different spiritual forces is present in every human soul regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides.<sup>51</sup>

Lombard also repeats verbatim Hugh's assertion that Eve was created to be neither slave nor mistress to Adam but his equivalent.<sup>52</sup> An Anglo-Norman redaction of this idea of parity in creation appears in the *Mystère d'Adam*, in which the voice of God declares to Adam that Eve is 'your wife and your peer'.<sup>53</sup> The mid to late twelfth-century *Mystère d'Adam*, also known as the *Jeu d'Adam* or the *Ordo representacionis Ade*, comprises nine-hundred and forty-four lines of vernacular exegesis, most of which (lines 1-588) is devoted to the creation of Adam and Eve, the first sin, and the expulsion

<sup>49</sup> According to Giulio Silano, the earliest known manuscript is dated 1158 by its scribe; see Lombard, trans. Silano, *The Sentences Book 1: The Mystery of the Trinity* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007) p. xiii. Studies of Lombard include Joseph de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle : sa préparation lointaine avant et autour de Pierre Lombard, ses rapports avec les initiatives des canonistes; études, recherches et documents* (Bruges: Éditions de Tempel, 1948) and Marcia Colish's *Peter Lombard*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xix-xxvi.

<sup>51</sup> Lombard declares 'in nobis est mulier et vir et serpens', *Sententiae*, 2.24,7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.18, 2.

<sup>53</sup> 'Co est ta femme e tun pareil', *Mystère* ed. Sletsjöe, line 10.

from paradise.<sup>54</sup> The remainder of the text deals with the story of Cain and Abel, and the last section comprises a procession of the prophets. Despite the existence of only one extant manuscript witness, the text has received considerable scholarly attention across several disciplines. There has even been some specific study of the representation of Eve in the play: Maureen Fries has rightly emphasised the complexity of the character, and Kathleen Blumreich-Moore has explored the notion of sin as treason in the play.<sup>55</sup>

All the authors mentioned above employ their discussions of Eve's creation and fall within the context of universally applicable arguments concerning ethics, knowledge, human nature and the mechanics of temptation and abstention. In order to pursue the objectives outlined above, this thesis examines these arguments by arranging its corpus of texts thematically, addressing the main roles with which the figure of Eve was endowed in both her biblical incarnation and within twelfth-century thought. The thesis is structured as follows. The main three chapters are preceded by a survey of relevant secondary literature, in order to situate thesis historiographically, and discuss in detail the lacunae which exist in extant scholarship which employs and discusses the medieval figure of Eve. Chapter I then discusses representations of Eve as the first woman. This chapter demonstrates both the extent to which Eve was conceived as Adam's peer and equivalent rather than his subordinate, and that exegesis of Eve's creation provided a means by which to examine the origins of mankind and the composition of the universe in which they operated. Chapter II discusses representations of Eve as the first wife and mother. This chapter demonstrates the figure of Eve to be a significant component of discourse concerning marriage in the twelfth century, and also

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<sup>54</sup> The text is preserved in a single manuscript (Bibliothèque municipale de Tours 927) which is reproduced in full by Sletsjöe. 'Ordo representacionis Ade' is the title given in the manuscript, f. 20.

<sup>55</sup> Maureen Fries, 'The Evolution of Eve in Medieval French and English Religious Drama', *Studies in Philology* vol. 99, no 1 (2002) pp. 1-16. See pp. 1-5 for her discussion of Eve in the *Mystère d'Adam*'. Kathleen Blumreich-Moore, 'Original Sin as Treason in Act I of the *Mystère d'Adam*', *Philological Quarterly* no 72:2 (1993) pp. 125-141.

discusses the ambiguity of Eve's designation as mother of all the living. Chapter III discusses representations of Eve as the first sinner. This chapter demonstrates that Eve, rather than being vilified as a model of female iniquity, was employed in order to elucidate the mechanics of sin and temptation within the human soul, and that there existed a consistent level of emphasis on the advantages of the first sin.



# THE MEDIEVAL FIGURE OF EVE: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

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## INTRODUCTION

In terms of the extant scholarship relating to the twelfth century, and indeed to the middle ages more broadly, navigating contemporary work on medieval representations of Eve is a surprisingly difficult task for several reasons. Firstly and most importantly, there is remarkably little in the way of a historiographical tradition of writing exclusively or at length on the figure of Eve. In addition, there is virtually no historiographical tradition of writing on the medieval hexaemeral tradition. There also exists the contradictory problem that whilst there has been very little work on the medieval figure of Eve specifically, references to Eve are frequently encountered throughout scholarship on medieval conceptions of gender. If Eve is rarely examined in modern scholarship, she is nonetheless frequently invoked and alluded to: the figure of Eve has become a sort of shorthand for medieval attitudes towards gender. As will be demonstrated below, it is considered so apparently self-evident that Eve lies at the heart of these attitudes, that it has apparently become unnecessary to explore or even to substantiate this assumption. Given the significance with which the idea of Eve is tacitly endowed in these brief but frequent allusions, it is surprising that so little work has been devoted exclusively to it.

In order to situate this thesis and to demonstrate the historiographical contribution that might be made by studying the medieval figure of Eve, this section provides a survey of the extant modern scholarship which deals with medieval

commentary on Genesis, and with the figure of Eve herself. It first discusses the medieval hexaemeral tradition; an area which has traditionally been overlooked. It then discusses scholarship relating to the figure of Eve directly, beginning with the small amount of work devoted exclusively to Eve in the middle ages, followed by the wide and varied body of work which employs Eve as an emblem of 'the feminine' in the middle ages.

#### EXTANT STUDIES OF MEDIEVAL COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

As was mentioned above, the only monograph to have attempted to provide a full survey of hexaemeral commentary is Robbins' *The Hexaemeral Literature: A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis*.<sup>1</sup> Published in 1912, only the last twenty pages of this study are devoted to hexaemeral writing 'from Eriugena to the Renaissance'.<sup>2</sup> There has also been some work completed on Genesis commentary as used by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, but this does not, and is not intended to, offer a great deal of insight into the context and significance of the medieval tradition.<sup>3</sup> In addition, early vernacular and apocryphal treatments of the hexaemeron and expulsion narratives have received some attention thanks to the work of Brian Murdoch, but this work does not address the Latin canon, and nor does it take into consideration the significance of the hexaemeral tradition as a whole.<sup>4</sup> Thus in spite of some interest in Patristic Genesis commentary, the medieval tradition as a whole has been neglected.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 12, note 23.

<sup>2</sup> Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature*, pp. 73-93.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Mary Irma Corcoran, *Milton's Paradise Lost with Reference to the Hexaemeral Background* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1945); J.M. Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Brian Murdoch, *The Fall of Man in the Early Middle High German Biblical Epic: The Wiener Genesis, the Vorauer Genesis and the Aneenge* (A. Kümmerle, 1972); *The Recapitulated Fall: A Comparative Study in Mediaeval Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1974); *Adam's Grace: Fall and Redemption in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000). There is also one chapter devoted to apocrypha concerning Adam and Eve in *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003) pp. 42-69.

This historiographical lacuna was identified as long ago as the early 1980s, in unpublished PhD theses by Gunar Freibergs and Wanda Zemler Cizewski.<sup>5</sup> Cizewski has continued to complete further work on some specific hexaemeral commentaries, which has shed much light on their ability to illuminate the wider intellectual concerns of the twelfth century.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Cizewski's translation of Abelard's *Expositio* forms part of the renewed interest in these texts which has recently begun to emerge. The medieval tradition of commentary on Genesis appears to be burgeoning area of scholarly interest, with several significant studies having emerged in the past few years. As was mentioned above, Conrad Rudolph has drawn attention to the volume of extant twelfth-century material concerned with the creation and fall.<sup>7</sup> Giles Gasper has discussed the creation of light in hexaemeral commentaries from Basil to Lombard, and is preparing, with Greti Dinkova-Bruun, a new survey of the medieval hexaemeral tradition.<sup>8</sup> Emmanuel Bain has discussed the categories of male and female in twelfth-century hexaemeral commentaries in an article which offers an impressively nuanced account of gender in medieval responses to the creation narrative.<sup>9</sup> In addition, several individual medieval commentaries on Genesis have also been recently studied and/or edited.<sup>10</sup> Yet, whilst the medieval hexaemeral tradition appears to be emerging as an

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<sup>5</sup> Gunar Freibergs, 'The Medieval Latin Hexameron from Bede to Grosseteste', PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1981; Wanda Zemler Cizewski, 'The Doctrine of Creation in the First Half of the Twelfth Century: Selected Authors [Rupert of Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis, Peter Abelard and Hugh of St. Victor]', PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, Centre for Medieval Studies, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Beauty and the Beasts: Allegorical Zoology in the Twelfth Century Hexaemeral Literature,' in Haijo Westra ed., *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought, Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeuneau* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 289-300; 'Interpreting the Hexameron: Honorius Augustodunensis *De neocosmo*,' *Florilegium* vol. 7 (1985) pp. 84-108.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolph, 'In the Beginning', passim but particularly p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Giles Gasper, '“Oil upon the waters”: On the Creation of Light from Basil to Peter Lombard', *Archa Verbi* vol. 8 (2011) pp. 9-31. The forthcoming collaboration with Dinkova-Bruun will comprise a survey of the medieval hexameron c. 1070 – 1270.

<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel Bain, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Bede, trans. Calvin B. Kendall, *On Genesis*, Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999); Michael Gorman, 'The Commentary on Genesis of Angelomus of Luxueil and Biblical Studies under Lothar', *Studi Medievali* vol. 40 (1999) pp. 559-632; idem. and Martine Dulaey eds, *Isidorus Episcopus Hispalensis: Expositio in Vetus Testamentum: Genesis* (Freiburg: Herder, 2009);

area of burgeoning interest within medieval cultural and intellectual history, the figure of Eve remains largely absent from this field.

#### EXTANT STUDIES OF THE MEDIEVAL FIGURE OF EVE: DUBY AND FLOOD

An examination of the modern studies devoted specifically to the figure of Eve in the Middle Ages is necessarily brief as far as historiographical surveys go, since there are only two of them: Duby's *Eve and the Church*, and John Flood's *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and the English Middle Ages*. Both these studies have their strong points and shortcomings, but the essential issue with both is that they do not offer a sustained analysis of the position which the figure of Eve occupied in medieval thought, choosing instead to focus exclusively on gender. These studies principally provide short surveys, which devote little attention to commentary on Genesis specifically, or to the wider intellectual and theological contexts in which the medieval figure of Eve was constructed.<sup>11</sup> On account of their neglect of texts which devote full attention to the complex theological and philosophical issues raised by Eve and her role within the narratives of creation and fall, Duby and Flood present a distorted or incomplete assessment of the place of Eve in medieval thought.

Duby's *Eve and the Church* represents a missed historiographical opportunity; namely, the chance to have had one of the greatest medievalists of the twentieth century writing about some of the most compelling texts of the twelfth century. However, the text is problematic in several ways. It does not actually analyse twelfth-century representations of Eve at all, and if it had done so, it would have been enormously

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Kevin Hughes, 'St Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse', *Franciscan Studies* vol. 63 (2005), pp. 108-129.

<sup>11</sup> Duby's study comprises approximately 130 pages and Flood's not much more. Unlike his 'predecessor', Flood acknowledges the parameters of the study, declaring right from the beginning that despite the book's chronological range, its title 'should be hedged about with caveats and qualifications', op. cit., p. 1.

valuable. The following quotation, from Jo Ann McNamara's review of the trilogy, offers some indication of the issues which affect Duby's study:

More in anger than in sorrow, I confront the responsibility of reviewing this posthumous work from one of the most celebrated and productive medievalists of our time. Anger first because a serious university press with an excellent list in the history of women in the Middle Ages would surely never have considered publishing this work had any lesser name appeared on the cover. Moreover, the profit the name can still be expected to engender has been maximised by spreading a modest group of articles over the pretentious spaces of a trilogy entitled *Women of the Twelfth Century*. A share of anger, however, must also be reserved for the author who served up this bit of fluff as the last statement of a great career...[Duby] does not pretend to say anything at all about women living in the twelfth century, and, indeed, makes very little pretence of saying anything about women.<sup>12</sup>

McNamara's claims sound at first to be excessively scathing; however, she is, unfortunately, entirely accurate in her assessment. Reading *Eve and the Church*, one would be forgiven for concluding that the Fall was thought to have occurred merely as a convenient scriptural justification for antifeminist vitriol, and that twelfth-century writing presents sin and corporeality as exclusively female afflictions which demanded ruthless eradication.

Duby insists that Eve, and thus all women, were considered merely 'a receptacle, a womb primed for the germination of the male seed, and that she had no other function than to be impregnated'.<sup>13</sup> The Genesis narrative was, according to Duby, relevant to twelfth-century scholars only insofar as it answered three questions – why humanity is sexual, why humanity is guilty, and why humanity is unhappy. Predictably, the answer according to Duby lies in the faults of Eve, and the faults of all her female descendants.<sup>14</sup> He writes that as far as twelfth-century scholars were concerned, 'the Fall, no doubt, was provoked by the appetite for pleasure', and that 'the men of the

<sup>12</sup> Jo Ann McNamara, 'Review: Women of the Twelfth Century by Georges Duby', *Speculum* vol. 74, no. 3 (1999) pp. 732-33; p. 732.

<sup>13</sup> Duby, *Eve and the Church*, pp. 36.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

Church were afraid of women'.<sup>15</sup> He maintains that 'in the last analysis, the priests used the words of Eve, her actions and the sentence that condemned her as an excuse to load the burden of sin onto women in order to disburden men', since Eve had 'doubly sinned' and was 'therefore doubly punished, not only, like Adam, by physical pain, but by her subjection to male power'.<sup>16</sup> At certain points in the text it is difficult to tell whether Duby is criticising, repeating, or even defending, the misogyny he finds to be so apparently ubiquitous; for example, in his claim that Eve 'deserved to be the mother of the dead'.<sup>17</sup> All the statements quoted above are presented as being completely and axiomatically accurate: 'this then', he declares, 'was how the most learned priests of the twelfth century responded in the face of Eve and her troubles'.<sup>18</sup> Despite having failed to devote any substantial attention to twelfth-century commentaries on Genesis, or indeed to any text which offers a sustained, systematic treatment of the theological position occupied by women more broadly, *Eve and the Church* presents a portrait of a high medieval Church fuelled by misogynistic contempt, intent on corrupting and distorting the image of the female who is the object of frustrated desire and loathing in equal measure.

The crucial question of where the evidence for all of this is to be found is one about which the text remains silent, since it contains no critical apparatus at all. Even the direct quotations are completely unreferenced: there are no footnotes or citations of any kind. There is not even a bibliography. McNamara is perhaps unnecessarily caustic in describing the trilogy as 'a series of short articles, without notes or bibliography of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. pp. 39 and 78.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 46 and 38.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 41. I do not wish to labour a point here, but see also p. 36, '[Eve was] only a wife and above all a mother, a receptacle, a womb, primed for the germination of the male seed'; p. 39, Adam was not seduced and 'he did not talk nonsense'; p. 42, 'All women, even the saintliest, with the exception of the mother of God, conceived and conceive in iniquity, in filth and in sin, not only original sin but that incited by their own desire for sexual pleasure'; p. 57 describes female virginity as a 'refusal' of 'social duty', i.e. the female 'duty' to accept being reduced to 'a receptacle, a womb'.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

any sort, suitable for airplane magazines', but her criticism is not unjustified.<sup>19</sup> The text's main purpose appears to be the repetition of tedious platitudes relating to medieval clerics and their supposed hatred of all women who happened not to be the mother of Christ. As McNamara says, the trilogy in general says very little about twelfth-century women, as was supposedly its aim, but *Eve and the Church*, in addition to this, says very little about the figure of Eve. It hardly seems worth lamenting that the text entirely neglects to contextualise its questionable selection of fragments which mention Eve, or that it goes so far as to admit that the Genesis narrative, or at least the hexaemeron component thereof, 'contained the seeds of a spiritual promotion of women' and then subsequently ignores this line of enquiry. In spite of its title, the text evidently never aimed to provide a full and measured analysis of representations of Eve, or to readdress the common conception of Eve in the Middle Ages by taking into account the texts which challenge the idea of endemic clerical misogyny. This represents a most unfortunately wasted opportunity - even at one hundred and thirty pages, had Duby actually discussed Eve and the Church, it would no doubt have proved enormously enlightening. Instead, the text stands in contradiction to everything that the last few decades' worth of scholarship (including his own) on high medieval gender, identity, and mentality sought to do, and succeeded in achieving.

Until very recently, *Eve and the Church* was the only full length study (ostensibly) focusing on the figure of Eve explicitly. This has recently been rectified by the publication of John Flood's *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and the English Middle Ages*. This succinct text traces the traditions of writing about Eve from the major Patristic authors, with an understandable focus on the work of Augustine, to the time of Chaucer and Dante, including a chapter discussing the much neglected genre of

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<sup>19</sup> McNamara, op. cit., p. 732.

defences of Eve.<sup>20</sup> With the exceptions of Peter Lombard and Peter Comestor, the writings of the twelfth century are generally overlooked. Given the study's intended emphasis on medieval texts in English, it skips chronologically from a chapter on 'The Anglo-Saxon Eve' to one on 'Later Medieval Theology'.<sup>21</sup> However, this is an enormously useful study insofar as it establishes firstly the utility of studying the figure of Eve, and secondly in identifying the textual and methodological issues involved in doing so. Flood identifies and critiques the inconsistency in modern scholarship which employs the figure of Eve as a form of unthinkingly inaccurate shorthand, or an insufficiently researched allusion:

[Eve] appears as a backdrop where she is taken for granted but left unexamined. When, as is common, scholarly books or articles make a passing reference to Eve to explain some aspect of gender differences, they should specify to which Eve they are referring. Yes, it is true that the majority of accounts of her were negative, but they were negative in significantly different ways. At the same time, the positive depictions of Eve should not be forgotten. Eve is useful neither as shorthand for women nor for the oppression of women; her history is too rich and varied.<sup>22</sup>

Flood also points out that any reader seeking to find feminist ideals within a medieval text will inevitably find themselves disappointed, even by the more positive representations of Eve:

From the outset... it should be stated that medieval 'profeminism' is always deficient when examined by a modern reader; for example, there are several interpretations of the Genesis story that are positively disposed towards Eve, but they stop short of gender equality: they are inherently patriarchal.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp. 81-91. Defences of Eve have been examined by Alcuin Blamires; see 'Eve and the Privileges of Women', in his *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) pp. 96-125.

<sup>21</sup> Flood, *Representations of Eve* pp. 49-64 and 65-80.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 3.



Nonetheless, to disregard such texts as revealing nothing but arrant misogyny is neither just nor useful: ‘fortunate in living in a time when equality of the sexes is at least the stated aim of society, it is too easy to look back and score easy points with straightforward literary-critical analysis of ancient and medieval works’.<sup>24</sup>

However, Flood’s study is predicated on the notion that representations of Eve can elucidate nothing more than perceptions of women and of gender, and that the Genesis narrative has been variously manipulated in order to construct them. The narrow and reductive nature of this approach does a disservice to the fascinating diversity of material that Flood assembles, and undermines his convincing assertion that Eve is too significant a figure to be used merely as ‘shorthand for women or the for the oppression of women’.<sup>25</sup> ‘Because the centre of this book is the first woman’, the introduction states, ‘it is silent about many of the great themes to be found in Genesis (such as the nature of evil and divine providence)’.<sup>26</sup> It is the main contention of this thesis that this argument can, and indeed should, be completely reversed – that, on the contrary, representations of Eve actively demand and develop discourse concerning the major themes of Genesis, rather than silencing them. Certainly in the case of the twelfth-century texts which provide the basis of the present study, it is precisely *because* the figure of Eve is under discussion that major themes such as the nature of evil arise.

Flood inadvertently highlights this in his brief description of Peter Lombard’s representation of Eve in the *Sententiae*:

Following the precedent of earlier twelfth-century sentence collection, Lombard constructed a systematically organised body of theology drawn mostly from the writings of the Church Fathers. These included Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory, Bede, Chrysostom, Origen and Isidore of Seville. For the history of the representation of Eve, Lombard is a hinge figure. He ensures the influence of particular Patristic passages while inspiring his commentators to further elaboration of the themes he

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

chose. ...In distinction twelve, he begins an account of the six days, commenting on the formation of man in distinction sixteen and the production of woman in distinction eighteen before he goes on to consider the Fall. *In the process he discusses various topics related to issues in Genesis including causation, providence and free will*, but the focus here will be exclusively on matters related to gender.<sup>27</sup>

Here, the figure of Eve clearly belongs at the centre of both twelfth-century scholastic methodology and of the twelfth century's intellectual and theological priorities. It is evident from this passage that constructing representations of Eve was, at least for Lombard and other twelfth-century commentators, a fundamental part of the onerous theological enterprise of Genesis commentary, and the numerous problematic issues that the Genesis narrative provoked. Flood is entirely correct to emphasise the fact that examining Eve and her role in the creation and fall inevitably raises wider ethical questions relating to free will, action, grace and temptation.<sup>28</sup> It thus seems something of a wasted opportunity to gloss over these other issues in favour of focussing explicitly on the topic of gender. This becomes particularly apparent alongside his insightful survey of the reasons why the figure of Eve is too significant and why 'her history is too rich and varied' to remain a mere shorthand for women or the ways in which they have been oppressed.<sup>29</sup>

By divorcing representations of Eve, and the texts which construct them, from their context of wider medieval discussion of the major themes of the Genesis narrative, Flood risks distorting or marginalising them. Representations of Eve are a component of responses to the narratives of the creation and fall, and thus cannot ever really be separated from their theological and philosophical setting without reducing their utility

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 67 (Italics mine).

<sup>28</sup> See also *ibid.* pp. 67-8, in which Flood also asserts that one of Lombard's major concerns revolves around 'explaining the human psychology involved in the Fall' and his concern 'to provide a more literal psychological account of Genesis 2-3', which again suggests that despite his explicit emphasis on gender, Flood is aware that this is really only one component of a much wider theological and intellectual endeavour.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and impact. In addition, separating representations of Eve from the context of wider Genesis-related debates which are not focused on gender is likely to exacerbate the impulse to relegate them to being ‘shorthand for the oppression of women’; a problematic approach which Flood rightly and eloquently identifies as being reductive and insufficiently rigorous. To say that representations of Eve need to be fully examined simply because they are all ‘negative in significantly different ways’ gives insufficient credit to the complexity and illuminating qualities of the texts in question.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the assertion that all medieval responses to the figure of Eve were negative is itself questionable.

#### ‘THE MYTH OF EVE’: THE USE OF EVE AS AN EMBLEM OF ‘WOMAN’ AND AS THE CAUSE OF MISOGYNY

Although Duby and Flood are the only scholars who have discussed the medieval figure of Eve exclusively and at length, their emphasis on gender, and their lack of attention to many of the wider issues raised by Eve’s role in the Genesis narrative, is representative of the way in which Eve is alluded to throughout modern scholarship on medieval conceptions of gender and the position of women. Discussions of medieval representations of Eve are usually limited to discourse on gender and misogyny, and assume Eve to be the cause of and justification for misogyny throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. As will be demonstrated below, there remains the assumption that the figure of Eve provoked nothing more than misogynistic sentiment from medieval writers and their readers. More concerning, however, is the equally prevalent tendency to be guided by this assumption without verifying and contextualising the necessary sources, or indeed in some cases, without even quoting any of them first hand. As Flood rightly points out, Eve has simply come to be synonymous with women and their

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

subjugation.<sup>31</sup>

The majority of modern scholarship on the Middle Ages which employs the figure of Eve does so as part of a wider argument concerning gender or misogyny in the middle ages. The use of Eve in this way has shaped modern perceptions of the medieval figure of Eve as a repository of antifeminist ideas, or as a convenient emblem of medieval women in general. This perception and use of the medieval figure of Eve is rarely based on analysis of medieval texts which systematically examine the creation and fall narratives. However, the assumption that medieval representations of Eve will, almost by definition, be misogynistic, has rarely been challenged.

There is a long standing tradition in feminist scholarship of associating the figure of Eve with the development of Western misogyny. Simone de Beauvoir exemplifies the use of the figure of Eve as an emblem for the oppression of women at the hands of patriarchal systems which were considered to have their origins in early Christianity and scriptural misogyny. In *Le deuxième sexe*, Beauvoir asserts that

The woman seems the most formidable temptation of the Devil. Tertullian wrote: 'Woman, you are the gateway of the Devil. You persuaded him whom the Devil dared not attack directly. It is because of you that even the son of God had to die; you should always go about in mourning clothes and rags'. Saint Ambrose: 'Adam was driven to sin by Eve and not Eve by Adam. It is just that she receive as sovereign the one whom she drove to sin'. From [the time of] Gregory VI, when celibacy was imposed on priests, the dangerous character of the woman is more severely emphasised: all the Fathers of the Church proclaim her abjection.<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, *Le deuxième sexe* was not intended to provide an interpretation of the figure

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> 'La femme apparaît comme la plus redoutable tentation du démon. Tertullian écrit : « Femme, tu es la porte du diable. Tu as persuadé celui que le diable n'osait attaquer en face. C'est à cause de toi que le fils de Dieu a dû mourir; tu devrais toujours t'en aller vêtue de deuil et de haillons. » Saint Ambroise: «Adam a été conduit au péché par Eve et non Eve par Adam. Celui que la femme a conduit au péché, il est juste qu'elle le reçoive comme souverain. » ...A partir de Grégoire VI, lorsque le célibat a été imposé aux prêtres, le caractère dangereux de la femme est plus sévèrement souligné : tous les Pères de l'Église proclament son abjection', Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000) vol. I, p. 157. (Translation mine). It is of course equally possible to argue that modern feminist interpretation of the Genesis narrative began with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 1895 *Woman's Bible*.

of Eve, or a definitive examination of the role of women in any one specific period or genre. Consequently, Beauvoir's use of the figure of Eve is not underpinned by lengthy study of the Patristic texts she cites in her description of Eve. However, Eve has been consistently employed in this way throughout texts which do intend to provide a comprehensive assessment of the theological position occupied by women. Henderson *et al.* convincingly argue that Beauvoir's discussion of Eve and the way in which she relates it to the concept of woman 'other' was a directly formative influence particularly on Phyllis Trible.<sup>33</sup> From *Le deuxième sexe* onwards, the figure of Eve became a significant element in feminist theory. She became, for feminist theology and feminist theory more broadly, both an icon to be 'reclaimed' as a model of independent thought and curiosity, and an emblem of patriarchal oppression.<sup>34</sup>

This problematic approach is discernible throughout numerous subsequent responses to the figure of Eve which are concerned with medieval Christianity and its attitude toward gender and the position of women. In the preface to 1974 edited volume tellingly entitled *Religion and Sexism*, Rosemary Radford Ruether declared that

Eve's fall represents the de-humanization of women under patriarchy and patriarchal religion since the beginning of civilization... This is the history of the shattered image, because woman, in being made to represent the projections of what men are not, his fears and aspirations, became a mirror-being without real selfhood of her own, the amalgam of the contradictions of men. Simultaneously the 'Devil's Gateway' and the

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<sup>33</sup>Ronald Henderson, Chana Kronfeld, and Ilana Pardes, 'Gender and Sexuality' in Henderson ed., *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 71- Henderson et al., 'Gender and Sexuality', p. 71. On Trible and Eve, see below pp. 41 – 3.

<sup>34</sup>The significance of the figure of Eve to feminist thought is of course not confined to theological analyses. Eve was at the heart of feminist critique of patriarchy more generally, since it was considered to be rooted in Western Christianity and deeply indebted to the notion of women having been created to be inferior to men. This feminist view of Eve appears even as far back as Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* (1792), in which Wollstonecraft states that 'the prevailing opinion, that woman was created for man, may have taken its rise from Moses's poetical story [i.e. the hexaemeron]', and proceeds to criticise the idea that Eve was intended to represent women in general and to ratify their inferior status; see Mary Wollstonecraft ed. Sylvana Tomaselli, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp. 95-6, and also 88-9. For a second wave feminist discussion of Eve and biblical patriarchy and misogyny, see for example Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000; first published 1969) pp. 52-5.

Virgin Mother, the hated and the adored, woman becomes, in Western mythology, a chimera without substance.<sup>35</sup>

At least as far as the Middle Ages are concerned, this is manifestly not the case, as even a cursory reading of some medieval analyses of Eve's fall would have proved. Nevertheless, this view of Eve is often encountered in feminist theology.<sup>36</sup> In the same volume, Eleanor McLaughlin calls attention to the problems surrounding this type of approach. At the beginning of her considerably more nuanced article, McLaughlin criticises the persistent tendency for modern scholarship on women and the Church to fabricate a gloomy image of ubiquitous medieval misogyny, without having embarked upon sufficient investigation of the sources. She writes that 'those few books on women and the Church that include a chapter on the Middle Ages', of which, incidentally, *Religion and Sexism* is one, 'paint an undifferentiated and quite unanalytical picture of medieval misogyny'.<sup>37</sup> Ruether's extravagant claims of rampant misogyny and calculated dehumanisation provide an excellent example of the 'undifferentiated and quite unanalytical picture' which McLaughlin identifies.

There are numerous additional examples of modern treatments of medieval gender which correspond to McLaughlin's assessment insofar as they assume that the medieval figure of Eve was axiomatically represented negatively, but do not offer evidence to substantiate this assumption. R Howard Bloch, for instance, begins his study of medieval misogyny and gender with the perceptive criticism that

Antifeminism... is a mode of thought often taken for granted; one that, when acknowledged, is often analysed superficially... A failure to

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<sup>35</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> See for example Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narrative* (Norwich, SCM-Canterbury Press, 2002); Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Mary: The Feminine Face of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Minnesota: Beacon Press, 1983) and more recently, idem, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (London: SCM Press, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Eleanor McLaughlin, 'Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes' in Radford ed., *Religion and Sexism* pp. 213-267; see p. 213.

recognise the topic can itself be a source of misogyny by leaving the way open to the kinds of unconscious complicities to which none of us is immune.<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, whilst he confidently claims that Eve is ‘the originary moment - the cause and justification - of medieval antifeminism’, the remainder of his study disregards Genesis commentaries, and indeed any other sustained theological treatments of Eve and the Fall that were composed after the time of Augustine.<sup>39</sup> A comparable example can be found in Barbara Newman’s ‘Flaws in the Golden Bowl’, in which she states that ‘another recurrent topos [in medieval writing about women] is the denunciation of curiosity, with woman as its symbol... and its chief exemplars were Dinah and Eve’. She goes on to explain Bernard of Clairvaux’s use of Dinah as an exemplar of curiosity, but does not explain anything further about the representation of Eve. According to Newman, Eve’s being presented as an archetype of the weak and wayward woman led astray by her intellectual and moral deficiencies is so self-evidently universal that there is nothing to be gained from investigating it further:

Examples of [such] casual misogyny could be multiplied, but this particular dead horse has already been well beaten. The ‘weak woman’ topos may have been such a familiar cliché that some users scarcely perceived it as misogynist, any more than some people today would perceive it as racist to speak of blackening a person’s character. Even writers who generally exalted women, like Abelard and Hildegard of Bingen, made use of the topos.<sup>40</sup>

No references are provided for any of these statements. Likewise, Judith M. Bennett, although a medievalist writing eloquently about the role of feminist thought in historical practice, employs the reductive dichotomy of the temptress Eve and the Virgin Mary as being representative of medieval attitudes towards women: ‘defamed and defended,

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<sup>38</sup> Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny*, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> Barbara Newman, ‘Flaws in the Golden Bowl’, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) pp. 19-45; see p. 25.

attacked and praised, caricatured as Eve and venerated as the Virgin, medieval women were both fully human and profoundly other'.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Simon Gaunt, in his study of gender in medieval French texts, quotes Joan Wallach Scott's excellent assertion that as historians 'we need a refusal of the fixed and permanent quality of the binary opposition, a genuine historicisation and deconstruction of the terms of sexual difference', whilst on the exact same page he declares that medieval attitudes to women were shaped by 'the dominant symbols of Eve and Mary throughout the Middle Ages'.<sup>42</sup> Peggy McCracken, although she titles her text *The Curse of Eve*, devotes more attention to the analysis of Alice Cooper's lyrics than she does to the examination of the unsubstantiated Eve/Mary dichotomy on which much of her thesis relies.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, despite some attention having been drawn to the problem, the 'undifferentiated and unanalytical picture of medieval misogyny' identified by McLaughlin, combined with neglect of relevant sources, is still a dominant characteristic of discussion relating to the medieval figure of Eve. The extent to which this remains the case can be seen in the use of the 'devils's gateway' phrase employed by Ruether in the passage quoted above. This provides a usefully specific example of the way in which the 'myth of Eve' prevails, and indeed can do so to the point where its apparently unassailable veracity overrides any perceived need to provide context or justification.

Tertullian has become somewhat notorious for his description of Eve as the 'gateway of the devil'.<sup>44</sup> This, it seems, is largely thanks to Simone de Beauvoir having

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<sup>41</sup> Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) p. 146.

<sup>42</sup> Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender and Medieval Literature* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) pp. 1-3. See for example pp. 4 or 68 for reliance on unsubstantiated views of Eve and her relationship to the Virgin Mary.

<sup>44</sup> 'Et Euam te esse nescis? ...Tu es diaboli janua, tu es arboris illius resignatrix, tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix, tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non ualuit, tu imaginem Dei, hominem, tam



employed this excerpt in the well-known and often quoted passage on Patristic misogyny in *Le deuxième sexe*, as mentioned above. These lines tend to be presented as providing such a self-evidently accurate representation of pre-modern attitudes towards Eve, and to women in general, that it is quoted regardless of the seemingly obvious problems involved in employing a Patristic sartorial diatribe as useful evidence in the context of discourse on medieval theology and/or gender. In addition, it is never established, or indeed even raised as a possible question, whether or not the text was actually read by the medieval authors who supposedly assimilated its sentiments without question. Again, Bloch is an excellent example of a scholar who makes frequent use of these lines, using them as an emblematic representation of medieval views of Eve, and of women more generally, without having considered the problems raised by so doing, despite his otherwise rigorous approach to his material.<sup>45</sup> There are many examples of scholarship on gender which uses this quotation in much the same way.<sup>46</sup>

However, *De cultu feminarum* is a minor tract on clothing which, unlike Tertullian's more significant works, does not concern itself with the theology of creation or that of original sin, nor indeed with any of the complex theological issues these topics raise. In fact, *De cultu feminarum* does not appear in a single extant manuscript

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facile elisisti: propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius Dei mori habuit ...' Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*, ed. E. Kroyman, CCSL 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954) 1.1, 16 - 21.

<sup>45</sup> For example, see *Medieval Misogyny* pp. 40, 68, 73-75, 89-91, and 146. Chapter Three of the text is also entitled 'The Devil's Gateway and the Bride of Christ', pp. 65-92.

<sup>46</sup> A selection of the numerous examples include Tina Beattie, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate: A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation* (London: Continuum, 2002) (Reprint of Bristol University Press 1999 edn) p. 96; John Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France Around 1200* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 21; Elizabeth Ann Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990) p. 38; Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 47; Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1994) p. 79; Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997) p. 99; Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words; Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press/Boydell and Brewer, 1999) p. 24; June Hall McCash, 'Mutual Love as a Medieval Ideal', ed. Keith Busby and Erik Kooper, *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context*, Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature vol. 25, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990) pp. 429-438; see p. 431.

between the ninth century and the fifteenth.<sup>47</sup> It seems unlikely, therefore, that it was widely read throughout the middle ages, or that it had a great deal of impact on forming medieval representations of Eve and of women. Tellingly, ‘the devil’s gateway’ line is usually quoted in translation or from secondary sources and without any attempt to establish its context or its likely medieval readership. The lines are often cited from translations of the text, with no attempt to present the line in its original form, or indeed reproduced without any references being provided at all, which indicates the extent to which it has become uncritically accepted as accurate.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, it is presented without any attempt to establish some justification for presuming this obscure and anachronistic text to be useful evidence for the exploration of medieval attitudes toward Eve. It seems to be considered sufficient simply to quote the passage, without offering any appreciable sense of how widely known this short polemic was even amid Patristic scholarship, let alone how widely it was read by the medieval commentators who are apparently thought to have unthinkingly accepted its claims.

#### CHALLENGING REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE: TRIBLE, HIGGINS AND BLAMIRE

Trible’s ‘Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation’ represents the first academic

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<sup>47</sup> *De cultu feminarum* appears in the ninth-century Agobardinus collection (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1622) and does not appear again until the *Editio M. Mesnartii* in 1545; see the manuscript survey and also Tabula II in Dekkers’ CCCM edition of Tertullian’s works: Tertullian, *Opera* ed. E Dekkers, CCCM 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954) pp. 6-9. See also Marie Turcan, ‘La tradition manuscrite de Tertullien à propos du *De cultu feminarum*’, *Revue des Études Latines* vol. 44 (1966) pp. 363-372.

<sup>48</sup> Of the examples given in the note above, Beattie, who describes the text as being ‘widely quoted in feminist critiques of Patristic theology’ but gives no examples of this, quotes from a translation without giving a page number, op. cit. p. 96 and p. 111 for the citation; Robinson references the lines as being quoted by Marina Warner, op. cit. p. 204; Warner herself refers to a translation with no page reference, see *Alone of All Her Sex* (New York: Vintage, 1983) note 18 to p. 58, on p. 371; Jantzen gives a reference to Barbara MacHaffie’s revealingly titled *Readings in Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992) which references a translation with adequate apparatus, but which presents the text as a crucial representative of medieval attitudes, see p. 27; Baldwin gives no reference at all but maintains that the passage typifies medieval views of Eve and of women; Haskins quotes from a translation but does give page numbers, op.cit. p. 416; Gregg also takes the passage from Warner’s *Alone of All Her Sex*, op. cit. p 246; Voaden quotes a translation, op. cit. p.24; McCash provides no reference at all and does not even acknowledge the lines to be a quotation, but again presents them as exemplifying medieval views of Eve and of women.

refutation of the idea that representations of Eve and exegesis of the creation and fall were inevitably written from a misogynistic perspective.<sup>49</sup> Tribble argues that the hexaemeron, and the creation of Eve in particular, has been appropriated by modern writers who have employed it to serve religious or ideological agendas, at the expense of analysis and a rigorous approach to the actual texts alluded to.<sup>50</sup> Feminist interpreters are equally guilty of this, according to Tribble, and she singles out both Kate Millett and Mary Daly for criticism.<sup>51</sup>

Crucially, Tribble writes that ‘interpretation is often circular. Believing that the text affirms male dominance and female subordination, commentators find evidence for this view’.<sup>52</sup> This may seem reasonably obvious, however, this statement identifies a persistent problem with modern interpretations of the figure of Eve and the way she was perceived in the past; namely, that they are a map of the reader’s own mentality rather than the result of close consultation of primary sources. This is to some extent an inevitable aspect of any form of exegetical criticism, but Tribble’s thesis remains pertinent.

Consequently, despite the fact that Tribble focuses on direct scriptural interpretation rather than Patristic or medieval commentary, the approach she outlines in this seminal text is germane to the examination of the figure of Eve in any period. Tribble’s ‘Depatriarchalizing’ is significant in its identification of a problem that persists in modern scholarship which employs the figure of Eve in arguments about medieval conceptions of gender, namely the extent to which it is characterised by the

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<sup>49</sup> Phyllis Tribble, ‘Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1973) pp. 30 - 48. Also, the lecture which preceded and introduced the approach which this seminal article advances was published in 1993 as ‘Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread’ in *Eve and Adam: Jewish Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*, ed. Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999) pp. 431-438. (Unfortunately for the present study, the only medieval Christian authors discussed in this volume are Thomas Aquinas and Christine de Pisan).

<sup>50</sup> Tribble, ‘Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation’, pp. 30-35.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

unacknowledged but prevalent presumption that the figure of Eve and the spectre of misogyny are both ubiquitous and inevitable in medieval thought, but that analysing and interrogating them is entirely unnecessary. Tribble attributes this problem to ‘the dangers of eisegesis’; that is, the tendency to examine a text and see only conformation of one’s extant beliefs and opinions.<sup>53</sup>

Following Tribble, Jean Higgins drew further attention to the problems surrounding the assumption of misogyny and the figure of Eve. In an article entitled ‘The Myth of Eve: The Temptress’, Higgins identified and challenged ‘the myth of the temptress’ and the ways in which it has distorted approaches to the representation of Eve.<sup>54</sup> The main premise of the article is that approaches to the figure of Eve have been informed by preconceived ideas and assumptions about lust and misogyny, and that there is simply no scriptural basis for depicting Eve as a temptress and seductress since the account in Genesis states merely that Eve ‘took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat’.<sup>55</sup> Representations of Eve as an enticing and destructive femme fatale, Higgins asserts, ‘cannot be explained except in terms of each commentator’s own presuppositions and cultural expectations’, since there is so little in the biblical text to support such interpretation.<sup>56</sup>

However, Higgins’ approach is somewhat problematic. There does not appear to be any particular rationale behind her choice of evidence, and she assumes (or at least, she provides no evidence to challenge the idea) that every post-Biblical depiction of Eve, from Tertullian to Gerhard von Rad, is motivated by an anti-feminine

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<sup>53</sup> Tribble, ‘Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation’, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> See note 11 above.

<sup>55</sup> ‘[Eva] tulit de fructu illius et comedit deditque viro suo qui comedit’, Genesis 3.6.

<sup>56</sup> Higgins, ‘Myth of Eve’, p. 647.

preoccupation with temptation and lust. The article attempts neither to explain why this might be the case, or what it might reveal about the authors of these depictions, beyond their desire to flesh out the narrative of the fall. This compromises the validity and significance of her overall argument, firstly because some evidence of more affirmative representations of Eve would have further emphasised the potentially revealing divergences and inaccuracies of the representations she does cite, and secondly because hardly any of the extensive evidence employed is taken from sustained analyses of the creation and fall. She overlooks the complex and measured representations of Eve which can be found in favour of selecting fragments which support her overall thesis. This undermines her criticism of those whose use of Eve privileges their own agendas over analysis of primary sources.

Higgins' pre-modern sources range from the writings of Tertullian to the *Malleus maleficarum*, via Heloise, Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Jacques de Vitry, *inter alia*, all examined through dislocated excerpts and brief or truncated quotations. Whilst this range is usefully varied, what the article gains in diversity it loses in consistency as a result: Higgins is right to draw attention to the dominant trend in modern scholarship of vilifying Eve without sufficient textual evidence, but it is precisely this disorganised and poorly-chosen corpus of platitudes and decontextualised fragments that she herself employs in order to lay the blame for this tradition on early scriptural commentators. These excerpts can hardly be said to represent the full extent of Patristic and medieval engagement with the creation and fall narratives and the complex theological issues they involve, and thus it is unfair to criticise them as 'expressions of imagination, drawn mainly from each commentator's

own presuppositions'.<sup>57</sup> It is illogical to confine a corpus to diatribes, conduct texts and personal correspondence, and then to opine that the representation of significant theological figures found throughout this corpus is weak and unsubstantiated.

An additional exception the general tendencies encountered in approaches to the medieval figure of Eve can be found in the work of Alcuin Blamires. His study entitled *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* seeks to redress the balance and assemble evidence for a medieval tradition of writing favourably about women, and part of this endeavour includes a chapter entitled 'Eve and the Privileges of Women'.<sup>58</sup> This chapter offers a brief but crucial survey of texts which are rarely discussed – those which offer generous analyses, or even outright defences, of Eve. The chapter employs a wide range of examples from Augustine to Christine de Pisan, including some references to Peter Lombard and Hugh of St Victor, but as with Higgins's study, the evidence is generally rather fragmented.

This is essentially the problem, as well as the strength, of the chapter: it runs the risk of imposing an alluring consistency and sense of logical progression on a selection of excerpts which are not quite so widespread or unified as they initially seem. For example, the main tenets of the chapter – the 'privileges of women' to which the title refers – are based on a list of items which describe the ways in which the creation of Eve means that women are in fact superior to men. The list runs as follows. Firstly, Eve is created from bone, a far more refined substance than the limo terrae from Adam was moulded. Secondly, whilst Adam was only placed in the garden of Eden after he had been fully formed, Eve was created within paradise. Thirdly, Eve is 'the mother of all the living'. In addition, women are superior to men in their association with the mother

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<sup>57</sup> Higgins, 'Myth of Eve', p. 647. In any case, surely it is possible to level this criticism at any given text, including the Genesis narrative itself.

<sup>58</sup> Alcuin Blamires, 'Eve and the Privileges of Women', pp. 96-125.

of Christ.<sup>59</sup>

Blamires describes this list as being ‘one of those conventions which seem to appear from nowhere and quickly assume categorical, almost proverbial status’.<sup>60</sup> However, the problem with this impressive roster of privileges is precisely the one Blamires inadvertently highlights with the phrase ‘appear to come from nowhere’. They are enormously difficult to trace, and simply do not appear with anything like the frequency required for something to be deemed categorical or proverbial. Blamires cites only two sources in which they all appear together as a list: an unidentified Cambridge manuscript found by Paul Meyer in 1886, and one of Jacques de Vitry’s sermons.<sup>61</sup>

Blamires also establishes the ‘defence’ texts in opposition to, or divorced from, the apparently ‘traditional’ misogynistic accounts. As Blamires is obliged to acknowledge, the theological ‘defences’ are often ambiguous or ambivalent:

Of course the ‘privileges’ were not conjured, fully shaped, from nowhere. From the available evidence (albeit fragmentary) I think it most credible to suggest that they were the result of incremental growth, as writers opportunistically picked up cues... they often are, in reductive form, unsophisticated clichés of the medieval case for women.<sup>62</sup>

In placing so much emphasis on gender, the chapter overlooks the broader theological and ethical contexts of the quotations from Abelard, Peter Lombard, Hugh of St Victor. Hence it inevitably becomes clear that they do not entirely fit beside Christine de Pisan and *Dives and Pauper*, because they are taken from texts in which Eve more often represented an allegorised element of the human soul, regardless of gender. That is not to say that Latin theology should be entirely divorced from lay and/or vernacular

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. pp. 96-7.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 97.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 98. The references he gives are to Paul Meyer, ‘Melanges de poesie francaise, iv’, and Jacques de Vitry, Sermon 66, MS Bibliotheque Nationale Lat. 17509 (f. 135 v.). The full reference for the former is as follows: Meyer, ‘Les manuscrits francais de Cambridge, ii: Bibliothèque de l’Université’, Romania vol. 15 (1886) pp. 236-357. Whilst Blamires is correct in saying that the individual items of the privilege list appear several times elsewhere, to the best of my knowledge, the list of privileges itself does not occur anywhere other than the aforementioned two texts.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. pp. 97-8. See also ibid. note 3 to p. 97, p. 100 and note 19 to p. 102.

writing. The *Mystère d'Adam*, for example, has considerably more in common with the Latin commentaries on Genesis than it does with any of the other Anglo-Norman texts alongside which it is usually placed simply because they happen to be written in the same language. Nevertheless, there is a difference in purpose and approach which must be acknowledged. Commentaries on Genesis did not set out to defend Eve or to vilify her, but to explain and comment upon the scriptural account of her actions, and they should be understood by, and informative to, the reader. Hence, whilst they might have informed, say, Christine de Pisan's defence of Eve, they are nonetheless part of a very distinct theological enterprise, for which the figure of Eve represents a crucial element of human nature, rather than being an emblem of women and femininity. Nonetheless, Blamires remains the only scholar who has devoted any attention to positive representations of the medieval figure of Eve, and thus his chapter on Eve and the privileges of women is significant.

#### CONCLUSION

Extant research which employs the medieval figure of Eve is principally concerned with gender. The texts discussed above use Eve either as an emblem of perceived 'female nature' in general, or as a means of explaining misogynistic and patriarchal mentalities. As Flood's *Representations of Eve* has demonstrated, it is possible to do this with great success, and it is clear that examining representations of Eve can reveal much about conceptions of gender, and attitudes toward the supposed nature of 'woman'. However, gender is ultimately only one of the many areas which can be illuminated by examining medieval representations of Eve, and extant research which discusses Eve places a disproportionate amount of emphasis on this subject.

Moreover, Flood's careful analysis of his medieval sources is, unfortunately,



something of an exception. As Flood himself points out, it is far more common to employ the figure of Eve as a form of unsubstantiated shorthand for the idea of ‘woman’, or ‘femininity’, and to assume that medieval authors did the same.<sup>63</sup> As demonstrated by the frequent inaccurate use of the ‘devil’s gateway’ quotation, many of the texts which employ the medieval figure of Eve in this way demonstrate a concerning tendency to overlook what is actually in the primary source material, particularly those of the twelfth century.<sup>64</sup> Careful analysis of these sources is too frequently eschewed in favour of recycled and unverified references from other secondary texts. Georges Duby remains the only scholar to have devoted any substantial attention to twelfth-century representations of Eve specifically, and unfortunately, *Eve and the Church* is predicated on a cliché - the image of the medieval male cleric so consumed by alternate horror and desire, that he invariably maligns and marginalises the figure of Eve as an emblem of disorderly ‘femininity’. Evidence which challenges the verisimilitude of this caricature is dismissed as a mere aberration.<sup>65</sup> Even the scholarship which acknowledges the tradition of defences of Eve does surprisingly little to redress the unjust assumption that medieval representations of Eve reveal only ubiquitous misogyny. Whilst it is enormously valuable to have this ‘defence tradition’ acknowledged, Blamires and Flood inadvertently privilege the questionable ubiquity of ‘clerical antifeminism’, by presenting the defences of Eve as atypical exceptions to the misogynistic rule.<sup>66</sup>

In short, thanks to the expectation of misogyny, and exclusive focus on the idea

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<sup>63</sup> Flood, *Representations of Eve* p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> Although, Flood is also occasionally guilty of this – see note 3 below.

<sup>65</sup> Even when this evidence is found in significant and influential texts, e.g. Hugh of St Victor’s *De sacramentis* - see Duby, *Eve and the Church* p. 39.

<sup>66</sup> An example of how misleading this can prove to be can be found Flood’s discussion of Humbert de Romans’ use of the argument that Eve’s having been created from the rib indicates her parity with Adam. Flood writes that this is exceptional; that its ‘use in the work of an eminent and orthodox churchman is noteworthy’. See Flood, *Representations of Eve* p. 76. Flood overlooks the fact that this argument was not particularly exceptional in the work of ‘orthodox and eminent churchmen’, and that it originated with an ‘orthodox churchman’; one considerably more eminent than Humbert of Romans; see Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis* 1.6, 35.

of gender, little has been done to acknowledge or assess the significance of the figure of Eve in medieval thought more widely. Hence we are left with an impression of the medieval figure of Eve that is inaccurate since, at least as far as the twelfth century is concerned, the widespread image of the misogynistic male cleric is simply not borne out by the major treatments of the creation and fall. Consequently, examining twelfth-century representations of Eve involves confronting a problematic disparity between the historical and the historiographical. In order to address this disparity, it is necessary to examine the texts which seek to interpret the hexaameron and the fall, rather than those which mention Eve only briefly, or refer to Eve with the specific intention of making a rhetorical point about gender. As the central figure in the narrative of mankind's fall and expulsion, Eve was an exceptionally significant component of twelfth-century thought not merely to debates about gender but about human nature itself. She was an emblem not simply of the 'fallen woman', but of fallen mankind. The figure of Eve lay at the heart of the most crucial issues - creation and composition, free will and virtue, sin and temptation, punishment and compunction - raised by these narratives.

# CHAPTER I

## REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE AS THE FIRST WOMAN

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### INTRODUCTION

The texts with which this thesis is concerned reveal the creation of Eve to be a crucial component of the twelfth century's flourishing corpus of writing on the hexaemeron. These texts demonstrate a consistent level of emphasis on, and consensus about, the equivalence and parity with which Eve was created, as well as a developing sense of engagement with the wider philosophical implications of the hexaemeral narrative. They generally present Eve not as an inferior or threatening creation, but as an equal participant both in the union she shared with Adam, and in the qualities which distinguished mankind as the apex of terrestrial creation. At the same time, these texts employ the scriptural account of Eve's creation as a means by which to elucidate the mechanics of the creative processes which comprise the hexaemeron. They construct complex and searching representations of Eve as the first woman which succeed in negotiating the challenges presented by both literal and symbolic interpretations of the opening chapters of Genesis, and which demonstrate the theological significance attributed to the first woman and the creative processes by which she was formed.

Whilst Marie-Dominique Chenu identified the creation of Eve as a significant site of theological debate in this period amid an increased concern with the hexaemeral narrative more widely, the subject remains neglected.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is

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<sup>1</sup> Marie-Dominique Chenu ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 16.

thus to demonstrate the dissemination of two hitherto overlooked aspects of twelfth-century commentary; namely, the convention of presenting Eve as an equal partner to Adam, and the emergence of the narrative of Eve's creation as a locus of discourse on the disposition and purpose of mankind within the order of creation.

There are two passages in Genesis pertaining to the creation of Eve. The first is Genesis 1.26 – 27, which refers to the creation of humanity in general, making no distinction between Eve and Adam:

And God said, 'let us make mankind to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moves upon the earth'. And God created mankind to his own image, to the image of God he created [mankind], male and female he created them.<sup>2</sup>

The second occurs in Genesis 2.21 – 24, which describes the formation of Eve specifically:

Therefore the Lord God sent Adam to sleep and when he was asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, 'this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she is taken from man'.<sup>3</sup>

Having breathed life into the inanimate matter from which Adam was created, God took a rib from the sleeping Adam and formed it into the first woman. The purpose for his having done so is that Adam was in need of an assistant companion like himself ('adiutorum similem sui') and, having already created the elemental and the animal components of Adam's dominion, God 'fleshed out' the rib into another human being.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Et ait "faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram et praesit piscibus maris et volatilibus caeli et bestiis universaeque terrae omnique reptili quod movetur in terra." Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam, ad imaginem Dei creavit illum, masculum et feminam creavit eos', Genesis 1.26-27.

<sup>3</sup> 'Inmisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in Adam cumque obdormisset tulit unam de costis eius et replevit carnem pro ea et aedificavit Dominus Deus costam quam tulerat de Adam in mulierem et adduxit eam ad Adam. Dixitque Adam "hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea haec vocabitur virago quoniam de viro sumpta est"', Genesis 2.21-24.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 2.18-19.

These two accounts of Eve's creation became subject to extensive disputation which, in the texts discussed here, is focused not on conceptions of female inferiority but on the origins of mankind as a whole. More specifically, they are concerned with elucidating the processes which enabled Eve to be formed from a rib, and with mankind's establishment in the order of creation. An identifiable pattern emerges of consensus about the equivalence and parity which Eve was intended to share with Adam. To say that Eve is conceived in these texts as being categorically equal to Adam would be incorrect, since none of the authors discussed here consistently argue that Eve and Adam possessed identical levels of strength and privilege. As was mentioned in the introduction, these are not feminist or proto-feminist texts, and nor are they consistently pro-feminine. However, all of them emphasise the fact that Eve shared with Adam the qualities which made human beings the most sophisticated and significant terrestrial inhabitants created in the course of the hexaemeral narrative, and it is widely agreed that Eve's status was that of a peer and equivalent within a balanced and reciprocal partnership. Contrary to the expectation of clerical antifeminism, which is discernible only in the early, and subsequently abandoned, arguments presented by Guibert of Nogent, the most explicit and systematically defended arguments for Eve's parity appear in the scholastic commentaries, with Abelard, Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard providing the most rigorous assertions of Eve's status as Adam's equivalent.

In addition, exegesis of Genesis 1.26 – 27 demonstrates the existence of a twelfth-century conception of the human soul as an entity which comprised both masculine and feminine elements regardless of the gender of the body in which the soul resided. Bain establishes as one of the principal features of twelfth-century hexaemeral commentary a complex conception of the categories 'masculine' and 'feminine' in this passage, which he says is characterised by the refusal to reduce such categories to

simple biological distinctions.<sup>5</sup> This tendency is certainly identifiable in the texts discussed here.

Also apparent within these texts' representations of Eve as the first woman is the more broadly significant theme of a developing sense of engagement with exegesis of Eve's creation, as well as the hexaemeral narrative more generally, as a means by which to expand extant knowledge of the created world and the place of mankind within it. With the exception of Guibert of Nogent's exclusively moral and allegorical account of Eve's creation, originating in the late eleventh century, it is possible to identify increasing preoccupation with the literal, physical processes which engendered Eve's formation from the rib. This interest in the naturalistic and mechanistic aspects of Eve's creation reveals a profound concern with what Abelard succinctly terms 'dispositio mundi'; that is, the intelligible, observable composition and organisation of a cosmos in which mankind is perceived to be a vital participant.<sup>6</sup> It seems that discussing the creation of Eve provided, or perhaps demanded, the opportunity to discuss the fundamental composition of mankind and of the universe in which they existed. Discussion of the creation of Eve in this context also reveals that the figure of Eve provided an opportunity to approach the disparities between the events of scriptural narrative and observable natural phenomena.

#### I. 'AD IMAGINEM DEI CREAVIT ILLUM, MASCULUM ET FEMINAM CREAVIT EOS': REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE IN EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 1.26 – 27

Genesis 1.26 - 27 presents numerous difficulties both in terms of the way in which it was interpreted by medieval scholars, and the way in which it is employed in modern

<sup>5</sup> Bain, 'Homme et femme il les créa', passim but particularly p. 236.

<sup>6</sup> *Expositio*, 9, 72.

scholarship relating to gender in the middle ages. Some modern scholarship concerned with gender in the middle ages forges the impression of an anthropological and theological debate during this period about whether women were created in the image of God, or whether bearing the image of God was an exclusively male privilege indicative of the superior status according to which men were created.<sup>7</sup> However, the texts discussed here reveal exegesis of this passage not as a locus of discord regarding the status of women, but as the site of discussion concerning the composition of the soul as an entity containing both masculine and feminine components, regardless of the gender of the body in which it resided.

It is true that Abelard's *Expositio* claims that Eve bore only the likeness of God; however, this argument paradoxically forms part of his subsequent rehabilitation of Eve. He is the only author discussed here who applies Genesis 1.26 – 27 to men and women specifically rather than human beings in general, and again, this is connected to his defence of Eve rather than an indication of misogyny. Also, the first book of Guibert of Nogent's *Moralia* presents Eve as bearing only the likeness, and not the image, of God; an argument which is subsequently abandoned in the text. However, this initial argument is made because the early part of the texts aligns Eve with the body; that is, the aspect of the human being which is deemed incapable of bearing the image of God. It is the first book of the *Moralia* which deals with Genesis 1.26 – 27, and thus his exegesis of this passage bears the hallmarks of an immature scholar yet to benefit from the experience of substantial exegetical output, and from the formative wisdom of

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Kari E. Børresen, 'Imago Dei, privilège masculin? Interprétation augustinienne et pseudo-augustinienne de Gen. 1. 27 et 1 Cor. 11. 7', *Augustinianum* vol. 25 (1985) pp. 213-234; Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 'The Image of God: Is Woman Included?', *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 175-206. More specifically relevant to the treatment of this subject in twelfth century texts is Bain's discussion of the image/likeness issue in 'Homme et femmes il les créa', pp. 239 – 245.

Anselm of Canterbury.<sup>8</sup> Neither Abelard nor Guibert employs the image/likeness argument in order to claim that women were created to be inferior to men, or to argue that the hexaemeral narrative demonstrates men to occupy a more privileged and authoritative position in the order of creation. Thus, whilst the arguments constructed by these two authors necessitate examination, they are considered here as two individual interpretations rather than as adherents to an opposing view within a consistent and widespread debate about Eve as *imago Dei*.

#### THE *IMAGO DEI* DEBATE: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Despite the modern attention devoted to the issue of whether women were created in the both the image and likeness of God, it is difficult to find evidence of a sustained, widespread debate surrounding this subject in the twelfth century. The texts discussed here do not even mention the subject of Eve, or women in general, as *imago Dei*. Nonetheless, the subject has attracted sufficient attention that the phrase ‘image of God’ has come to be something of a rhetorical expedient in studies which concern themselves with constructing ‘the history of women’.<sup>9</sup> Maryanne Cline Horowitz has criticised the use of the phrase in this way, singling out the work of Julia O’Faolain and Lauro Martines as examples of the way in which using the phrase as a title ‘overstates the misogyny in the Western religious and humanist traditions’ which these texts discuss.<sup>10</sup> Bain has also commented on the way in which the use of this title has come to provide a

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<sup>8</sup> See note 34, p. 16 above.

<sup>9</sup> Particularly when employed as the title for a publication - see for example see Børresen, *op. cit.*; Horowitz, *op. cit.*; Julia O’Faolain and Lauro Martines eds, *Not in God’s Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). A more recent example is Julia Bolton Holloway, Constance S. Wright eds, *Equally in God’s Image: Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> Horowitz, ‘The Image of God: Is Woman Included?’, p. 205. It could of course be argued that Horowitz’s own use of the phrase in the title of this article does much the same.



kind of shorthand for the authors' opinion about the status of women in the middle ages.<sup>11</sup>

The rhetorical currency of this phrase appears to be both a function of, and partial explanation for, the fact that it is possible to identify several instances in modern scholarship dealing with twelfth-century conceptions of gender where a perhaps disproportionate level of significance and cogence is attributed to the image/likeness issue. For example, Barbara Newman claims, in her discussion of Hildegard of Bingen's work on the creation narrative, that the subject is 'a question central to medieval anthropology', but the only evidence she provides of Hildegard's participation in this supposedly prevalent debate is a single line in *Liber divinorum operum*; a line which does not in fact mention the notion of Eve as *imago Dei*.<sup>12</sup> Horowitz, though she examines a range of Christian and Jewish writing dating from St Paul to Agrippa von Nettesheim, actually admits, inadvertently, that it is 'rare' to encounter 'direct confrontation with the question "Is woman in God's image?"'.<sup>13</sup> Bain claims that the notion of Eve's bearing only the likeness of God is fundamental to the unequal theological status of women in the twelfth century, which contradicts his valuable observation that commentaries on Genesis from this period are remarkable for the lack of emphasis they place on the differences between women and men.<sup>14</sup> The question of whether Eve bore the likeness of God also provides one of the few instances in which Abelard's *Expositio* has been discussed in modern scholarship in a broader theological context, since the text describes Eve as bearing only the likeness of God. However, within this context, the *Expositio* has been unfairly misrepresented, and Abelard has

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<sup>11</sup> Bain, 'Homme et femmes il les créa', p. 238, note 46. Like Horowitz, he gives O'Faolain and Martines as examples.

<sup>12</sup> Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (California: University of California Press, 1997) p. 91. The line she quotes (in English only) here is 'man signifies the divinity and woman the humanity of the Son of God'.

<sup>13</sup> 'The Image of God', p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> Bain, 'Homme et femme il les créa', pp. 229 and 238.

received criticism for his supposedly misogynistic interpretation of Genesis 1.26 by scholars who neglect to mention that the *Expositio* formulates one of the most positive representations of Eve produced by any medieval author.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Guibert of Nogent's interpretation of this passage has been misconstrued, and inaccurately represented as being indicative of both the text as a whole, and of supposedly widespread tendencies in twelfth-century writing on the hexaemeron.

However, in the texts with which this thesis is concerned, exegesis of Genesis 1.26 - 27 is not connected with the attempt to provide a scriptural justification for perceived masculine superiority.<sup>16</sup> In most of the texts discussed here, Genesis 1.26 – 27 is principally considered to be an account of the creation of the soul. At no point do Hugh of St Victor, Hildegard of Bingen, Peter Lombard or the Adam poet enter into any debate about whether or not Eve bore the image of God. Nor do they refer to such a debate, or give any other kind of indication that such a debate existed. Indeed in Hildegard's account of the soul's creation it is Eve rather than Adam who is aligned with the soul. Moreover, whilst Abelard and Guibert both argue that Eve bore only the likeness of God, the *Expositio* and the *Moralia* both present strong cases in favour of the idea that the divisions imposed on mankind by the biological categories of male and female are less significant than the shared qualities which distinguish human beings in general as the apex of the creative processes recounted in the hexaemeral narrative.

Rather than provoking disputation about male and female capabilities, Genesis 1.26 – 27 had, since the time of Origen, been discussed as an account of the creation of

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<sup>15</sup> For example Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, p. 91; Horowitz, 'The Image of God', pp. 179-80.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Javelet's *Image et ressemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille*, 2 vols (Strasbourg: Letouzey and Ane, 1967) provides some revealing contextualisation for the Eve as *imago Dei* issue and the attention it received in the twelfth century. The text comprises a sustained and lengthy examination of the concept of the image of God in a wider context beyond the subject of gender; however, over the space of two volumes, only nine pages are devoted to this supposedly widespread debate; see vol. 1, pp. 236-45.

the soul, with the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ elements referred to in the passage being considered different aspects of the soul which were universally apparent, regardless of the gender of the body in which the soul resided.<sup>17</sup> A similar approach was taken by Augustine, whose *De Genesi ad litteram* argues that Genesis 1:27 refers only to the creation of the soul or mind:

And so, although this external diversity of sex in the bodies of two human beings symbolises what is to be understood internally in the one mind of a single human being, still the female too, because it is simply in the body that she is female, is also being renewed in the spirit of her mind in the recognition of God according to the image of him who created that in which there is no male or female. Now just as women are not cut off from this grace of the renewal and reshaping of the image of God, although their bodily sex has a different signification, according to which the man alone is called ‘the image and glory of God’; by the same token too in that original creation of man in terms of which ‘man’ included woman as well [‘homo’], the woman of course also had her mind, a mind endowed with reason, with respect to which she too was made to the image of God.<sup>18</sup>

Thus whilst men and women are biologically different, all human beings share the rational interior which distinguishes them as the only terrestrial creations bearing the image of God. It is this line of reasoning that is most evident in the twelfth-century exegesis of this passage discussed here. Hugh of St Victor writes that Genesis 1.26

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Hunc sane hominem, quem dicit “ad imaginem Dei” factum, non intelligimus corporalem. Non enim corporis figmentum Dei imaginem continet, neque factus esse corporalis homo dicitur, sed plasmatus, sicut in consequentibus scriptum est. Ait enim, “et plasmavit Deus hominem”, id est finxit “de terrae limo”... Interior homo noster ex spiritu et anima constat. Masculus spiritus dicitur, femina potest nuncupari. Haec si concordiam inter se habeant et consensum, conviventia inter se ipsa crescunt et multiplicantur generantque filios sensus bonos et intellectus vel cogitationes utiles, per quae replent terram et dominantur in ea’, *Origenes Werk - Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins I: Die Homilien zu Genesis, Exodus und Leviticus*, ed. W.A. Baehrens, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte vol. 29 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchandlung, 1920) pp. 15 and 19.

<sup>18</sup> *On Genesis* trans. Hill, p. 237. ‘Itaque quamvis hoc in duobus hominibus diversi sexus exterior secundum corpus figuratum sit, quod etiam in una hominis interior mente intelligitur; tamen et femina quae est corpore femina, renovatur etiam ipsa in spiritu mentis suae in agnitione Dei secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit, ubi non est masculus et femina. Sicut autem ab hac gratia renovationis, et reformatione imaginis Dei, non separantur feminae, quamvis in sexu corporis earum aliud figuratum sit, propter quod vir solus dicitur esse imago et gloria Dei; sic et in ipsa prima conditione hominis, secundum id quod et femina homo erat, habebat utique mentem suam eandemque rationalem, secundum quam ipsa quoque facta est ad imaginem Dei’, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 3.22.

refers to the creation of the soul only, since it is not actually possible for mankind's physical form to bear the image or the likeness of God:

Mankind was made in the image and likeness of God, because the soul was the better part of man. Actually, this better part was itself mankind made in the image and likeness of God: image according to reason, likeness according to love... Only in the soul was mankind made thus, because it is not possible for corporeal nature to take the likeness of the divine.<sup>19</sup>

Peter Lombard also argues that it was the soul of mankind that was made in the image and likeness of God, but also offers the opinion that this passage might refer to the body as well:

Man was made in the image and likeness of God in respect to his mind, by which he excels irrational creatures; in his image, however, according to memory, intelligence and love; in his likeness according to innocence and justice... But also 'in the body he has some property which indicates this [i.e. his creation in God's likeness], because his stature is erect, so that the body suits the rational soul because it is erect toward heaven.'<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Lombard's *Sentences* do not enter or even refer to any debate about whether Eve bore the image of God is particularly telling, since this text provides an excellent barometer of scriptural passages which were deemed especially difficult or disputable.<sup>21</sup>

Like Hugh and Lombard, Hildegard of Bingen maintains that Genesis 1.26 - 27 refers to mankind universally. She does not deem this to be a particularly significant

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<sup>19</sup> 'Factus est homo ad imaginem et similitudino dei. Quia in anima potior pars erat hominis. Vel potius ipse homo erat fuit imago et similitudino dei. Imago secundum rationem. Similitudino secundum dilectionem... Hec autem in anima sola factum est quia corporea natura similitudinem divinitatis capere non potuit', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Lombard, *Sentences Book II* trans. Silano, pp. 70-71. 'Factus est ergo homo ad imaginem dei et similitudinem secundum mentem, qua irrationabilibus antecellit; sed ad imaginem secundum memoriam, intelligentiam et dilectionem; ad similitudinem secundum innocentiam et iustitiam... Sed et in corpore quandam proprietatem habet quae hoc indicat, quia est erecta statura, secundum quam corpus animae rationali congruit, quia in caelum erectum est', *Sententiae* 1.16, 3 and 4.

<sup>21</sup> As Silano comments in the introduction to his translation of the *Sentences*, their influence and utility, for both modern and medieval scholars, lies in their ability to 'provide balanced syntheses of theological debates... which everyone had come to regard as crucial in the development of doctrine. The *Sentences* also presented a very comprehensive collection of the questions which school masters raised, discussed, and settled or failed to settle', *Sentences Book I* trans. Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007) pp. xxvii – xxviii.

area of debate, but in her discussion of why mankind was able to sin, her rendering of the voice of God refers to human beings in general as ‘you who have been made in the image and likeness of God’, and asks ‘O foolish humans, how can that which was made in the image and likeness of God exist without testing?’.<sup>22</sup> Thus it is possible to infer that she does not consider Eve and Adam to have been differentiated in terms of image and likeness of God.

However, Hildegard’s depiction of Eve as a cloud offers an intriguing addition to these responses to Genesis 1.26 – 27 because, when read in conjunction with her literal interpretation of the soul’s creation in *Causae et curae*, there arises the implication that the figure of Eve represents the soul, and Adam the body. Thus, far from being excluded from the privilege of having been created in the image of God, it is in fact Eve rather than Adam who is visually and symbolically aligned with the aspect of the human being that is singularly able to bear the image of God.

*Scivias* represents Eve as a shining white wing-shaped cloud, filled with stars which represent the unborn descendants to whom she will give birth.<sup>23</sup> The Eve-cloud emerges from Adam’s rib as he is lying above the fires of Hell, his attentive listening to which signifies his own temptation and culpability for the Fall. The black column to the left of the image represents the evil emanating from Hell. The eighth off-shoot from this column represents Satan in the form of a serpent, blowing the column’s black matter onto the form of Eve. Hildegard summarises the Fall and expulsion from Paradise thus:

A pit of great breadth and depth appeared, with a mouth like the mouth of a well, emitting fiery smoke with great stench, from which a loathsome cloud spread out and touched a deceitful, vein-shaped form [the devil]. And, in a region of brightness, it blew upon a white cloud

<sup>22</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, pp. 86-7. ‘Qui ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei facti estis’; ‘Ergo, o stulti homines, hoc quod ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei factum est, quomodo sine probatione posset subsistere?’; *Scivias*, 1.2, 683 and 689.

<sup>23</sup> *Scivias*, 1.2, 234. See illustration, p. 1 above.

[Eve] that had come forth from a beautiful human form [Adam] and contained within itself many and many stars, and so doing, cast out both the cloud and the human form from that region.<sup>24</sup>

Adam is represented in human form, lying on the ground, whilst Eve hovers above him in her wing-shaped manifestation as a cloud. This representation of Eve as a cloud and Adam in human form offers a visual parallel to her description of the soul and body in *Causa et curae*. She writes that when God created the soul

Which was *winged and could fly everywhere*, he also had in his plan to give spiritual life – which is the breath of life – a corporeal mass, that is, an erect form brought forth from the clay of the earth. And this would not be able to fly, nor to float, not to lift itself on its own. Therefore it should be bound [to the earth] so that it would look more intensely at God.<sup>25</sup>

Aside from the notable similarity between this passage and Hugh of St Victor's assertion that God gave the soul a physical carapace in order to deepen human appreciation of divine works, what is intriguing here is the implication that Eve represents the soul, and Adam the body, in the *Scivias* image of the creation.<sup>26</sup> The soul is winged and airborne, like the *Scivias* image of Eve, whilst the body is tied to the earth beneath it, like the *Scivias* image of Adam.

To summarise, Genesis 1.26 – 27 is not employed in any of the texts with which this thesis is concerned as a means by which to justify the supposed inferiorities of women. They do not even refer to any debate about whether or not Eve bore the image of God; it is simply assumed that as a human being, Genesis 1.26 – 27 includes Eve,

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<sup>24</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 73. 'Et ecce lacus multae latitudinis et profunditatis apparuit, os velut os putei habens et igneum fumum cum multo fetore evomens de quo etiam teterrima nebula exhalans ad finem usque quasi visu imperceptibilem attigit, et in quadam clara regione candidam nubem quae de pulchra hominis forma plurimas stellas in se continens exierat, afflavit, et illam ac eadem hominis formam ex illa regione ejecit', *Scivias*, 1.2, 55-64.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Berger ed and trans., *Hildegard of Bingen on Natural Philosophy and Medicine: Selections from Causae et curae*, Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999) p.24. Italics mine. 'Quae volatilis erat et quae ubique volare potuit, in eodem consilio suo habuit, quod spiritali vitae, quae spiraculum vitae est, molem corporalem, id est elatam formam de limo terrae daret, quae nec volaret nec flaret et quae prae impossibilitate sua se levare non posset, et ut ideo sic ligata esset, quatinus ad deum acutius aspiceret', *Causa et curae* ed. Paul Kaiser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903) 1, 27 - 33.

<sup>26</sup> See illustration, p. 1 above. *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 1.

and her female descendants. Nonetheless, the principal features that these interpretations of the passage share in common are revealing insofar as they present gender as an exclusively corporeal phenomenon, and the soul as the only aspect of the human being which is capable of bearing both the image and likeness of God. The soul is deemed capable of bearing the image and likeness of God regardless of the gender of the body to which it belongs. Moreover, the soul is presented as an entity which comprises both masculine and feminine components, irrespective of whether it resides in a body that is biologically male or female. Hence exegesis of this passage reveals a more complex formulation of the categories of masculine and feminine than has been acknowledged in modern scholarship concerning the medieval reception of this passage, which tends to be focused on constructing a twelfth-century debate about the nature of women at the expense of examining the twelfth-century conception of the construction of the soul.

#### EVE AS SIMILITUDINO DEI IN GUIBERT OF NOGENT'S *MORALIA*

Guibert of Nogent had rather different reasons for arguing that Eve bore only the likeness of God. The first book of the *Moralia* conceives the creation of Eve in relation to the fundamental dichotomy which according to Guibert characterises and drives humanity after the fall; that between spirit and flesh, and virtue and vice. He depicts Eve as a symbolic representative of the body, and the first section of the text is dominated by a straightforwardly conceived antagonism between the spirit and the flesh, signified by Adam and Eve respectively. Adam and the spirit are aligned with the image of God; Eve and the flesh are denied this privilege and are aligned only with the likeness of God. Thus like Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard, Guibert does not consider the human body to be capable of bearing the image of God. However, it is important to bear in mind that Guibert approaches the hexaemeron with a singularly tropological objective,

and his representation of Eve should be read accordingly. It is Eve in her allegorical guise as the body who does not bear the image of God, rather than Eve as a representative of women in general.

Guibert begins his commentary by establishing that the creation of heaven and earth is analogous to the creation of the body and the soul. In a virtuous person, Guibert explains, the body (the earth) and soul (heaven) can never coexist peacefully: the soul must fight the reign of the body's lustful disobedience and its invitations to indiscretion.<sup>27</sup> The antipathy between spirit and flesh can never be resolved, Guibert says, it can only be controlled through devotion and piety. This process must begin with the fear which propels the soul towards conversion, represented by the emergence of light.<sup>28</sup> The firmament represents the path that the soul must negotiate between the conflicting demands of the corporeal and the cerebral, the earthly and the divine.<sup>29</sup> The allegorical functions of earth and heaven are then transferred to the figures of Eve and Adam respectively in the interpretation of Genesis 1.27. Adam represents the spirit or the soul, because the spirit is 'masculine' ('spiritus, quod est masculus'), and it is the soul, not the body, which bears the image of God ('*imaginem Dei Adam habuit in anima*').<sup>30</sup> The body, by contrast, is 'feminine', and thus represented by Eve. It is represented by Eve because it is inferior and disorderly:

Eve, however - rebellious and untamed animal - never acquiesces to the will of the spirit voluntarily, but always resists the stern zeal of virtue. But Eve is our flesh, who – the devil supplying – flaunts before reason and bends [it] to consent to an unchaste desire. For Adam, as the Apostle

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<sup>27</sup> ‘“In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram”: in principio conversionis nostrae intra nosmetipsos in duo quaedam sibi valde contraria dividimur, quae in nullo bene vivente pacem vel momentaneam inter se, ut puto reperiri, possunt habere. Sunt autem caro, et spiritus... Ex tunc ergo in nobis concupiscentialis inobedientia regnat, quae etiam nolentes ad motus nos indecoros invitat’, *Moralia*, PL vol. 156, cols 32 B - 33 B.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., cols 37 D – 41 B.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., cols 41 B – 44 B.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., cols 55 C and 57 A.



says, was not seduced [by the devil] but Eve was seduced, and then she seduced the man as well.<sup>31</sup>

Guibert's representation of Eve is thus a crucial element in his formulation of a dichotomous and conflicting relationship between the body and soul, and the formative influence this relationship has on human conduct.

Nonetheless, Guibert's representation of Eve here is crude and misogynistic, and could easily be used to demonstrate the prevalence of clerical antifeminism. Within a simplistic division between spirit and flesh, Eve/the flesh is a pandering go-between, enticing Adam/the spirit to capitulate to the blandishments of sin. The allegorical figure of Eve represents base corporeality and unchaste appetites. Lust and corporeality are both aligned with, and owe their existence to, the creation of the 'feminine'. In contrast, Adam and the masculine represent the spirit and the intellect, valiantly resisting the corrupting influence of Eve. However, it is important to bear in mind that the symbolic roles assigned to Eve and Adam here are not intended to be mapped onto literal women and men. Since every human being comprises both a body and a soul, this conflict between the corporeal 'Eve' component and the spiritual 'Adam' component occurs in every human being, regardless of the biological gender of the body in which the soul resides.

As with Abelard's *Expositio*, Guibert's representation of Eve as bearing only the likeness of God has been misrepresented in modern scholarship. Bain portrays the first section of the *Moralia* as being not only representative of the text as a whole, but as being representative of a 'clear and universally accepted' twelfth-century tradition of

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<sup>31</sup> 'Eva tamen, rebelle et indomitum animal, nunquam voluntati spiritus voluntarie acquiescit, sed semper virtutis studio dura resistit. Eva autem est caro nostra, quae suggerente diabolo lenocinatur rationi, et inflectit ad consensum appetitus inhonesti. Adam enim, ut ait Apostolus, seductus non est, sed Eva, unde et virum seduxit', *ibid.*, col. 57 B.

employing Eve as a representation of the body.<sup>32</sup> However, none of the major treatments of Eve discussed here employ her in this way; nor do they refer to any tradition of doing so. Tellingly, the only concrete evidence that Bain provides to demonstrate the ‘clear and universal’ acceptance of this formulation in the twelfth century is Guibert himself.<sup>33</sup> He also cites Gregory the Great’s apparent assertion that Eve was as the flesh and Adam the spirit; however, Gregory the Great is obviously not a twelfth-century author.<sup>34</sup> The use of this interpretation by only two authors, one of whom precedes the period in question by approximately six centuries, is not proof of ‘universal’ or even widespread acceptance of the idea during the central middle ages.

Guibert’s interpretation of Genesis 1.28 (‘fill the earth and subdue it’) suggests that Augustine’s early work on Genesis might also be a potential source for the representation of Eve as the flesh bearing only the likeness of God. Guibert describes Eve as a handmaiden or slave (‘ancilla’) who must be subdued and forced to obey her mistress (‘domina’): ‘we subdue the earth when we force Eve to comply with our rule, so that the handmaiden - that is, flesh - does not precede reason, her mistress’.<sup>35</sup> Here, Eve and the earth symbolise the body, which must be ruled and restrained in order to prevent it from destabilising the hierarchy of reason and appetite on which virtue

<sup>32</sup> ‘Clair et universellement accepté’, ‘Homme et femme il les créa’, p. 234.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Une citation de Grégoire commentant la faute affirme qu’Ève est *quasi caro* et Adam *velut spiritus*’, *ibid.*, p. 234. There is no reference provided for this statement; however, it is found in the work of Bede, not Gregory. In the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the account Bede gives of the letters between Augustine of Canterbury and Gregory attributes this representation of Eve to Gregory: ‘Eva velut caro delectata est, Adam vero velut spiritus consensit’, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* ed. Michael Lapidge (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005) p. 238. Gregory himself did not in fact state this quite so simplistically: ‘Nam serpens suasit, Eva delectata est, Adam consensit; qui etiam requisitus, confiteri culpam per audaciam noluit... Eva delectata est; quia carnalis sensus, ad verba serpentis mox se delectationi subternit. Assensum vero Adam mulieri praepositus praebuit; quia dum caro in delectationem rapitur, etiam a sua rectitudine spiritus infirmatus inclinatur. Et requisitus Adam confiteri culpam, quia videlicet spiritus, quo peccando a veritate disjungitur, eo in ruinae suae audacia nequius obduratur’, *Moralia in Job* ed. Marcus Adriaen, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003) vol. 2, p. 58. However, it seems likely that this was the source of Guibert’s early representation of Eve, and Rubenstein has commented on the Gregorian influences in Guibert’s *Moralia*; see Guibert of Nogent pp. 32-33 and p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Replete terram et subicite eam’, Genesis 1.28. ‘Subjicimus terram, cum nostrae ditioni obtemperare compellimus Evam, ut non ordine praepostero ancilla, id est, caro rationem praecedat dominam’, *Moralia* col. 57 C.

depends. This idea appears to be a somewhat muddled borrowing from Augustine's *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, in which Augustine's allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2.18 ('it is not good for the man to be alone') compares the relationship between Adam and Eve to the 'masculine' reason governing the body.<sup>36</sup>

Augustine takes care to establish that this does not relate to biological gender: every human soul has a 'masculine' and a 'feminine' component.<sup>37</sup> Although he does not demonstrate much sophistication in his alignment of Eve with the body, it is nonetheless important to bear in mind that even Guibert does not automatically intend for the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' to signify literal, human men and women. For example, it is notable that unlike Augustine, Guibert conceives both components of this hierarchy as female here – the governing force of reason is represented not by Adam but by a superior female 'domina'. Like Hugh of St Victor, Peter Lombard and Hildegard of Bingen, Guibert makes no comment on the gender of the individual human being in which the conflict between flesh and spirit occurs. Every human being, male or female, experiences this same conflict, because everyone has both an 'Adam' component (that is, a soul) and an 'Eve' component (a body). His conception of Eve as a signifier of base corporeality is thus misogynistic insofar as it depends on a gendered hierarchy in which 'the feminine' is inherently inferior to 'the masculine'. However, this hierarchy exists in every body and soul regardless of whether the body itself is biologically male or female. Thus whilst Bain is inaccurate in presenting Guibert as representative of a widespread

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<sup>36</sup> "Non est bonum solum hominem esse". Adhuc enim erat, quod fieret, ut non solum anima corpori dominaretur, quia corpus servilem locum obtinet, sed etiam virilis ratio subjugaret sibi animalem partem suam, per quod adiutorium imperaret corpori. Ad hujus rei exemplum femina facta est, quam rerum ordo subjugat viro... ut appetitum animae, per quem de membris corporis operamur, habeat mens interior tanquam virilis ratio subjugatum, et justa lege modum imponat adiutorio suo, sicut vir debet feminam regere, nec eam permittere dominari in virum; quod ubi contingit, perversa et misera domus est', *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, ed. Dorothea Weber, CSEL 91 (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998) book 2, col. 204.

<sup>37</sup> '...Ut quod in duobus hominibus evidentius apparet, id est in masculo et femina, etiam in uno homine considerari possit', *ibid.*, col. 204.

twelfth-century tradition of depicting Eve as the body, he is right in arguing that the categories of masculine and feminine cannot be straightforwardly mapped onto the biological categories of male and female.<sup>38</sup>

This is another area in which Guibert's representation of Eve has been misrepresented in modern scholarship, and one which highlights the significance of the caveat highlighted by Bain. According to Rubenstein, the passage representing Eve as a subdued handmaiden

Leads Guibert to one of his more startling novelties. Just as there would have been no distinction between Reason and Flesh had the fall not occurred, so there would have been no division between the sexes: "Thus God created man... Rightly it is said that man was created singularly, and afterwards masculine and feminine. Before their transgression, man was the same in himself and never was diverse".<sup>39</sup>

The passage that Rubenstein quotes here clearly does not mean that God refrained from dividing the first human beings into the biological categories of male and female, man and woman. Guibert is not attempting to deny that Eve and Adam were biologically female and male. The passage simply means that before sin, mankind did not experience a conflicting disparity between the 'masculine' component (that is, the soul) and the 'feminine' component (that is, the body) which comprised the human being regardless of biological gender. Guibert's conception of gender here is less novel and more sophisticated than Rubenstein allows, and it demonstrates the validity of Bain's assertion that the categories of masculine and feminine are paired with each other, but not with the ostensibly corresponding physical categories of 'man' and 'woman'.

<sup>38</sup> 'Homme et femme il les créa', p. 236 – 38.

<sup>39</sup> Rubenstein, *Guibert of Nogent*, p. 33. The passage Rubenstein translates here runs as follows: 'creavit ergo Deus hominem... Recte primo dicitur homo singulariter creatus, postmodum masculus et femina creati, quia ante praevericationem idem in se, et nusquam diversus homo erat', *Moralia*, col. 57 A.

As was mentioned above, Abelard's *Expositio* has been misrepresented in the context of the historiographical debate about medieval women as *imago Dei*. Newman for example, employing some problematically anachronistic terminology, deplores Abelard's supposed reputation 'as a twelfth-century feminist' because he writes that only men bore the image of God, when 'most theologians, however, held to the equality of the sexes in this regard'.<sup>40</sup> Horowitz also cites Abelard's *Expositio* as a misogynistic aberration among 'the bulk of theologians from Anselm of Canterbury to Alain de Lille [who] considered both man and woman as beings created in the image of God'.<sup>41</sup> In addition to inaccurately presenting the *Expositio* as an opposing participant in a cogent debate, as will be discussed below, the text is not given any credit for its remarkable defence of Eve, and the way in which Abelard's claim that Eve bore only God's likeness forms part of this defence. Similarly, Duby states that Abelard 'went much further than the others [i.e. other exegetes working on Genesis]' in his supposed misogyny by declaring women to be inferior because Eve was created merely in the likeness of God, whereas Adam was created in the image of God, and thus men are by definition the superior entity.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to these examples, a more complex use of the *Expositio* in this way is given by Bain, whose neglect of Abelard's defence of Eve is baffling. Bain concedes that Abelard's argument is 'more subtle and more nuanced' than most accounts of male and female difference.<sup>43</sup> However, he nonetheless presents the *Expositio* as a text which formulates 'a vision of the woman as categorically inferior to the man, because she is

<sup>40</sup> Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, p. 91.

<sup>41</sup> Horowitz, 'The Image of God', pp. 179-80.

<sup>42</sup> Duby, *Eve and the Church*, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup> 'Plus subtil et plus nuancé', 'Homme et femme il les créa', p. 241.

less close to God'.<sup>44</sup> He even states that this contradicts the claims made elsewhere by Abelard that 'through their weakness, women effectively had the opportunity to be closer to God'.<sup>45</sup> However, this ostensible contradiction abates when Abelard's defence of Eve is considered, because Eve is crucial to the ethical framework which allows Abelard to argue that women were further removed from the divine in the order of creation, whilst asserting simultaneously that women were able to become closer and dearer to God not despite, but because, of their inherent weakness and their concomitantly superior capacity for virtue.

In order to clarify this, and to demonstrate that Horowitz, Newman and Bain are wrong to cite the *Expositio* as a misogynistic aberration, it is necessary to examine Abelard's exegesis of Genesis 1.26 and 3.6 in more detail. To begin with Genesis 1.26 directly, Abelard does indeed claim that Eve was created to bear only the likeness of God, and that creation in the image of God was a privilege enjoyed by Adam, and men, alone:

Since human being is the shared name of both the man and the woman, since both are a rational and mortal animal, hence also in what follows where it says 'God created the human being' at once there is added 'male and female he created them'; we understand that the man was created in the image of God, but the woman was created in the likeness. Indeed, the Apostle says concerning the man; 'truly he ought not to veil his head, because he is the image and glory of God', that is, his more glorious and precious likeness. For there is a difference between image and likeness because likeness to something can be said to exist because there is a kind of conformity with it, whence something can be said to be similar to it. But an image refers only to an express likeness like the statues of men that more perfectly represent them limb by limb. And so because the man is more worthy than the woman and consequently more like God, he is called his image, but the woman is his likeness.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 'Une vision de la femme certes inférieure à l'homme, puisqu'elle est moins proche de Dieu', *ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>45</sup> 'Par leur faiblesse, les femmes ont effectivement la possibilité d'être plus proches de Dieu', *ibid.*, 245.

<sup>46</sup> Abelard, *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, pp. 77. 'Cum autem homo commune nomen sit tam uiri quam femine, cum sit utrumque animal rationale mortale, unde et in sequentibus cum dicitur quia "creavit deus hominem", statim subinfertur: "masculum et feminam creavit eos"; intelligimus uirum ad imaginem dei

Thus women possess reason, because all human beings possess reason, but they bear only the likeness of God.

Abelard adds that Adam received more divine wisdom than Eve and was created in the image of God. Eve, having received less divine wisdom and having been created without the benefit of all the components of the Trinity, was formed only in the likeness of God.<sup>47</sup> Abelard invokes here an argument from 1 Corinthians 11, which presents an additional complication to the interpretation of Genesis 1.26 – 27.<sup>48</sup> As Augustine observed, despite the use of ‘homo’ (‘mankind’), rather than ‘vir’ (‘man’ as opposed to ‘woman’), in the creation narrative, 1 Corinthians states that women are obliged to cover their heads because they were not made in the image of God, unlike men: ‘every woman praying or prophesying with her head not veiled disgraces her head...[but] the man indeed does not have to veil his head because it is the image and glory of God’.<sup>49</sup> There thus arises a possible conflict between the scriptural accounts of Eve’s creation, which Abelard employs here: Genesis states that mankind in general (‘homo’) was

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creatum, feminam uero ad similitudinem. De uiro quippe apostolus ait: “Vir quidem non debet uelare caput suum, quia imago et gloria dei est”, hoc est gloriosior et preciosior eius similitudo. Distat autem inter imaginem et similitudinem quod similitudo rei potest dici quod conuenientiam aliquam habet cum ipsa, unde simile illi dici queat. Imago uero expressa tantum similitudo dicitur, sicut figure hominum que per singula membra perfectius eos representant. Quia ergo uir dignior quam femina est et per hoc deo similior, imago eius dicitur; femina uero similitudo’, *Expositio*, 255 - 258. Abelard repeats this idea in the *Hymnarius Paraclitensis*: ‘hinc Dei dicimus virum imaginem / Ejusque feminam similitudinem’, PL vol. 178, col. 1785 D.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Omnis autem mulier orans aut prophetans non velato capite deturpat caput... vir quidem non debet velare caput, quoniam imago et gloria est Dei mulier autem gloria viri est’, 1 Corinthians 11. 5 – 7. Gratian is another twelfth-century writer who employs this passage to justify his assertion that women bore only the likeness of God, stating that women must cover their heads because they were made only in the likeness of God and not his image: ‘mulier debet velare caput, quia non est imago Dei’, *Decretum liber II, causa 33, q. 5*; quoted in Horowitz, ‘The Image of God’, p. 177. Horowitz suggests that this interpretation is based on a mangled translation of 1 Corinthians which mistakenly excludes women from having been created ‘in imago Dei’; see *ibid.*, pp. 177-78. However, Gratian is correct – 1 Corinthians 11.7 describes only men (‘viri’) as bearing the image of God, whereas woman is merely ‘the glory of man’ (‘mulier autem gloria viri est’).

<sup>49</sup> ‘Omnis autem mulier orans aut prophetans non velato capite deturpat caput suum... vir quidem non debet velare caput quoniam imago et gloria est Dei’, 1 Corinthians 11:5-7. For Augustine’s response to this, see note 18 above.

created in the image of God, whereas 1 Corinthians provides justification for his argument that Eve bore only the likeness of God.

It seems difficult initially to reconcile these statements of Abelard's with his assertion that Eve, in her transgression, became dearer to God than many thousands of men who were without sin. The process by which she was created was inferior to that by which Adam was formed, and thus women must bear the burden of Eve's lesser place in the order of creation by being condemned to be considered less worthy than their male counterparts. Abelard constructs a hierarchy in which Eve, and women in general, occupy a less exalted position than Adam, and men, within the carefully calibrated order of creation. However, the notion of Eve's having been created to be weaker than Adam is in fact crucial to Abelard's subsequent rehabilitation of Eve later in the text, because weakness and susceptibility to temptation are crucial to Abelard's definition of virtue. Eve's weakness and susceptibility paradoxically become the very qualities which make virtuous women more valuable than virtuous men in the eyes of God.<sup>50</sup> The relative weakness of the female soul is a necessary component of Abelard's conception of the relationship between weakness and virtue, which, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III below, revolves around the ethics of intention and Christ's ostensibly contradictory assertion in 2 Corinthians that strength is perfected in weakness.<sup>51</sup>

In short, according to Abelard, an act can only be defined as virtuous if the person who performs it experiences a genuine struggle with temptation. The greater the struggle with temptation, the more commendable the act of virtue, since, Abelard asks,

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<sup>50</sup> *Expositio*, p. 113. This is discussed in further detail in the chapter below on representations of Eve as the first sinner.

<sup>51</sup> 'Dominum rogavi... et dixit mihi "sufficit tibi gratia mea nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur"', 2 Corinthians 12.8 - 9.



where is the sense of victory in a battle which is easily won?<sup>52</sup> Merely refraining from wrongdoing in the absence of temptation may ensure that sin is avoided, but remaining sinless is not the same as being actively virtuous. The comparative weakness of Eve and her female descendants means that it is harder for them to overcome temptation, since they are less resilient and bear only the likeness of God.<sup>53</sup> However, if virtue is defined by the ferocity of the struggle with temptation, and women have to work harder than men to overcome temptation, any virtuous act performed by a woman is more worthy and more commendable, because it was more difficult to achieve. This is clarified in the seventh letter to Heloise, which states that:

Because the female gender is the weaker, their strength is more pleasing to God and is more perfect according to the word of God himself by which he encouraged the weakness of the apostle to the crown of victory, saying: “My grace is enough for you, for my strength is at its best in weakness”.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, Abelard directly aligns female weakness with the weakness which defines and perfects the strength of Christ in 2 Corinthians 12.9. Bearing only the likeness of God is thus a function of the means by which both Eve’s sin, and subsequent acts of female virtue, achieve their value in the eyes of God; a value which outstrips the worth of any evidence of virtue demonstrated by men. Hence it is misleading to present Abelard’s image/likeness argument as a misogynistic dismissal of women as inferior creations.

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<sup>52</sup> *Expositio*, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> I.e. Because they bear only the likeness of God they are thus less ‘like’ him, and less strong than men, who, by contrast, possess the image of God. Since the male is more worthy, Abelard writes, he can be said to be more like God – thus the man can be said to bear the image of God, whereas women can be said to possess only his likeness (‘vir dignior quam femina est et per hoc deo similior, imago eius dicitur; femina uero similitudo’), *Expositio*, 258.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Letter 7 to Heloise: The History of Women’s Roles in Christianity’, ed. and trans. Vera Morton and Jocelyn Wogan Browne in *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003) pp. 52-95; see p.76. ‘Quippe quo infirmior est feminarum sexus, gratior est Deo atque perfectior earum virtus, juxta ipsius quoque Domini testimonium, quo infirmitatem Apostoli ad certaminis coronam exhortans, ait: “Sufficit tibi gratia mea. Nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur”’, ‘The Letter of Heloise on Religious Life and Abelard’s First Reply’, ed. J.T. Muckle, *Mediaeval Studies* vol. 17 (1955) pp. 240 - 281; p. 269.

In addition to the way in which Abelard's argument about Eve bearing only the likeness of God is related to his assertion that she was dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men, it is necessary to draw attention to the emphasis he places on female capacity for reason and wisdom. Abelard takes great care to point out that as the first human beings, both Adam and Eve represent the peak of God's creative force, since human beings were the most important and worthy component of the created universe, on account of whom all other things were made.<sup>55</sup> He also points out that corporeal gender has no impact on the capacities of the soul, and that all souls are equally equipped with the capability for reason and wisdom:

The human soul... is created immortal and free of defect. It alone, moreover, is capable of reason and wisdom and partakes of divine love. For what cannot recognise God through reason cannot love him. And these three are common to the woman as well as to the man.<sup>56</sup>

The principle difference between the souls of men and women, he continues, is that men are capable of *more* wisdom and reason, which was demonstrated by the fact that Eve was capable of being seduced by the serpent and Adam was not.<sup>57</sup> The difference between Adam and Eve at the moment of their creation was thus not a qualitative one - Eve possessed all the qualities which made human beings the apex of God's creative force, but she possessed them in a smaller quantity.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, exegesis of Genesis 1.26 – 27 is usually focused on the soul, and emphasises the qualities which distinguish humanity as a whole in a way that renders the categories of masculine and feminine entirely distinct from the biological categories

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<sup>55</sup> Abelard, *Expositio*, p. 58.

<sup>56</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 78. 'Anima humana... immortalis et defectus ignara est condita. Sola quoque capax est rationis et sapientie et diuini amoris particeps. Que enim deum recognoscere per rationem nequeunt nequaquam eum diligere possunt. Et hec quidem tria tam uiro quam femine communia sunt', *Expositio* pp. 60-61.

<sup>57</sup> 'Per sapientiam quoque siue rationem uirum femine preeminuisse supra docuimus, et in hoc eum sapientiozem constare quod a serpente seduci non potuit', *Expositio*, p. 61.

of male and female. The emphasis discernible in modern scholarship on the question of whether Eve bore the image of God attributes a disproportionate level of significance to a subject which did not play a prominent role in several of the major twelfth-century treatments of the figure of Eve. Abelard is atypical, not only for arguing that Eve was not created in the image of God, but for the fact that he addresses this issue directly. The texts with which this thesis is concerned do not suggest that there was any consistent debate during the twelfth century about whether or not Eve bore both the image and likeness of God. It is possible to infer that the notion that Eve was created only in the likeness of God was not widely shared. However, it is only possible to infer this because they do not directly state otherwise, not because they consciously adhere to a particular argument within a persistent, widespread debate. None of these texts make an explicit case for Eve as *imago Dei*, and none of them except Abelard's *Expositio* approach Genesis 1.26 – 27 as a means by which to address the theological position of women.

In addition, the arguments presented by Guibert and Abelard regarding Eve as *imago Dei* need to be adequately contextualised. Whilst they cannot be dismissed as misogynistic aberrations, equally, they become distorted when viewed as components of a debate that is to some extent a construction of historiography. Guibert's representation of Eve as the body is swiftly abandoned within the scope of the *Moralia*'s hexaemeral commentary, and whilst his representation of Eve as an analogue of the body is atypical, his assertion that it is the soul alone which bears the image of God is not. In Abelard's *Expositio*, with its complex and paradoxical interaction between weakness and virtue, the idea that Eve did not bear the image of God is in fact a crucial part of the text's defence of her sin. More importantly, both Guibert and Abelard form part of a wider tendency to interpret Genesis 1.26 – 27 as a text which recounts the origin of the human

soul, and the capacities which distinguish it regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides.

## II. 'NEC ANCILLA NEC DOMINA SED SOCIA': THE FORMATION OF EVE FROM THE RIB

As was discussed above, for Guibert, the creation of both the earth and of Eve/the body signified the creation of base corporeality, and physical creation meant only sensual, carnal distractions from the pursuit of virtue. On the other hand, for Abelard, Hugh of St Victor, Peter Lombard and Hildegard of Bingen, examining the creation of the earth and of human beings provided an opportunity to examine the physical composition of the universe and its components. With the evident exception of Guibert's exclusively allegorical exegesis, it is possible to detect considerable concern with the mechanics of Eve's formation from Adam's rib, and literal exegesis of Eve's creation emerges in the texts discussed here as a means by which to access and comprehend the mysteries of the creation process.

It is possible to identify in these texts a consistent level of emphasis on the examination of observable phenomena, frequently authorised by the declaration in Romans 1.20 that 'from the creation of the world, the invisible things of him [God] are clearly seen, being understood via created things'.<sup>58</sup> This line is employed in all the texts discussed here as a scriptural justification for attempting to make the divine more comprehensible via human intelligence, and it is quoted to explain the hermeneutic and exegetical usefulness of examining observable things in order to elucidate divine

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<sup>58</sup> 'Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur', Romans 1.20.

mysteries.<sup>59</sup> At no point is it suggested that human intelligence is comparable with the divine or capable of fully understanding the ‘mysteries’ of the hexaemeron narrative: human knowledge and agency are always subordinate to the divine. Nonetheless, these texts demonstrate an identifiable preoccupation with the earth and the body as means by which to explore natural law and the physical processes of the creation, rather than employing them to signify base physicality.

In terms of the creation of Eve, this preoccupation manifests itself in the form of literal interpretation of her formation from Adam’s rib, and a concern with examining how this process supposedly progressed. However, the significance of the allegorical and symbolic readings of Eve’s creation cannot be overlooked. As will be discussed below, there is an identifiable tendency to provide surprisingly egalitarian metaphorical accounts of the reason for Eve’s creation, and for the reason this creative process occurred in the way it did. Genesis states simply that Eve was created to provide Adam with a ‘helper’ who was ‘like himself’ (‘adiutorium simile sui’).<sup>60</sup> However, the commentary on Eve’s creation discussed here endows her with substantially more significance. She is frequently represented as an analogue of the Church, emerging from the side of Adam as the Church emerged from the side of the crucified Christ. Moreover, rather than being only a helper to Adam, there is an identifiable tradition in twelfth-century writing of interpreting the manner of Eve’s creation as an indication of her parity.

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<sup>59</sup> The notion of the divine being comprehensible through human intellect was a potentially problematic assertion. Cizewski has commented on hexaemeral commentators’ use of Romans 1.20 in this context, and discusses its use in Abelard’s *Expositio*, Rupert of Deutz’s *Commentariorum in Genesim* and Hugh of St Victor’s *De tribus diebus*; see *Doctrine of Creation* pp. 387-9. Its use by Abelard is wholly unsurprising; indeed Cizewski describes it as his ‘favourite quotation’, *ibid.*, p. 389; see *Expositio* p. 6. However, in addition to aforementioned works, it also appears in Hugh’s *De sacramentis*, pp. 75 and 189, Lombard’s *Sententiae*, I. 3, 1 and Hildegard’s *Scivias*, 1.3, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Genesis 2.18.

## LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CREATION OF EVE FROM THE RIB

The texts with which this thesis is concerned devote considerable attention to clarifying and rationalising the implausible series of the physical processes which enabled Eve to be formed from a rib. Here there are two concerns which arise with relative frequency. First, there is the question of why Adam needed to be asleep before God took the rib from him. It is widely agreed that God submerged Adam not into ordinary human sleep but a form of divine anaesthesia, in order to spare him any pain he might have suffered as a result of his rib having been removed, and in order to demonstrate the creative force of God.<sup>61</sup>

Second, and of substantially greater interest, was the question of how Eve's body in its entirety could possibly have originated with a single rib, and whether anything was added to the rib. It is possible to discern that this process of the rib's having had been 'built' ('aedificavit') into Eve was, unsurprisingly, an issue which provoked some debate.<sup>62</sup> Both Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard testify to the significance of Eve's creation as a significant locus of discourse during this period, with both referring explicitly to people who question how Eve could have been created in this way, and even those who might be sceptical about whether it happened at all. Hugh writes that he devotes so much time to the exposition of Genesis 2.22 on account of those who are inclined to marvel at ('mirare'), and especially those who doubt ('dubitare'), the plausibility of Eve's creation.<sup>63</sup> Lombard does not use the word 'doubt' explicitly, but he likewise states that the question of whether something was added to

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<sup>61</sup> Abelard, *Expositio*, 482 - 486; Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 36 - 37; Lombard, *Sententiae*, 2.18, 3.

<sup>62</sup> 'Et aedificavit Dominus Deus costam...', Genesis 2.22.

<sup>63</sup> 'Hec opera iccirco distinximus propter eos qui mirari solent vel potius dubitare quomodo de costa viri mulier facta sit', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 37.

the rib frequently arises, and that the correct answer (that is, that nothing was added) is one to which some people object.<sup>64</sup>

Abelard, Lombard, Hugh and Hildegard all devote considerable attention to establishing and clarifying that Eve was made from the rib alone, and not from any other additional external material. Abelard writes that it is to be understood that the flesh of Adam would transfigure or move toward ('transierit') becoming the flesh of Eve. He too states that it is possible to question whether Eve originated from the rib alone or whether some other element added ('elementis aliquid superadditum sit') as he believes is the case with the growth of children. However, he maintains that the former statement is correct and the flesh which adhered to Adam's rib is the only substance from which the body of Eve was derived.<sup>65</sup>

Whereas Abelard likens the process of Eve's creation to a quantifiable physical phenomenon – that is, procreation – Hugh and Lombard describe it as a miracle. Peter Lombard explains that Eve was formed from the rib via the same miraculous process which enabled Jesus to multiply the five loaves of bread into enough to feed five thousand people. He is equally careful to emphasise that no extra material was added to the rib:

But if God added anything extrinsic in making the body of the woman, then the addition would be greater than the rib itself, and so the woman should rather be said to have been made from that from which she had received the greater part of her substance than from the rib. So it remains that the body of the woman be said to have been made by divine power from the substance of the rib alone, without any extrinsic addition, by that very same miracle by which Jesus would later multiply the five

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<sup>64</sup> 'Solet etiam quaeri utrum de costa illa sine adiectione rei extrinsecae facta sit mulier. Quod quibusdam non placuit', *Sententiae*, 2.28, 4.

<sup>65</sup> 'Unde datur intelligi quod coste illi aliquid carnis adhererit, quod in carnem mulieris transierit. Si quis forte requirit utrum illud solum quod de Adam sumptum est in corpus mulieris transierit, an de elementis aliquid superadditum sit ad totam corporis quantitatem reddendam, sicut et de incrementis puerorum credimus, ista profecto sententia...', *Expositio*, 489 - 490.

loaves of bread with a heavenly blessing and five thousand men were filled.<sup>66</sup>

This explanation, as well as the comparison with the loaves and fishes miracle, is clearly borrowed from Hugh's *De sacramentis*, which gives a virtually identical explanation.<sup>67</sup> To describe the creation of Eve as miracle is an undeniably positive assessment, and to find this statement in the work of two of the most prominent scholars of the central middle ages discredits the idea that 'clerical antifeminism' was the distinguishing characteristic of representations of Eve during this period. However, Hugh's and Lombard's discussion of the 'miraculous' process of Eve's creation reveals something other than a marked lack of misogyny in responses to the first woman. It also demonstrates the extent to which representations and discussions of Eve provided the impetus and opportunity to examine more fundamental issues; in this case, the fabric of the universe and its components.

For Hugh of St Victor, the creation of Eve necessitated an explanation of the fundamental nature of matter. Hugh describes the way in which all matter can be reduced to basic atomic level, explaining that an atom is the most basic or 'simple' unit from which all matter is ultimately comprised: 'of such a nature are the simple "bodies" which are called atoms', he writes, 'which are not *from* matter, because they are simple, but rather they *become* matter, because they are in themselves multiplied'.<sup>68</sup> Since atoms are the most basic components of all the matter in the universe, the appearance of the first atoms was the very beginning of the world's existence - the point at which

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<sup>66</sup> *Sentences Book II* trans. Silano, p. 78. 'Ceterum si ad perficiendum corpus mulieris deus extrinsecum augmentum addidisset, maius illud esset quam ipsa costa; ideo que potius de illo quam de costa mulier facta deberet dici, de quo plures accepisset substantiae partes. Restat igitur ut de sola ipsius costae substantia, sine omni extrinseco additamento, per diuinam potentiam in semet ipsa multiplicata, mulieris corpus factum dicatur: Eo sane miraculo quo postea de quinque panibus iesu caelesti benedictione multiplicatis, quinque millia hominum satiata sunt', *Sententiae*, 2.28, 4.

<sup>67</sup> *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 36.

<sup>68</sup> 'Qualia sunt corpora simplicia quos aethomos dicunt que quidem ex materia non sunt quia simplicia sunt sed tamen materia fiunt quia in semetipsis multiplicantur', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 37. My italics.



something was made out of nothing ('de nihilo aliquid factum est').<sup>69</sup> To make something from nothing is the ultimate creative act, a process which Hugh describes as the first mode or work of operating. There are six such works or modes according to which all actions are brought into effect, which correspond to the six days of the hexaemeron.<sup>70</sup> Second in this hierarchy of operating modes is the act of multiplication ('opus multiplicationis'), by which extant matter is expanded and developed into something greater in terms of substance and quality ('de aliquo aliquid facere secundum substantiam et qualitatem in maius').<sup>71</sup> The process by which Eve was formed from Adam's rib was thus achieved through this second mode of operating in which things are created via the multiplication and development of extant material. The substance of the rib was 'multiplied' and formed into the physical form of Eve without any external addition, because God was able to expand and multiply the extant atoms from Adam's rib. It is thus not right, Hugh concludes, to say that the rib received any additional material in order to grow sufficiently to the body of the woman.<sup>72</sup> Hence, rather than being content with the justification that Eve's creation was a miracle and thus axiomatically inexplicable, Hugh goes on to offer a literal, scientific explanation of how this miracle operated. It is possible to see here then that the creation of Eve provoked discussion of significant theological and philosophical concerns entirely unrelated to gender; in this case, the ways in which divine creative processes can be elucidated through the examination of how they manifest themselves in observable physical phenomena.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 1.6, 37.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 1.6, 37.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 1.6, 37.

<sup>72</sup> 'Hoc modo operandi de substantia costae in se divina virtute absque extrinseco additamento multiplicato corpus mulieris factum est. Neque enim convenit ut costam illam extrinsecus additamentum recepisse dicamus quatinus in eam quantitatem excresceret que corpori mulieris formando sufficere potuisset', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 37.

For Peter Lombard, the principal concern raised by the mechanics of Eve's creation also relates to the fundamental nature of physical phenomena. Having borrowed Hugh's comparison with the loaves and fishes miracle, Lombard elucidates the miraculous nature of Eve's creation with reference to the Augustinian conception of natural law. He begins by explaining Augustine's account of the seminal reasons which govern physical processes:

As Augustine says, God placed seminal reasons in things. By these reasons, some things come from others, as such a grain from this seed, such a fruit from this tree, and suchlike... And those things which are made according to seminal cause are said to be made naturally, because the course of nature has become known to men to be such.<sup>73</sup>

However, Lombard continues, there are certain miraculous exceptions to established natural law and the observable ways in which it proceeds. The creation of Eve is one of these exceptions:

Augustine says that these [exceptional] things are the ones which are made through grace, or are made miraculously, not naturally... Among these, he places the making of woman through the man's rib, saying as follows: 'That it would be necessary for woman to be made in this way was not established in things, but hidden in God. Each and every course of nature has its natural laws. Over this course, the creator has at his disposal the power over all things to do something other than their natural order requires: namely, that a dry staff suddenly flower and bear fruit; and that a woman who was sterile in her youth should give birth in her old age...'<sup>74</sup>

Eve's creation clearly does not match the 'course of nature [which] has become known to men'. Lombard identifies and addresses here the disparity between the way in which

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<sup>73</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, pp. 79-80. 'Ut ait Augustinus, quia inseruit deus seminales rationes rebus, secundum quas alia ex aliis proueniunt, ut de hoc semine tale granum, de hac arbore talis fructus, et huiusmodi... Et illa quidem quae secundum causam seminalem fiunt, dicuntur naturaliter fieri, quia ita cursus naturae hominibus innotuit', *Sententiae*, 2.18, 5-6.

<sup>74</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 80. 'Haec autem dicit Augustinus esse illa quae per gratiam fiunt, uel ad ea significanda non naturaliter, sed mirabiliter fiunt. Inter quae mulieris facturam de costa uiri ponit, ita dicens: ut mulierem ita fieri necesse foret, non in rebus conditum, sed in deo absconditum erat. Omnis naturae cursus habet naturales leges. Super hunc naturalem cursum creator habet apud se posse de omnibus facere aliud quam eorum naturalis ratio habet: ut uirga scilicet arida repente floreat, fructum gignat; et in iuuentute sterilis femina in senectute pariat', *Sententiae*, 2.18, 6.

Eve was formed, and the observable natural laws and processes which usually govern the growth and development of physical phenomena.

Hildegard's *Scivias* also offers a naturalistic literal interpretation of Genesis 2.22. Hildegard, like Hugh and Lombard, establishes that Eve and Adam were made from the same substance, and that Eve was created entirely from the material comprised in Adam's rib without any extraneous matter having been added. Hildegard demonstrates this through the use of an unusual but effective botanical analogy. She writes that Eve was 'grafted' ('insito') from Adam's rib. The rib received heat and moisture from Adam, she says, and was thus it able to produce the figure of Eve.<sup>75</sup> This botanical analogy implies that Eve was 'grown' from Adam's side via the 'scion' provided by the rib. This signifies the indivisible bond which joined Eve to her husband from the very beginning of her existence, and also elucidates the image which accompanies Hildegard's vision of the creation and fall in *Scivias*, in which the wing-shaped Eve is depicted as having 'sprouted' (*exire*) from Adam's side.<sup>76</sup> This explanation of Eve's creation also clarifies Hildegard's apparently inconsistent statements regarding the respective roles of Eve and Adam and the ways in which these roles correspond to women and men more generally, which argue that Eve is simultaneously esteemed and inferior. Eve and Adam share a fundamentally similar composition, and whilst she is certainly weaker than him, they are ultimately stronger and more productive when they operate in union. Hence Hildegard writes without contradiction that Eve's creation demonstrates that women must remain under the rule of their husbands, but also (referring to 1 Corinthians 11.12)

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<sup>75</sup> 'Nam de costa insito calore et humore Adae, Eva formata est', *Scivias*, 1.2, 255.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.2, 55.

that women and men were created for each other's mutual benefit – as Eve is of the man, so he is of her.<sup>77</sup>

#### METAPHORICAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF EVE'S CREATION FROM THE RIB

Whilst the physical processes of the creation of Eve are generally dealt with by providing literal exposition of Genesis 2.22, there are two particularly significant allegorical readings of Genesis 2.21-22 which tend to accompany the literal explanation of Eve's creation. These interpretations deal with why Eve was created, and what the method of her creation reveals about her purpose and significance, and they make particularly illuminating contributions to the study of twelfth-century representations of Eve, since they are remarkably positive about her function and status. The first presents Eve as a typological representation of the Church's creation from the side of the crucified Christ. The second presents Eve as Adam's equivalent and partner, stating that her creation from the rib was intended to indicate symbolically that she was to be neither superior nor subordinate to Adam, but equal to him.

To begin with the first of these allegorical interpretations, the representation of Eve as a typological symbol of the Church has its roots in Ephesians 5.28 – 32. This passage compares the union of Adam and Eve to that of Christ and the Church:

And all men ought to love their wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever had hatred for his own flesh, but nourishes and cares for it, just as Christ does the Church... on account of this a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament, but I speak in terms of Christ and the Church.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> 'Mulier sub potestate viri manet', *ibid.*, 1.2, 259. 'Mulier propter virum creata est, et vir propter mulierem factus est; quoniam ut illa de viro, ita et vir de illa ne alterum ab altero discebat in unitate natorum suorum, quia in uno opere, unum operantur, quemadmodum aer et ventus opera sua invicem complicant', *ibid.*, 1.2, 302.

<sup>78</sup> 'Ita et viri debent diligere uxores suas ut corpora sua qui suam uxorem diligit se ipsum diligit, nemo enim unquam carnem suam odio habuit sed nutrit et fovet eam sicut et Christus ecclesiam... Propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem suam et adhaerebit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una. Sacramentum hoc magnum est ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia', Ephesians 5.28-32.

This idea appears in Patristic exegesis of Genesis dating back to Tertullian, who relates it specifically to Eve's creation from the rib. Tertullian's *De anima* asserts that Adam's being put to sleep to allow Eve to be created prefigured Christ's 'sleeping' on the cross so that the Church might be taken from his side like Eve from that of Adam. He reinforces the Eve/Church connection by interpreting the phrase 'mother of all the living', used to describe Eve in Genesis 3.20, as a reference both to Eve and to the Church itself:

For as Adam was a figure of Christ, Adam's sleep shadowed the death of Christ, who was to sleep a mortal slumber, that from the wound inflicted on His side might, in like manner (as Eve was formed), be typified the Church, the true mother of the living.<sup>79</sup>

However, this idea was more likely borrowed by twelfth-century commentators from the work of Augustine. Augustine's *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* refers to the same passage in Ephesians, agreeing that Eve's creation from Adam's side prefigures the creation of the Church:

So then, what as a matter of history was fulfilled in Adam, as a matter of prophecy signifies Christ... He [Christ] too was put to sleep, falling asleep in death, in order that his consort the Church might be formed for him... So then the Church was formed for him as his consort from his side, that is, from faith in his death and baptism, because his side was pierced with a lance and poured out blood and water.<sup>80</sup>

This representation of Eve as the Church prefigured appears to have had some currency in twelfth-century commentaries on Genesis.<sup>81</sup> Abelard refers to it briefly, stating that

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<sup>79</sup> 'Et vocavit Adam nomen uxoris suae Eva eo quod mater esset cunctorum viventium' Genesis 3.20. Tertullian, 'A Treatise on the Soul' trans. Peter Holmes, *The Writings of Tertullian Vol. II*, Anti-Nicene Christian Library vol. XV (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1870) pp. 410-541, p. 497. 'Si enim Adam de Christo figuram dabat, somnus Adae mors erat Christi dormituri in mortem, ut de injuria perinde lateris ejus vera mater viventium figuraretur Ecclesia' PL vol. 1 col 723 B.

<sup>80</sup> Augustine, *On Genesis* trans. Hill, pp. 96-97. 'Ergo quod per historiam impletum est in Adam, per prophetiam significat Christum... Ergo et ipse soporatus est dormitione passionis, ut ei conjux Ecclesia formaretur... Formata est ergo ei conjux Ecclesia de latere ejus, id est de fide passionis et Baptismi. Nam percussus latus ejus lancea, sanguinem et aquam profudit', *De Genesis contra Manichaeos*, 2.24.

<sup>81</sup> And also prior to the twelfth century – in addition to Tertullian and Augustine, Flood has identified this idea in the work of Isidore of Seville and Rabanus Maurus among others; see idem, *Representations of Eve*, p. 14.

‘the apostle states that in these words of Adam [“bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”] the great sacrament of Christ and the Church is prefigured’.<sup>82</sup> He repeats the idea in the *Hymnarius Paraclitensis*.<sup>83</sup> Hugh of St Victor devotes a little more attention to Eve as a type of the Church, in a passage clearly influenced by Augustine’s rendering of the idea:

As far as [the creation of Eve] pertains to a spiritual understanding therefore, the first Adam furnished while sleeping the material whence his spouse might be created from his side, since afterwards the second Adam [Christ], rendered unconscious by the sleep of death on the cross, that his spouse the Church might be formed, ministered sacraments by shedding from his blood with water.<sup>84</sup>

Peter Lombard also describes the creation of Eve as being representative of the Church’s emergence. Writing of Eve’s formation he states that

In this work, the sacrament of Christ and his Church is also prefigured. For just as the woman was formed from the side of the sleeping man, so the Church was formed from the sacraments which flowed from the side of Christ sleeping on the cross, namely blood and water, by which we are redeemed from punishment and washed clean of our faults.<sup>85</sup>

These associations of the creation of Eve with the creation of the Church are both significant and affirmative. Had Eve been widely considered worthy only of disdain, to compare her with so significant an institution as the Church would have been impossible. However, Flood advises caution regarding the positive nature of this association:

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<sup>82</sup> Abelard, *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 120. ‘Apostolus in istis uerbis Ade magnum sacramentum Christi et ecclesie prefigurari dicat’, *Expositio*, 500.

<sup>83</sup> ‘De costa viri fit sopiti femina / Ubi Christi sponsa ejus est Ecclesia / Mors Christi sopor est, de cujus latere / Nos mundat prodiens aqua cum sanguine’, PL vol. 178, col. 1786 A. See also *ibid.* col. 1178 D.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Quantum vero pertinet ad spiritalem intelligentiam idcirco primus Adam dormiendo materiam unde illi sponsa crearetur de latere suo prestitit quoniam secundus adam postea in cruce sompno mortis soporatus ut sponsa illius ecclesia formeretur et sanguinem cum aque de latere fundendo sacramenta ministravit’, Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 36.

<sup>85</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 77. ‘In quo etiam opere sacramentum christi et ecclesiae figuratum est; quia sicut mulier de latere uiri dormientis formata est, ita ecclesia ex sacramentis quae de latere christi in cruce dormientis profluxerunt, scilicet sanguine et aqua; quibus redimimur a poenis atque abluimur a culpis’, *Sententiae* 2.18, 3.

The Eve/church identification is largely based on positive associations (in that both Eve and the Church are the mother of the living and Eve/church is the spouse of Adam/Christ). It must be observed, however, that whether the Eve/church comparison is a wholly positive one depends on one's ecclesiology. Paul certainly had doubts about the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 11.2 - 4), and Matthew's parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13.24 - 30) along with the mixture of clean and unclean animals in Noah's ark (Genesis 7.2 - 3) were taken by early Christians as symbols of the mixed nature of a fallible institution with human participants.<sup>86</sup>

Several aspects of this argument are questionable. Flood gives no indication of whom these sceptical early Christians might be, offering no evidence to substantiate his suggestion that the association between Eve and the Church was read as being negative or critical. Also, the misgivings of Matthew and Paul are somewhat tangential here, since the scriptural origin of the Eve/Church typology makes it clear that the association is meant to be a positive one. Ephesians 5 clearly constructs an image of a loving and mutually nurturing relationship between Eve/the Church and Adam/Christ. In addition, even if we assume that Paul, Matthew and 'the early Christians' had intended to express their misgivings about the early Church by connecting it with Eve, it is unlikely that any theologian writing as late as the twelfth century would have doubted whether or not the existence of the Church was a good thing. In short, it seems rather more likely that the comparison between Eve and the Church was, at least as far as its twelfth-century redactions were concerned, a positive one.

The other significant allegorical reading of Eve's creation relates to the symbolic significance of God having specifically selected the rib from which to form the body of Eve. Abelard, Hugh and Lombard all argue that God created Eve from Adam's rib in order to indicate the parity and equivalence she was to share with Adam. Had she been created from his feet or from his head, it is argued, this would have indicated that she

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<sup>86</sup> Flood, *Representations of Eve*, p. 16.

was intended to be subordinate to him, or superior to him. In a simultaneously literal and allegorical reading, Abelard explains that

[God] decided to form the woman from the side of man, not from a higher or lower part, so that before sin he saw her as a kind of partner and companion, not as a superior or subordinate... And so he decided to work in that first man in such a way namely that he did not restore the rib but substituted flesh for the rib, so that [Adam] might especially learn through this, when he felt the place that he lacked the rib, and felt somewhat weakened in strength, so that a woman might be made from him, how important to God is the woman also is whom he decided to create at some detriment or loss to the strength of his bone structure. Hence also the man would love her the more, because he recognised that she was not created through herself, but out of him.<sup>87</sup>

A precedent for this idea may be found in Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, which states that 'the fact that the woman was made from him from his side signifies clearly enough how dear the union between a man and his wife should be'.<sup>88</sup> However, Augustine does not state specifically that Eve's creation from the rib indicates any kind of equality. He seems simply to emphasise that Eve was made from the same matter as Adam – that she was 'like unto him' and equivalent in composition rather than in status. Flood suggests Jewish exegesis of Genesis as another possible source:

It is this type of reasoning which gives rise to one of the most lasting contributions of the Midrash to the Christian theology of the significance of the rib. In the passage Yahweh is speaking: "I will not create her from [Adam's] head, lest she be swelled-headed... nor from the foot, lest she be a gadabout; but from the modest part of man".<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, pp. 117-18. 'De latere uiri, non de superiori vel inferiori parte mulierem formare decreuit, ut eam quasi sociam et collateralem, non quasi prelatam uel subiectam ... In illo itaque primo uiro id facere decreuit, ut uidelicet non costam restitueret, sed pro costa carnem substitueret, ut per hoc maxime admoneretur cum locum illum costa vacuum sentiret, et quasi se viribus infirmatum, ut ex ipso femina fieret; quanti apud deum femina quoque sit quam cum aliquo detrimento vel debilitate uiri vel roboris ex ossea eius fortitudine creare decreuit. Hinc quoque uir illam amplius diligeret quod non per se illam, sed de ipso creatam agnosceret', *Expositio*, p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> Augustine ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson, *The City of God Against the Pagans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) p. 539. 'Quod uero femina illi ex ejus latere facta est, etiam hinc satis significatum est quam chara mariti et uxoris debeat esse conjunctio', *De civitate Dei*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 12.28.

<sup>89</sup> Flood, *Representations of Eve*, p. 44.



Again though, there is no suggestion of parity or equivalence here, and nothing to indicate that Eve should not be considered inferior to Adam.

It appears thus appears that Abelard is the originator of this remarkably egalitarian representation of Eve as the first woman, although Hugh of St Victor, writing only slightly later than Abelard's *Expositio*, uses the same idea. Hugh writes that

[Eve] was made from the rib in order that it might be demonstrated that she was created for a partnership of love, lest perhaps she would have been seen as taking precedence over the man in domination if she had been made from the head, while if from the feet, that she was to be subjected to him in servitude. Because, then, she was produced as neither a slave nor a mistress but a partner to the man, she was made from neither his head nor from his feet, but from his side.<sup>90</sup>

Hugh's redaction of the idea is thus more elaborate than that of Abelard. He removes Abelard's caveat that Eve was only meant to be considered an equivalent *before* sin, and he clarifies this equality further by adding that any intended superiority or subordination would have been indicated by God having chosen to create her either from Adam's head or from his feet. In his subsequent redaction of this idea in his discussion of the sacrament of marriage, he makes the parity between Eve and Adam more explicit. Whereas he had not previously mentioned equality explicitly, he writes that Eve's creation from the rib indicated that she was created in order to participate in an association of equals ('*equalitatem societatis*').<sup>91</sup> Peter Lombard repeats the words of Hugh of St Victor more or less exactly:

[Eve] was formed not from just any part of [Adam's] body, but from his side, so that it should be shown that she was created for the partnership of love, lest, if perhaps she had been made from his head, she should be

<sup>90</sup> 'Facta est autem de latere viri ut ostenderetur quia in consortium creabatur dilectionis ne forte si fuisset de capite facta preferenda videretur viro ad dominationem ut si de pedibus subicienda ad servitutem. Quia ergo viro nec domina nec ancilla parabatur sed socia nec de capite nec de pedibus sed de latere fuerat producenda', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 35.

<sup>91</sup> 'Propterea de medio facta est ut ad equalitatem societatis facta probaretur', *De sacramentis*, 2.11, 4.

perceived as set over the man in domination; or if from his feet, as if subject to him in servitude. Therefore, since she was made neither to dominate nor to serve the man, but as his partner, she had to be produced neither from his head, nor from his feet, but from his side.<sup>92</sup>

This sense of Eve's parity is not confined to Latin commentary. The Anglo-Norman Adam poet, whilst he does not use the argument about Eve's creation from the rib, was equally concerned with establishing Eve as Adam's equivalent rather than his inferior. In the opening exchange of the *Mystère d'Adam*, the voice of God instructs Adam with the following lines: 'I have given you a good companion. / She is your wife; her name is Eve. / She is your wife and your peer'.<sup>93</sup> However, the rib topos appears to have been fairly well known, and is found in vernacular texts as late as *Dives and Pauper* and Chaucer's Parson's Tale.<sup>94</sup> Whilst it has attracted some scholarly attention, it is rarely discussed in detail.<sup>95</sup> Despite being repeated by several of the most influential theologians of the central middle ages, arguments about Eve's equivalence to Adam are not sufficiently well known in modern scholarship to have provided a possible challenge to the assumption that medieval representations of Eve are largely misogynistic. It must also be admitted that none of the twelfth-century writers who employ the argument could be described as feminists, or proto-feminists, even were

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<sup>92</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 77. '[Eva facta est] non de qualibet parte corporis uiri, sed de latere eius formata est, ut ostenderetur quia in consortium creabatur dilectionis: Ne forte si fuisset de capite facta, viro ad dominationem uideretur praeferenda; aut si pedibus, ad seruitutem subicienda. Quia igitur viro nec domina nec ancilla parabatur, sed socia, nec de capite nec de pedibus, sed de latere fuerat producenda,' *Sententiae*, 2.18, 2.

<sup>93</sup> 'Je tai dune bon cumpainun / ce est ta femme eua a noun / Ce est ta femme e tun pareil', *Mystère* ed. Sletsjöe, 8 – 10.

<sup>94</sup> 'God made nout woman of the foot to ben mannys thral ne he made hyr nout of the hefd to ben hys maystir but of his syde & of his rybbe to ben his felawe in loue', *Dives and Pauper* ed. Priscilla Heath Barnum, Early English Texts Society Original Series 275 (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press: 1976) vol. 1, 66-67; 'But God made womman of the ryb of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe unto man', 'The Parson's Tale', *The Riverside Chaucer* ed. Larry Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 927.

<sup>95</sup> See for example, Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*, pp. 101-103; Erik Kooper, 'Loving the Unequal Equal: Medieval Theologians and Marital Affection' in Robert Edwards and Stephen Spector eds, *The Olde Daunce: Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World* pp. 44-56, see 45-46; David d'Avray and M. Tausche, 'Marriage Sermons in the *ad status* Collections of the Central Middle Ages', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age* vol. 47 (1980), p. 107.

these not deeply anachronistic appellations. As will be discussed in the next chapter concerning representations of Eve as the first wife, use of the rib argument did not prevent anyone from arguing that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. Nonetheless, it remains the case that there were prominent twelfth-century scholars who argued that Eve was created as Adam's equal.

### III. 'IN PARADISO VOLUPTATIS': REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE AND PRELAPSARIAN HUMAN NATURE

The nature and composition of prelapsarian mankind was an issue that provoked questions from many during this period, as Hugh of St Victor asserts.<sup>96</sup> Discussions of prelapsarian human nature tend to focus on two main concerns in relation to the figure of Eve. First, the significance of the placing of Eve in paradise – whereas Adam had been created within paradise, Eve was created externally and established in the garden of Eden subsequently. Second, there is the question of the role that mankind was intended to perform in paradise, and the status of mankind as the most significant occupant of the terrestrial sphere of the created universe.

#### THE PLACING OF EVE IN PARADISE

Regarding the establishment of the first human beings in paradise, it is generally agreed that Adam was created outside it and then placed there afterwards, whereas Eve was created within paradise itself. In the *Expositio*, Abelard writes that Eve was created in a better situation than Adam; that is, inside the garden of Eden itself. However, despite this privileged creation, she proved weaker and more susceptible to temptation than

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<sup>96</sup> *De sacramentis*, p. 145.

Adam, who had been made in less exalted circumstances; thus ‘the woman was created in a better place [than Adam] but behaved worse when tempted’.<sup>97</sup> This idea is taken from Ambrose’s *Paradiso*, although Abelard tones down here the misogyny of Ambrose’s original formulation, which uses the location of Eve’s creation as a justification for the subordination of ungratefully wayward women to the supposed authority and protection of their ‘superior’ male counterparts:

Note that the man was created outside Paradise, whereas woman was made within it. This teaches us that each person acquires grace by reason of virtue, not because of locality or of race. Hence, although created outside Paradise, that is, in an inferior place, man is found to be superior, whereas woman, created in a better place, that is to say, in Paradise, is found to be inferior. She was first to be deceived and was responsible for deceiving the man...And Paul says: “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and was in sin”... For she who was made for assistance needs the protection of a man, because the head of woman is man, who, while he believed that he would have the assistance of his wife, fell because of her.<sup>98</sup>

However, Abelard seems to have changed his mind about this issue at some point during the 1130s, and the seventh letter to Heloise demonstrates the same idea, taken from Ambrose again but reworked into a far more generous representation of Eve:

Indeed if we trace the benefits of this divine grace and honour shown to women from the creation of the world, we at once find that the creation of woman excelled by a certain dignity, since it was clearly in paradise. Man was created outside paradise.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Abelard, *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 102. ‘Vir quippe, extra paradisum factus de limo terre, in paradisum translatus est. Mulier uero in paradiso de uiro creata est, que tamen uirum et se pariter de paradiso eiecit, sicut sequentia manifeste tradunt. Ex quo patenter innuitur non tam loca quam mores ad salutem pertinere, cum mulier in meliori loco facta, deterior in seductione fuerit’, *Expositio*, 393.

<sup>98</sup> Ambrose, *Paradise* trans. Savage pp. 301-2. ‘Denique extra paradisum factus, hoc est, in inferiori loco, vir melior invenitur; et illa quae in meliore loco hoc est, in paradiso facta est, inferior reperitur. Mulier enim prior decepta est, et uirum ipsa decepit... Et Paulus ait: Quia Adam non est seductus: mulier autem seducta in praeuocatione fuit... Nam ecce illa quae in adiumentum facta est viro, praesidio virili indiget; quia uir caput est mulieris: ille autem qui adiumentum uxoris habiturum se esse credebat, lapsus est per uxorem’, *Paradiso* 1.4, 24, *Exameron & De paradiso*, ed. C. Shenkl, CSEL 32, 1 (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1897).

<sup>99</sup> ‘Abelard to Heloise: The History of Women’s Roles in Christianity (Letter 7)’ ed. and trans. Vera Morton and Jocelyn Wogan Browne in idem, *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003) p. 76. ‘Cujus quidem divinae gratiae beneficia vel honorem feminis exhibita si ab ipso exordio mundi repetamus, reperiemus statim mulieris creationem quadam praecellere dignitate, cum ipsa scilicet in paradiso, uir extra creatus sit’, Muckle ed., ‘The Letters of Heloise on Religious Life and Abelard’s First Reply’, p. 264. Morton and Wogan-Browne label this

Hence Abelard takes a misogynistic Patristic representation of Eve and translates it into a positive representation, maintaining the impression of Patristic authority whilst providing praise of Eve and of women in general. Peter Dronke has established that Abelard was the first person to employ this interpretation of Eve's creation, which appears in numerous later texts.<sup>100</sup> Blamires concurs, pointing out that Abelard repeats the idea in a sermon on the Assumption.<sup>101</sup> The sermon that Blamires refers to here discusses Eve's privileged creation in the context of the redemptive agency of the Virgin Mary.<sup>102</sup> As with the rib topos, it seems once again that Abelard and his exegetical creativity lie at the origin of a particularly positive representation of Eve which proved influential in later medieval defences of the first woman.<sup>103</sup>

However, this interpretation of Eve's 'privileged' creation does not seem to have been enormously popular among other writers of the twelfth century. Hugh of St Victor does emphasise the fact that Adam was created first, and then moved to paradise after his creation, since the Genesis text clearly states that he was not created but placed there ('referto positus est homo, non creatus').<sup>104</sup> However, he does not attribute any particular significance to this; nor does he suggest that Eve's creation within paradise is indicative of any particular privilege. Lombard does not consider the location of Eve's creation as an indicator of privilege either, although he does suggest that Adam's having been created outside paradise might have indicated that mankind would not stay there

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letter 7, following the numbering used in PL, whereas Muckle labels this letter as number 6 in the correspondence.

<sup>100</sup> Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) p. 137.

<sup>101</sup> Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*, p. 104.

<sup>102</sup> 'Creatum extra paradisum legimus Adam, in paradiso Evam resuscitatum in terris Dominum, in coelestibus vero corpus maternum... De veteri Adam creata est Eva; novus autem Adam et veteris Redemptor generatur ex Maria. Illa de paradiso illum suum tam virum quam parentem expulit, hanc hodie suus tam sponsus quam filius ad feliciorum paradysum assumpsit', PL vol. 178, col. 542 C – D.

<sup>103</sup> Blamires has traced it as late as the work of Christine de Pisan; see *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*, pp. 103-5.

<sup>104</sup> *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 33.

for long: Genesis ‘plainly indicates that man, who was created outside paradise, was afterwards placed in paradise. This is said to have been done because he was not going to remain in it’.<sup>105</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF PRELAPSARIAN MANKIND IN PARADISE

Regarding the prelapsarian role of mankind, Genesis states that mankind was ordained to rule (‘dominare’) and to preside (‘praeesse’) over the living elements which occupied the earthly components of the carefully calibrated universal hierarchy:

And [God] said ‘let us make man in our image and likeness and let him have precedence...’ and he blessed them, and said ‘increase and multiply and fill the earth and make it [your] subject, and rule over the fish of the sea and the flying-things of the sky and all the creatures which move upon the earth’.<sup>106</sup>

This description of the position occupied by Adam and Eve (the statement applies to them both equally) places them at the heart of the creation Adam and Eve were to govern the earth as God governed the cosmos, and the notion of mankind’s being the crowning achievement of the six day work sustains the distinctively anthropic emphasis discernible in twelfth-century responses to the creation narrative.

The purpose of mankind’s existence is usually deemed twofold – human beings were created in order to worship God, and also to rule over the rest of his creation. They are able to fulfil these functions on account of being the only corporeal being created with a soul, and with the capacity for reason. This privileged status also accounts for mankind’s having been created after every other physical component of the earth.

Abelard writes of Genesis 1.26 (‘let us make man’) that

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<sup>105</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 74. ‘His uerbis aperte moyses insinuat quod homo, extra paradisum creatus, postmodum in paradiso sit positus. Quod ideo factum dicitur, quia non erat in eo permansurus’, *Sententiae*, 2.17, 4.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Et ait “faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram et praesit”... benedixitque illis Deus et ait “crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram et subicite eam et dominamini piscibus maris et volatilibus caeli et universis animantibus quae moventur super terram...”’, Genesis 1.26-28.

All other things having been created, or disposed on account of man, he [God] created him lastly, and as in the conclusion of his works established him. To whom [mankind], as the end and cause of his creation, all other things tended, since on account of him all things were made. Whence it was not right for him to be created unless he ought to be in charge of these other things.<sup>107</sup>

As mentioned above, Abelard also writes that the human soul is the strongest of all souls ('validior est') and is thus fit to rule the rest of the earth, since it is alone in being capable of participating in divine wisdom and love.<sup>108</sup> He comments that the very words used in the Bible to describe the creation of mankind were employed in order to indicate the significance of mankind as the most significant occupant of the terrestrial component of the world: 'how excellent this particular creation is', Abelard writes of mankind, 'and how far superior to the others described above, is in fact expressed in these words, [spoken] as if conferring together in some sort of council for the making of something great'.<sup>109</sup> Peter Lombard was equally convinced of mankind's superior status within the universe: as mankind was made in order to serve God, he writes, so the world was created in order to serve mankind.<sup>110</sup> Likewise, Hildegard of Bingen writes that the world had been created for the service of mankind.<sup>111</sup>

The Adam poet is unique in his exegesis of Genesis 1.26-28, and numerous scholars have commented on the way in which establishment of Adam and Eve in paradise resembles a lord expecting homage from his vassals.<sup>112</sup> God instructs Adam

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<sup>107</sup> Abelard, *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 76. '“Faciamus hominem” - creavit ceteris omnibus sive dispositus propter hominem, eum novissime condidit, et tamquam in fine suorum operum constituit. Ad quem tamquam finem et causam sue creationis cetera omnia tendebant, cum propter eum fierent universa. Unde nec eum creari oportuit nisi ceteris, quibus praeesse debebat', *Expositio*, 249 – 250.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>109</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 77. 'Que quidem creatio quam excellens sit et ceteris suprapositis longe superior, ipsis quoque uerbis exprimitur tamquam in consilio quodam collatis ad magnum aliquid faciendum', *Expositio*, 254.

<sup>110</sup> 'Et sicut factus est homo propter Deum, id est ut ei serviret, ita mundus factus est propter hominem, scilicet ut ei serviret', *Sententiae*, 2. 1, 4.

<sup>111</sup> 'Ad servitutem hominis creata fuerat', *Scivias*, 1.2, 660.

<sup>112</sup> For example, Duby trans. B. Bray, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983) p.215; Wendy Morgan, '“Who was

that ‘You must never take arms against me’, and to his announcement that ‘I give it [this garden, i.e. Paradise] to you, to maintain and preserve...’, Adam dutifully answers that ‘I will entirely obey your command’.<sup>113</sup> Even assuming that the poet intended these supposed allusions to feudal hierarchy to be apparent, given that the semantic field of bondage, duty and servitude would have had distinct scriptural resonances for a twelfth-century audience, the significance of this apparently secularised rendering of scriptural edicts has perhaps been overstated, particularly by Morgan.<sup>114</sup> However, Morgan is right to dispute the tenability of Erich Auerbach’s argument that the *Mystère d’Adam* ‘domesticates’ (i.e. simplifies) its scriptural material in order to render it comprehensible to an unenlightened laity.<sup>115</sup> The poet glosses and dramatises this passage in a way which communicates its theological import as a defining factor in prelapsarian humanity’s purpose within the cosmos, as well as rendering it directly relevant to the debt owed by fallen mankind to their creator and redeemer. As Duby states, the poet seeks to affirm in the minds of his audience the fact that mankind had transgressed despite their establishment ‘in a state of perfection where *ratio* ruled over *sensus*’.<sup>116</sup>

Mankind was thus agreed to have been the most significant being on earth, and the apex of the hexaemeral process as far as terrestrial creation was concerned. Given this anthropic emphasis, it is unsurprising that commentaries on Genesis have been employed in order to support arguments in favour of the existence of humanism in the

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then the Gentleman?”: Society, History and Linguistic Codes in the *Mystère d’Adam*, *Studies in Philology* vol. 79, no 2 (1982) pp. 101-21; see particularly pp. 101-4 and 112.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Ne moi devez ja mover guere’, *Mystère d’Adam* ed. Sletsjöe, line 5, p. 5; ‘jol [cest jardin] toi comand por maindre e por garder’, line 84, p. 9; ‘jo garderai tot ton comendement’, line 104, p.11.

<sup>114</sup> Indeed Morgan’s interpretation in particular forms an almost Marxist reading of the Fall, with the Devil inciting Eve and Adam to rebel by making them conscious of their oppression; see Morgan, ‘Who was then the Gentleman’, p. 115. In addition, if we are to imagine that subversive class commentary was the aim of the Adam poet, it would make more sense to read Adam as a lord, pre-eminent and responsible only to his monarch/God, rather than an oppressed subject.

<sup>115</sup> Morgan, *ibid.*, pp. 102-3. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003) p. 147.

<sup>116</sup> Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, p. 215.



twelfth century. Two prominent examples of this can be found in the work of Chenu and Southern. In an essay defending the existence of ‘renaissance’ and humanism in twelfth-century thought, Chenu claims that the twelfth century marks the point at which theologians self-consciously began to confront the physical universe as ‘an external, present, intelligible and active reality’, and that ‘they reflected that they themselves were caught up within the framework of nature, were themselves also bits of this cosmos they were ready to master’.<sup>117</sup> These anthropic and naturalistic concerns are, he continues, conspicuous in the hexaemeral commentaries of the period.<sup>118</sup> Likewise, Southern predicated his definition of medieval humanism on a demonstrable awareness of the fundamental worthiness of human nature, and of mankind’s centrality within the universal order. Medieval humanism is rooted, Southern states, in ‘a strong sense of the dignity of human nature’, from which man ‘understands himself as the main part, the keystone of nature’.<sup>119</sup> He writes that ‘scholastic humanism’ in particular comprised an intellectual habitus in which

The whole universe appears intelligible and accessible to human reason: nature is seen as an orderly system, and... we may expect a humanist to assert not only that man is the noblest of God’s creatures, but also that his nobility continues even in his fallen state, that it is capable of development in this world, that the instruments exist by which it can be developed, and that it should be the chief aim of human endeavour to perfect these instruments.<sup>120</sup>

It is indeed possible to find excerpts from twelfth-century hexaemeral writing which appear to justify the views of both Chenu and Southern, and it is difficult to deny that these definitions are at least superficially persuasive.

However, what they essentially say is simply that twelfth-century scholars considered the earth to be intelligible, and considered mankind to be the most

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<sup>117</sup> M-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century*, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>119</sup> Southern, *Medieval Humanism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) pp. 31-32.

<sup>120</sup> Southern, *Medieval Humanism*, p. 31.

significant of the creatures that occupied it. This does not constitute humanism, however laudable or justifiable it might be. It is also necessary to point out the frequency with which commentaries on Genesis point out the limitations of human knowledge and the inferiority of human capacity to comprehend divine ‘mysteries’. As was described above in the section discussing the use of Romans 1.20, commentaries on Genesis reflect the feeling that the world was intelligible; not that human intelligence was comprehensive, and certainly not that it was inherently beneficial to employ it. Examining created things and their physical existence was a means by which to approach God, and such examination was thus an earthly means to a spiritual end rather than an intellectual end that was considered inherently worthwhile. For example, Hildegard’s *Scivias* has the voice of God declare that there are elements of the creation and fall narratives which human beings cannot comprehend and should refrain from investigating.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, she reports that God issues the following warning to human beings who wish to know more than is appropriate, particularly regarding creation:

You see clearly only a few things among many which are hidden from your eyes... Truly you do not know how you were created. But now, O human, you wish to investigate heaven and earth, and to judge of their justice in God’s disposition, and to know the highest things though you are not able to examine the lowest.<sup>122</sup>

Even Abelard writes that it is necessary to study the physical components of creation precisely *because* God himself is ultimately inaccessible and invisible, whereas

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<sup>121</sup> ‘Quod quare factum sit: non est a te, o homo, perquirendum... mortalis homo scire non potest’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 437.

<sup>122</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 87. ‘Aperte enim videtis pauca de multis, quae ante oculos vestros abscondita sunt... Tu vero nescis quomodo creatus sis. Sed nunc, o homo, coelum et terram vis perscrutari, et justitiam eorum in constitutionem Dei dijudicare, et summa dignoscere; cum nec infima valeas examinare’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 702.

the earth is intelligible.<sup>123</sup> Hugh of St Victor is equally cautious about what it is appropriate for mankind to know. The genius of human intellect is, he writes, best judged by its ability to focus prudently on those things which need to be known, rather than persisting deliberately in the study of things which are inadvisably difficult.<sup>124</sup> ‘Therefore’, he continues, ‘insofar as it is sufficient for sound faith, we seek to discern, and we cease to examine those things which curiosity alone persuades us to investigate’.<sup>125</sup> This passage itself in fact demonstrates the very caution it advises. It is no coincidence that this exhortation to prudence appears in the section of *De sacramentis* which is concerned with the origin of the soul and its relationship to that of the body, which was, thanks to the legacy of Origen, a matter of long standing controversy.<sup>126</sup> More broadly relevant, however, is its demonstration that a sense of intellectual restraint was advisable within a setting which demanded that innovative enquiry afford due reverence not only to divine and scriptural authority, but also that of the major Church Fathers.<sup>127</sup>

Human intellect, therefore, was not only considered finite or flawed. These texts attest to the existence of things which human beings cannot and, moreover, are not allowed to know. To seek knowledge and understanding of such things is deemed actively impious and an affront to the superiority of the divine. It is difficult to reconcile this notion with Southern’s insistence that the whole universe was considered

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<sup>123</sup> ‘Sic et deus, qui in seipso inuisibilis et incomprehensibilis est, ex operum suorum magnitudine primam nobis de se scientiam confert, cum omnis humana noticia surgat a sensibus’, Abelard, *Expositio*, 11.

<sup>124</sup> ‘Neque vero in hoc ingenium hominis approbandum estimatur si his que difficilia sunt pertinaciter insistit sed potius que scienda sunt prudenter discernit’, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 3.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Propterea quantum sane fidei satis est queramus agnoscere et ea que curiositas sola scrutari suadet desistamus investigare’, *ibid.*, 1.6, 3.

<sup>126</sup> See for example Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen* (London: Routledge, 1998) pp. 62-7.

<sup>127</sup> It is conceivably a critique of Abelard, who was not particularly renowned for his tact and prudence, intellectual or otherwise, and whom Hugh might have considered a prime example of a scholar who assiduously pursued philosophical complexities whilst ‘failing’ in his individual duties as a Christian and cleric.

intelligible and accessible to human reason during this period, or with Chenu's claim that hexaemeral commentary conceived mankind as part of a cosmos that was to be intellectually mastered in its entirety. Literal commentary on Genesis may have been employed to elucidate the earth and the natural laws which governed it, but certainly not the entire universe, which included unknowable components such as heaven, hell and the nature of angels. Moreover, at no point do any of the hexaemeral commentaries state that it is an inherently good thing, in itself, to examine the fabric of the universe - they do not advocate human knowledge for its own sake. The role of mankind within the order of creation does receive considerable attention, but at no point is mankind truly central in the sense of being its most important component. Humanity and human reason are subordinate to the divine, and the supposedly humanist undertaking of examining the 'dispositio mundi' is conceived as a way of becoming 'closer' to God. Human knowledge of the created world is thus a means to an end; not an end in itself. It is therefore difficult to describe exegesis of the hexaemeron as a genuinely humanist endeavour.

#### CONCLUSION

It is possible to identify the following broad areas of concern which receive consistent attention throughout the major treatments of Eve's creation: the fundamental composition of the human being, the mechanics of the creative processes which enabled Eve to be produced from Adam's rib, Eve's purpose and status within the order of creation, and the knowledge and nature of mankind before the fall. Throughout the texts discussed here, there is a consistent level of emphasis on the equivalence with which Eve was created, and on the creation of Eve as a means of examining the fabric of the created world. The main development that it is possible to trace in examining

representations of Eve as the first woman is an identifiable shift in responses to the physical nature and status of the human being, and the significance of mankind within the order of creation. It is possible to discern an increasingly developed level of engagement with the exegesis of Genesis as a potential means by which to understand both the physical and spiritual realities of human nature and existence.

This analysis destabilises the notion that the categories of *masculus* and *femina* referred to in the passage were simplistically mapped onto the ostensibly equivalent biological categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’. Rather, what emerges in the interpretations of Genesis 1.26 – 27 discussed here is a consistent sense of the shared qualities which distinguish all human beings regardless of physical gender, and a conception of the human soul as an entity which contained both masculine and feminine components, symbolically represented by Adam and Eve respectively. Twelfth-century accounts of Eve’s creation were not used simply to demonstrate female inferiority by asserting that Eve was created to be weaker than her husband. Rather, commentary on Eve’s creation provided the opportunity to discuss numerous significant theological and philosophical issues during this period. It would be a mistake to say that the texts discussed above argue that the rights and capacities of women in general are equal to those of men, or that they do not express patriarchal attitudes. Tempting though it might be to translate words such as ‘socia’ and ‘pareil’ as ‘equal’, this would be somewhat misleading - Eve is presented as an equivalent partner, but at no point is she described as having the same spiritual or physical capability and status as her husband. Moreover, the notion of Eve’s equivalence is not unanimously asserted; for example, it does not appear at all in the commentaries by Hildegard of Bingen or Guibert of Nogent.

It must also be noted, however, that the concern with demonstrating any equivalence between Eve and Adam, and related ideas regarding gender, are given

considerably less attention than the wider issues surrounding the creation of Eve; namely, the origins of mankind generally, and the composition of the world in which they were created. It seems that gender and the nature of 'woman' was by no means the significant aspect of the biblical account of Eve's creation. Rather, the most significant aspect, the area which demanded most in terms of exegetical skill and intellectual attention, was the physical process itself. The process by which Eve is said to have been formed from the rib was clearly a difficult issue to address, since it is, as Lombard says, so clearly contrary to the course of nature as it has become known to mankind. Providing commentary on the creation of Eve necessitated confronting the disparity between certain scripturally recounted events and observable physical processes and phenomena. This disparity was not only acknowledged; there were also attempts to elucidate it which went beyond the idea that it was an axiomatically inexplicable miracle. It is also noticeable that discussions such as Lombard's account of seminal causes, or Hugh's explanation of the atomic composition of matter, arise in relation to Eve's creation, not that of Adam. This is also the case with the discussions of what it meant to be created in the image and likeness of God - the creation of Adam simply does not appear to have provoked such debate.

There is an increasingly identifiable emphasis throughout these texts on Eve's position as an equivalent created with benevolent intent, rather than on employing the creation of Eve as a means of justifying misogynistic theories about female inferiority. It is significant that some of the most influential scholars of this period were certain that the manner of Eve's creation was indicative of her worth and equivalence. Eve is consistently aligned with the Church, which indicates both the significance of the theological function she occupied during this period, and the positive associations with which she was endowed. The writers discussed above, even those who do not employ

the rib topos or the Eve/Church comparison, emphasise the unity and parity between Adam and Eve, and were occasionally even willing to modify Patristic and scriptural authority in order to do so. Moreover, the creation of Eve both justified and provoked discussion of much broader issues, and offered, or perhaps demanded, the opportunity to examine the composition and function of mankind in general, and that of the world in which they were created.

## CHAPTER II

# REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE AS THE FIRST WIFE AND MOTHER

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### INTRODUCTION

Unlike the hexaemeral material discussed in the previous chapter, representations of Eve as the first wife and mother relate to two areas which have been widely studied amid modern scholarship dealing with the twelfth century and with the middle ages more generally. The first of these areas is the medieval institution of marriage; a subject which has fostered a substantial historiographical corpus.<sup>1</sup> However, whilst the union of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden has been described as a well-established basis for exploring medieval responses to marriage, reading matrimonial and misogynous discourse in relation to Eve specifically has been overlooked as a means of exploring the ways in which marriage was viewed during this period, and exegesis of Genesis remains largely neglected in this context.<sup>2</sup> The second, and less easily definable, area is that of the theological and social expectations of medieval women as wives and mothers;

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<sup>1</sup> Prominent examples include Georges Duby trans. Elborg Foster, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978); idem, trans. Barbara Bray, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*; R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); idem, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Christopher Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). More recently, the subject of marriage in a literary context has been explored by Neil Cartlidge, whilst Brundage's situation of matrimonial discourse within the creation and enforcement of canon law has been advanced by the work of Anders Winroth, and David d'Avray has taken a more broad and sociological approach focusing on matrimonial symbolism; see Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997); Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), see also 'Marital Consent in Gratian's *Decretum*', in Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing ed., *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval Canon Law in Honour of Linda Fowler-Magerl* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp. 111-2; David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 38; Bloch, pp. 22-9.



more specifically, the substantial body of texts in which the medieval figure of Eve is deemed to be representative of the middle ages' supposedly inflexible and dichotomous characterisation of women as either Eve or Mary. Such studies often employ the palindromic formulation 'Eva/Ave', in which the name 'Eva' is reversed in order to form the word 'Ave', as an indication that the Virgin Mary 'reversed' the sin of Eve.<sup>3</sup> The Eve/Mary parallel has been endowed with substantial theological and anthropological significance in modern scholarship, and both the 'Eva/Ave' palindrome, and the idea of Mary as the 'new' or 'second' Eve, are often described as both a tenet of medieval theology and an exemplification of the medieval view of women.<sup>4</sup>

The twelfth-century figure of Eve has often been misrepresented in the modern scholarship relating to both these areas, and twelfth-century writers have been unfairly criticised for constructing representations of Eve as the first wife and mother which are distinguished principally by their misogynistic hostility toward Eve and toward the female corporeality she is thought to have represented during this period. For example, 'clerical authors' and their supposedly universal anti-feminism have received condemnation from Sharon Farmer, whose study of twelfth-century conceptions of the wife states that

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<sup>3</sup> The word 'Ave' is the first word spoken by the angel Gabriel in the Annunciation narrative: 'et ingressus angelus, ad eam dixit "ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus"', Luke 1.28.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Henry Kraus, 'Eve and Mary: Conflicting Images of Medieval Woman', *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (Colorado: Westview Press, 1982) pp. 79-100; *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages: A Reader* ed. Martha A. Broznya (North Carolina: McFarland, 2005) p. 235; Jacques Dalarun, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 'The Clerical Gaze', *A History of Women in the West: Silences of the Middle Ages* ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994) pp. 15-42, see p. 23; Rebecca L. Garber, *Feminine Figurae: Representations of Gender in Religious Texts by Medieval German Women Writers* (London: Routledge, 2003) p. 34, where the Eva/Ave phrase is described as 'well known' but no references are given; Brian Murdoch, *Adam's Grace*, p. 12; Catherine Sanok, 'Women and Literature', in *A Concise Handbook to Middle English Literature* ed. Marilyn Corrie (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009) pp. 54-76, p. 55; Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalene: Truth and Myth* (London: Harper Collins, 1993) p. 140, *Handbook to Life in the Medieval World* ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Linda Gale Jones (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008) vol. 3, p. 331; Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Vintage, 1983) p. 60.

Clerical authors became increasingly inclined to represent woman as Eve, the temptress. She was not a mere pawn, but an active, negative force, a source of disorder in society: she enticed men into the material realm of sin just as Eve enticed Adam.<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, Duby has much to say about the supposedly ubiquitous antifeminism of this period, stating that the ‘only’ extant evidence regarding twelfth-century marriage was written by ecclesiastical men who were, apparently, little more than professional misogynists: ‘men professionally obligated to express repugnance toward sex and particularly toward women’.<sup>6</sup> This endemic misogyny has, according to Duby, so blighted twelfth-century responses to marriage and the role of the wife that it is impossible to study it except as a phenomenon of social history.<sup>7</sup>

It has also been assumed that twelfth-century authors deemed the original sin to have consisted in sexual activity, with the lust-filled Eve seducing Adam and thereby sealing the fate of mankind.<sup>8</sup> This approach is exemplified by Jacques Le Goff’s assertion that

The original sin was one of intellectual pride, intellectual defiance of God, but medieval Christianity transformed this into a sexual sin. The height of abomination, the worst of the body and of sexuality, was the female body. From Eve... woman’s body was the devil’s stomping

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<sup>5</sup> Sharon Farmer, ‘Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives’, *Speculum*, vol. 61, no 3 (1986) pp. 517-43; p.519.

<sup>6</sup> Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> ‘So my investigation of marriage during this period is necessarily restricted to what was on the surface both of society and of institutions; to facts and events’, *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> See for example Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 62; Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 39; Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women and Jews*, p. 92; Sally Vaughn, ‘Saint Anselm and his Students Writing about Love: A Theological Foundation for the Rise of Romantic Love in Europe’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* vol. 19, no 1, pp. 54 – 73; p. 70; Rebecca Garber, ‘Where is the Body? Images of Eve and Mary in the Scivias’ in Maud Burnett McInerney ed., *Hildegard of Bingen: A Book of Essays*, Garland Mediaeval Casebooks (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 103 – 132; see pp. 113-14.

ground... By the twelfth century this view was accepted by nearly everyone... the original sin was simply said to be sexual.<sup>9</sup>

Related to this misconception is the notion that medieval theologians deemed marriage an aberrant concession to the concupiscence of fallen mankind; an approach typified by Duby's statement that twelfth-century marriage was conceived as 'a policy designed in fact to purify the whole of society'.<sup>10</sup>

On account of the prevalent conception of widespread hostility toward Eve as well as toward procreation and marriage during this period, twelfth-century writers in particular have been accused of subjecting women to vilification as wayward temptresses, and to veneration as remote and idealised *sponsae Christi*. For example, Newman writes that 'in the dichotomy of Eve and Mary, demonised *femina* and idealised *virgo*... medieval writers often remarked that the Virgin's *Ave* was but *Eva* inverted'.<sup>11</sup> Duby similarly employs the 'Eva/Ave' formulation, erroneously attributing the creation of the phrase to Anselm of Canterbury.<sup>12</sup> Robert Swanson argues that women were largely excluded from 'the twelfth-century renaissance'. He echoes Newman's conception of an inflexible dichotomy which presented only Eve and Mary as possible exemplars for female conduct, 'encapsulated', he asserts, 'in the reversal of the Fall as *Eva* (Eve) became *Ave*'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jacques Le Goff trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) p. 6; she gives no examples with which to support this claim.

<sup>12</sup> Duby, *Eve and the Church*, p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1999) p. 204.

There are of course exceptions to this conception of twelfth-century responses to Eve and women in general in the roles of wife and mother. Despite his insistence that twelfth-century responses to marriage were marked principally by the ubiquitous presence of misogyny, Duby's discussion of the Anglo-Norman Eve in fact provides valuable demonstration of the way in which the twelfth-century figure of Eve could function as a complex, informative didactic model rather than as a straightforward vehicle of misogyny. This function of Eve as positive exemplar is only rarely acknowledged; however, in addition to Duby another exception can be found in Cartlidge's discussion of the Anglo-Norman Eve.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Christopher Brooke has briefly highlighted the significance of the biblical representation of Eve in the establishment of marriage as a sacrament during the twelfth century:

In the creation of Eve, one of the authors of Genesis had provided a deeply moving image - that man and wife could be 'one flesh'... [Hence] the essence of marriage law and doctrine in twelfth century lay in the reaffirmation of positions already established in earlier times...What is new is the attempt by the Church with great sophistication and subtlety to define and enforce its law of marriage. Marriage is a sacrament - and here, in the definition of sacraments, we have something clearly original.<sup>15</sup>

On the whole, however, the myth of the twelfth-century figure of Eve as a simplistic vehicle for antifeminist sentiment remains prominent. Modern conceptions of the twelfth-century figure of Eve as a wife and mother remain characterised by the three misrepresentations outlined above; namely that Eve was a model of destructive uxorial conduct, that she was responsible for an act of sexual sin which necessitated the establishment of marriage as a concession to lust and procreation, and that her role as

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 213 – 216; Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, pp. 38 – 43, particularly p. 43 which argues, as Duby does, that Eve becomes both a model of contrition and vehicle for the text's typological optimism.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage*, p. 57.

wife and mother was unfavourably compared to that of the Virgin Mary in such a way that reduced female identity to a simplistic dichotomy between temptress and virgin.

The texts with which this thesis is concerned offer a very different perspective, and their representations of Eve as the first wife and mother bear little resemblance to the image of the twelfth-century figure of Eve described in the majority of the secondary texts referred to above. Since hexaemeral commentary has been neglected amid modern scholarship on the middle ages, the dominant conception of twelfth-century representations of Eve remains partial and incomplete. However, when hexaemeral commentary is explored in this context, a more nuanced and markedly less misogynistic image emerges of both the twelfth-century figure of Eve, and of the ways in which the figure of Eve informed responses to the subjects of marriage and procreation.

As will be discussed in more detail below, Eve is necessarily employed as a positive uxorial model, because the scriptural basis for marriage was the union established between Adam and Eve in Genesis 2.23 – 24.<sup>16</sup> Also, whilst the transmission of original sin after the fall was considered to be something facilitated via the act of procreation, the first sin itself was not considered to have consisted in illicit sexual activity. All the principal primary sources discussed here describe lust as consequence rather than a cause of the fall, and procreation as a basic human necessity which, had Eve not sinned, would have occurred innocently and without sin in paradise. In addition, there is no evidence in these texts to suggest that the Eve/Mary parallel was deemed a significant means by which to examine either the position of women or the theology of creation and redemption. It is not a common feature in major twelfth-

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Dixitque Adam “hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea haec, vocabitur virago quoniam de viro sumpta est”. Quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adherabit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una’.

century treatments of Eve or of the fall. The only the only author discussed here who compares Eve and Mary at all is Hildegard of Bingen, and she does not employ the parallel as a simplistic reversal of Eve's sin by Mary, and nor does she present the roles of Eve and Mary as being straightforwardly applicable to women in general.

## II.I REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE AS THE FIRST WIFE

Marriage occupied a singular position within the sacramental theology of the twelfth century since it was the only sacrament thought to have been instituted before the fall of mankind. The account in Genesis of Adam and Eve's being joined in one flesh became the blueprint for a union that was both socially and theologically significant, and which became both the subject of, and to some extent impetus for, the analysis and interpretative practices which characterise twelfth-century responses to the hexaemeron and the fall of mankind. Consequently, representations of Eve provide useful insights into these discussions, and the texts and traditions they comprised.

The model for Christian matrimony is described in the second chapter of Genesis as the joining of Adam and Eve into a single unit, the establishment of which is to be privileged above the ties of parental bonds:

And Adam said, 'this now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she will be called woman for she is made from man.' On account of this a man will leave his father and his mother and will cleave to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 'Dixitque Adam, "hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea haec vocabitur virago quoniam de viro sumpta est". Quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adherabit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una', Genesis 2.23 – 24.

Despite the image of husband and wife as harmonious components *in carne una*, the ‘first’ Christian marriage establishes a markedly abstract and utilitarian union which addresses none of the emotional and social aspects of the matrimonial bond as it functioned in medieval society. In addition to the extant complications involved in exegesis of the hexaameron, interpretation of this passage presented the additional complication applying theological and doctrinal intricacies to an institution that was not only subject to the temporality of romantic and political affinities, but which pre-dated Christianity itself, and which had long functioned successfully without Christian commentary or regulation. In relation to Eve’s role as the ‘first’ wife, there is the difficulty of reconciling Eve’s status as an equivalent in the order of creation with the social and cultural expectation that a wife be subordinate. Moreover, whilst Adam and Eve’s marriage was necessarily deemed the formative exemplar for all subsequent matrimonial unions, and also deemed unique among the sacraments as the only one to be established before the fall and ratified by God directly, Eve’s subsequent actions fall far short of exemplary uxorial conduct.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, several twelfth-century interpretations of the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib display a notable concern with establishing the parity and equivalence which existed between the first man and woman. However, when dealing with Adam and Eve as the archetypal married couple, it was necessary to reconcile this parity with the expectation that the wife be obedient and subordinate to the authority of the husband. This tension has been usefully identified by Duby, who describes the marriage of Adam and Eve in the *Mystère d’Adam* as a union of ‘two parties equal in nature but necessarily unequal in power’.<sup>18</sup> Whilst it contradicts his earlier insistence on ubiquitous antifeminism, this phrase encapsulates the tenor of the

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<sup>18</sup> Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, p. 214.

representation of Eve as a wife not only in the *Mystère d'Adam* but also in the work of Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard. The work of both Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard forms a significant component of twelfth-century writing on marriage as a sacrament, with *De sacramentis* proving particularly formative in this context.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it is the exegesis of Genesis in these texts which informs and upholds the sacramentality of marriage and the nature of the bond that it institutes.

Quoting Genesis 2.23 – 24, Hugh writes that the manner of Eve's creation and the prospect of procreation 'demonstrates marriage to be from God and to be good'.<sup>20</sup> He is concerned with establishing the uniquely prelapsarian nature of the sacrament, stating that whilst the other sacraments were instituted after the fall as a remedy intended to restore mankind, marriage has 'a singular law just as it has a singular institution'.<sup>21</sup> The marriage of Adam and Eve, he continues, having been established prior to the first sin, was intended not as a remedy but as an office, since in prelapsarian mankind 'there was no illness to be healed' and 'humbling was not necessary where there was no pride'.<sup>22</sup> After sin, however, marriage was intended to act, like the other sacraments, as a remedy for the maladies incurred by Eve's transgression.<sup>23</sup> Thus for Hugh, marriage is both a burden and a blessing, providing simultaneously a connection with the privileged and sinless existence of prelapsarian humanity, and a persistent reminder of its loss. Eve was both responsible for the sin which necessitated the implementation of the sacraments by God as a remedy for fallen human nature, but she

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<sup>19</sup> Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, pp. 269 – 70; John Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in Western Tradition* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012) p. 78-9.

<sup>20</sup> 'Coniugii auctor deus est. Ipse enim coniugium esse decreuit quando mulierem ad propagationem generis humani homini in adiutorium fecit... In quibus omnibus ostenditur coniugium et a deo esse et bonum esse', *De sacramentis*, 2.11, 1.

<sup>21</sup> 'Hoc sacramentum singularem habens legem quemadmodum habet singularem institutionem', *ibid.*, 1.8, 12.

<sup>22</sup> 'Morbus in homine non fuit qui sanaretur... humilitatio enim sibi necessaria non fuit ubi nulla superbia fuit', *ibid.*, 1.8, 12.

<sup>23</sup> 'Post peccatum ad remedium', *ibid.*, 1.8, 12.



nonetheless functions as an original and archetypal representative within the only one of them established directly by God prior to the fall.

This ambivalence toward the function and institution of marriage as a sacrament dominates Hugh's conception of Eve as a model of uxorial conduct. Despite having established that Eve was created neither to dominate Adam nor to be his inferior, Hugh's conception of the parity which she initially shared with Adam is diminished in relation to her role as his wife. As the first human beings, Eve and Adam may have enjoyed equal significance within the order of creation. As the first wife however, Eve is subordinate to the superior masculine authority of her husband. Thus, despite what Hugh argues in the hexaemeral portion of *De sacramentis*, he subsequently declares that the woman was, even before the fall, weaker than the man.<sup>24</sup> She is also subject to him, and she is to be instructed by his counsel.<sup>25</sup> In his discussion of Adam and Eve as models of the husband and the wife, Hugh writes that

For [God] himself decreed marriage to be when he made woman the assistant to man in the propagation of the human race. Adam, knowing in spirit to what end the woman was made said, when she was brought up to him, 'This now is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh...'<sup>26</sup>

Hugh's explanation of the origin of marriage thus recasts the creation of Eve. Whereas before she was to be a partner 'in consortium dilectionis' as well as a mother, she is now a biological expedient, created for the purpose of procreation.<sup>27</sup> However, Hugh remains insistent that this does not compromise Eve's position as Adam's partner

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<sup>24</sup> Hugh writes that devil approached Eve rather than Adam because he wished to attack human nature in the part where it seemed to be weakest, that is, the female: 'humanam naturam in eam partem ubi deliberior [i.e. debilior] videbatur aggressus est', *De sacramentis*, 1.7, 3.

<sup>25</sup> In his claim that Eve also received the commandment not to approach the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because she received it through Adam, he writes that 'deinde mediante viro ad mulierem quoque que subiecta viro fuit et consilio viri instituenda perveniret', *ibid.*, 1.7, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *De sacramentis*, 2.11, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6, 35.

(‘socia’) rather than his servant or master. In the section of the text which deals with the fundamental nature of marriage, Hugh repeats his previous assertion that Eve was created from Adam’s side in order to demonstrate her equivalence.<sup>28</sup> In fact, he develops this idea further, stating explicitly for the first time Eve’s equality with, rather than equivalence to, Adam: Eve was created, he says, to be part of an equal association.<sup>29</sup> In a certain way, he continues, Eve can be considered inferior to Adam, because she was created from him, and thus she must always look upon him as the origin of her existence.<sup>30</sup> However, this does not, apparently, undermine the unity and parity with which Eve was created. Hugh’s representation of Eve as the first wife therefore constructs for her an ambivalent function as both Adam’s equal and his subordinate. She was created for him as an associate in a union of equals, but created from him and thus a weaker derivative. Hugh is thus resolutely patriarchal in his conception of Eve’s uxorial role despite his egalitarian view of her creation. However, this does not lead Hugh to an axiomatically negative representation of Eve in this context. Eve’s position as both an equal and a subordinate is ratified by Hugh’s casting her as the ‘bride’ within a series of allegorical representations of the sacrament of marriage which are typologically invoked by the prelapsarian union she shared with Adam. As the soul is the bride of God (‘sponsa Dei’) and the Church is the bride of Christ (‘sponsa Christi’) – a relationship prefigured by the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib - Eve both represents the literal role of the wife, and the rational faculty of the soul (‘prudentia... hoc est ratio ad humana’) which is governed by wisdom.<sup>31</sup> Hugh’s representation of Eve as the first wife is thus patriarchal but not misogynistic.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Quia enim socia data est non ancilla aut domina... Propterea de medio facta est ut ad equalitatem societatis facta probaretur’, *ibid.*, 2.11, 4.

<sup>30</sup> ‘In hoc tamen quodammodo inferior ipso quod facta est de ipso ut ad ipsum semper quasi ad principium suum respiceret’, *ibid.*, 2.11, 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.8, 13.

Eve is consistently categorised as the weaker component within a series of binary arrangements, but none of these components are themselves indicative of imperfection or iniquity. The soul, the Church and *prudentia* may be subordinate to their respective counterparts, but it is difficult to describe them as images which signify abject inferiority or transgression.

In addition to displaying some uncharacteristic divergence from the views of Hugh of St Victor, Peter Lombard's discussions of the role of the wife within marriage demonstrate a remarkably consistent emphasis on the rights of the wife.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Lombard has a notably positive view of marriage in general.<sup>33</sup> Unlike Hugh of St Victor, however, his preferred model of the conjugal bond is that of Joseph and the Virgin Mary rather than Adam and Eve, and thus his discussion of Eve as a model of uxorial conduct is somewhat less substantial than his discussion of Adam and Eve's union as a prelapsarian model for the sacrament itself. However, where he does employ Eve as an archetypal wife, it is done with the same level of emphasis on reciprocity and equivalence that characterises his conception of the marital bond more generally. He refers to the manner of Eve's creation as a means by which to indicate that marriage consists not in mere cohabitation or sexual consent, but in reciprocal commitment to a conjugal partnership:

And so let us say that a consent to carnal joining or cohabitation does not make a marriage, but consent to a conjugal partnership, expressed by words of present tense, as when a man says: *I take you as my wife*, and

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<sup>32</sup> He does say that wives should heed the authority of their husbands; however, he also writes that no one has the right to coerce a woman into marriage, that a husband is not allowed to wish for a celibate marriage without his wife's consent, that a woman is permitted to leave a husband who refuses or is unable to have intercourse with her and/or give her children, and also that a husband is not permitted to leave or mistreat his wife, and vice versa, on account of any aesthetic or physical deficiency; see *Sententiae* 4.32, 1; 4.29, 1; 4.32, 2-3; 4.34, 1; 4.34, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Colish has noted that this is identifiable throughout his work, particularly in his earlier commentary on Corinthians which assembles a consistent refutation of the Pauline conception of marriage as a deplorable concession to the inherent concupiscence of fallen mankind; Colish, *Peter Lombard* vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994) p. 204.

neither as one to lord it over me, nor as a slave-girl ('non dominam, non ancillam').<sup>34</sup>

He then describes explicitly the way in which Eve's creation ought to inform the nature of the relationship between husband and wife; that is, that it should be a relationship characterised by parity and reciprocity:

If she had been from the highest, as from the head, she might seem created for domination; but if from the lowest, as from the feet, she might seem to be created for subjection to slavery. But because she is taken neither as mistress, nor as slave-girl, she is made from the middle, that is, from the side, because she is taken for conjugal partnership. When they come together in this manner, so that the man says: *I take you as my marriage partner*, and the woman says: *I take you as my husband*, by these words... consent is expressed, and not to carnal joining or to bodily cohabitation, but to conjugal partnership.<sup>35</sup>

Lombard thus demonstrates little of Hugh's ambivalence regarding the reconciliation of Eve's equivalent status at the moment of her creation with her subsequent role in the fall of mankind. Nor does he refer to Eve as a biological expedient.

The only point at which he describes marriage as a union in which the feminine must be dominated by the masculine is in his conception of the allegorical 'marriage' which exists between the components of the soul; a formulation which also appears in

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<sup>34</sup> *Sentences Book 4* trans. Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010), p. 172. 'Dicamus igitur quod consensus cohabitationis uel carnalis copulae non facit coniugium, sed consensus coniugalis societatis, uerbis secundum praesens tempus expressus, ut cum uir dicit: Ego accipio te in meam, non dominam, non ancillam, sed coniugem', *Sententiae* 4.28, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Sentences Book 4* trans. Silano, p. 172. 'Si de summo fieret, ut de capite, uideretur ad dominationem creata; si uero de imo, ut de pedibus, uideretur ad seruitutem subicienda. Sed quia nec in dominam nec in ancillam assumitur, facta est de medio, id est de latere, quia ad coniugalem societatem assumitur. Cum igitur sic conueniunt, ut dicat uir: Accipio te in meam coniugem, et dicat mulier: Accipio te in meum uirum, his uerbis uel aliis idem significantibus, exprimitur consensus: Non copulae carnalis uel cohabitationis corporalis, sed coniugalis societatis', *Sententiae*, 4.28, 4.

the work of Guibert of Nogent.<sup>36</sup> Lombard writes that Eve represents the lower part of reason, which must be subordinate to the higher portion, represented by Adam:

On the spiritual marriage of the man and woman within us. And between this man and this woman there is, as it were, a spiritual marriage and a natural contract by which the higher portion of reason, the man, as it were, is to go first and dominate; but the lower one, the woman, as it were, is to be subject and obey.<sup>37</sup>

Guibert likewise employs the prelapsarian union of Adam and Eve as a symbolic representation of the virtuous soul, which is characterised by the harmonious co-existence of the will (Eve as the wife), ruled by the intellect (Adam as the husband):

On account of this, [Genesis] says, he who has been separated from bestial life will leave his father, the devil, and his mother, concupiscence, and will cleave to his wife, that is, to his will, ruled by reason, and they shall be two - evidently will and intellect - in one flesh, that is, in one disposition of mind.<sup>38</sup>

According to both Guibert and Lombard, the maintenance of this 'marital' formulation is a prerequisite of virtue, with sin occurring when the 'Eve' component overrides the 'Adam' component.<sup>39</sup> However, this hierarchical arrangement of the soul's 'husband' and 'wife' aspects is intended to operate in every soul, regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides.

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<sup>36</sup> The idea in both cases is, as Lombard acknowledges, rooted in Augustine's *De trinitate*, 12.7.

<sup>37</sup> *Sentences Book 2*, trans. Silano, p. 111. 'De spiritali coniugio uiri et mulieris in nobis. Atque inter hunc uirum et hanc mulierem est uelut quoddam spirituale coniugium naturalis que contractus, quo superior rationis portio quasi uir debet praeesse et dominari; inferior uero quasi mulier debet subesse et obedire', *Sententiae*, 2.24, 8.

<sup>38</sup> 'Propter hoc, inquit, relinquet is, qui a bestiali semotus est vita patrem diabolum, matremque concupiscentiam, et adhaerebit uxori, id est, voluntati suae rationabiliter regendae, et erunt duo, intellectus uidelicet ac voluntas, in carne una, id est in affectu uno', *Moralia*, col. 70 C.

<sup>39</sup> This is discussed in more detail in Chapter III below.

Overall, Lombard's view of Eve as a largely positive uxorial model is not consistently shared, with other authors demonstrating the ambivalence which characterised Hugh of St Victor's discussion. This is particularly apparent in Hildegard's *Scivias* and the *Mystère d'Adam*. Hildegard devotes considerable attention to the consideration of Eve as a model of wifely conduct. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Hildegard's account of Eve's creation does not make the explicit arguments for the parity that Eve shared with Adam that appear in the work of Abelard, Hugh, Lombard and the Adam poet. However, her discussion of Eve as the first wife places more emphasis on the similarities she shared with Adam, and the similarities that women thus share with men more generally.

Paradoxically, this leads Hildegard to a rather critical representation of Eve and the potential agency she possesses within the marital union. It is on account of the similarities Eve shared with Adam, and the love he felt for her, that she was uniquely able to lead him into disobedience. Despite Eve's innocent soul ('innocentem animus'):

[The devil] saw that Adam burned so vehemently in his holy love for Eve that if he, the Devil, conquered Eve, Adam would do whatever she said to him... How? By first misleading Eve, so that she might flatter and caress Adam and thus win his assent, since she more than any other creature could lead Adam to disobedience, having been made from his rib. Thus woman very quickly overthrows man, if he does not hate her and easily accepts her words.<sup>40</sup>

This uneasy combination of inferiority and latent authority is discernible throughout Hildegard's discussion of Eve as a model of uxorial conduct. 'A wife is under the power

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<sup>40</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 77. 'Videns etiam quod Adam in caritate Euae tam fortiter ardebat ut si ipse diabolus Euae uicisset, quidquid illa Adae diceret, Adam idem perficeret... Quomodo? Videlicet Euae primum seduxit, ut ipsa Adae blandiretur, quatenus ei assensum praeberet, quia ipsa citius Adam quam alia creatura ad inoboedientiam perducere potuit, quoniam de costa illius facta fuerat. Quapropter mulier uirum citius deicit, cum ille eam non abhorrens uerba eius facile assumit', *Scivias*, 1.2, 237 – 49.

of her husband', Hildegard continues, 'because the strength of the man is to the susceptibility of the woman as the hardness of stone is to the softness of earth'.<sup>41</sup> However, Eve's formation from Adam's rib indicates that the marital union was a partnership forged in perfect love ('perfectam caritatem') in which 'woman was created for the sake of man, and man for the sake of woman. As she is from the man, the man is also from her... they should work as one in one work'.<sup>42</sup>

For Hildegard then, Eve's destructive potential originates in her similarity to Adam, and it is precisely this similarity which complicates the attempt to argue that she ought to be subject to him. As in *De sacramentis*, Hildegard's *Scivias* seeks to reconcile the conflicted scriptural representation of Eve as both equal to and weaker than Adam. Like him, Eve bears the image and likeness of God, and shares the qualities which distinguish mankind as the apex of terrestrial creation. At the same time, she is also weaker than him, and intended to function within a union which designates her inferior.

Ambivalence about Eve and the role of the wife within marriage is perhaps most apparent in the *Mystère d'Adam*, in which the qualities required for exemplary uxorial conduct are delineated, but also subjected to a remarkable degree of criticism. The text presents Adam and Eve's marriage as being simultaneous with Eve's creation. It seems that marriage to Adam is the primary motivation and justification for bringing Eve into Paradise; the role of the wife and the role of the first woman are to all intents and purposes indistinguishable. The opening stage directions dictate that the figure of Eve should be dressed in white ('vestimento albo') and standing next to Adam, who is

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<sup>41</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 77. 'Unde et mulier sub potestate uiri manet, quoniam ut duritia lapidis ad teneritudinem terrae est, ita etiam et fortitudo uiri ad mollitiem mulieris est', *Scivias*, 1.2, 259 – 261.

<sup>42</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 78. 'Mulier propter uirum creata est, et uir propter mulierem factus est; quoniam ut illa de uiro ita et uir de illa... in uno opere unum operantur', *Scivias*, 1.2, 302.

dressed in red ('tunica rubea').<sup>43</sup> God explains to Adam how he was formed from the earth in the image and likeness of his creator, whom Adam must always obey.<sup>44</sup> Having sworn never to disobey or take arms against God, Adam is then introduced to Eve, with the figure of God informing him that:

I've given you a good companion  
She is your wife, Eve by name.  
She is your wife and your equivalent  
You must be faithful to her  
Loving her and she loving you.  
If you will both be good to me  
May she be subject to your command  
As you both be to my will.  
From your rib I formed her,  
She is not a stranger [to you], she was born from you.  
I formed her from your body,  
From you and not from outside [i.e. not from any extraneous material].  
You govern her by reason,  
Let there not be conflict between you  
But great love, great co-operation  
Such be the law of marriage.<sup>45</sup>

This passage provides a considerable contrast with the instructions that God addresses to Eve:

Mark you this and hold it not in vain:  
If you do my will you will keep goodness within you.  
Love me and honour [me as your] your creator,  
Put all your resolve, all your strength  
And all your sense into serving me.  
Love Adam and hold him dear,  
He is your husband and you his wife.  
Be you inclined to him at all times  
And do not deviate from his discipline.  
Serve and love him through good-heartedness

<sup>43</sup> *Mystère* ed. Sletsjõe, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 – 5.

<sup>45</sup> 'Je tai dune bon cumpainun / ce est ta femme eva a noun / Ce est ta femme et tun pareil / tu le deuez estre ben fiel / Tu aime luj e ele ame tej / si serez ben ambedui de moj / Ele soit a tun comandement / e uus ambedeus a mun talent / De ta coste laj formee / nest pas estrange de tej est nee / Jo la plasmal de ton cors / de tei eisset non pas de fors / Tu la gouerne par raison / nait entre uus ia tencon / Mais grant amor grant conseruage / Tel soit la lei de mariage', *ibid.*, 8-22.



For this is the law of marriage.  
If you make him a good helpmate  
I'll place you with him in glory.<sup>46</sup>

When God describes marriage to Adam, it is defined by 'great love' and co-operation. When he describes it to Eve, it is defined as a contract in which she is obliged to serve. Thus whereas Adam is presented with a partnership between peers, God describes to Eve only the paragon of the good and humble wife, and the duties that she is contractually obliged to undertake.

These differences in the way in which marriage is described to Adam and Eve respectively provide a dramatised representation of the tension mentioned above between the two positions occupied by the figure of Eve. On the one hand, Eve is an equal participant in the privileged status of prelapsarian humanity, which is reflected in the speech to Adam with its emphasis on reciprocity and Eve as Adam's 'pareil'. On the other hand Eve must, according to the organisation of the matrimonial bond, remain Adam's faithful 'adiutoire', subject to his discipline. Her provenance and identity as Adam's equivalent is explained only to Adam, with God's speech to Eve containing comparatively little of the mutual love and co-operation which characterises marriage as it is described to her husband.

The promising incipient parity of the first marriage – 'your wife and your peer' – is tacitly undermined by God's speech to Eve. Whilst she is described as being Adam's equivalent, she is simultaneously obliged to acknowledge him as the stronger member of the union. He is similar to her in nature yet her superior within the matrimonial

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<sup>46</sup> 'Co garde tu nel tenez en uain / Si uos faire ma uolente / en ton cors garderas bonte / Moi aim e honor ton creator / E moi seruir met ton porpens / tute la force e tot tun sens / Adam aime e lui tien chier / Il est marid e tu sa mullier / A lui soies tot tens encline / nen issir de sa discipline / lui serf e aim par bon coraje / car co est droiz de mariage / Se tu le fais bon adiutoire / Jo te mettre od lui en gloire', *ibid.*, 25-39.

hierarchy: ‘You I will know as lord’, Eve says to God, ‘and he [Adam] as equivalent and stronger [than me]’.<sup>47</sup> With only the lexicon of service and discipline at her disposal, Eve is essentially defined, and obliged to define herself, in relation to her husband.

However, it seems that the Adam poet establishes these necessary pre-requisites for model wifely conduct not in order to exhort them as worthy female aspirations, or to highlight Eve’s faults by comparison. Rather, he seems to lay them open to critique. Eve’s actions in the text make apparent the spiritual and intellectual poverty of the role offered to her, by exposing the paradox of demanding subservience and immediate capitulation to masculine commands. Indeed, it is precisely these qualities which allow Eve to be led astray by the Devil. Eve is informed by God that servitude and discipline comprise the laws of marital union, and that the most desirable characteristics that she can possess as a wife are compliance, faithful credulity and *bon corage*. This lauded ideal of credulous and uncomplaining obedience is nowhere more clearly enacted by Eve than in her communications with the Devil. See for example the following exchange:

EVE:	Begin speaking and I will hear it
DEVIL:	You will listen to me?
EVE:	Yes indeed
	I will not cross you at all
DEVIL:	You will be discreet about me?
EVE:	Yes, by faith
DEVIL:	Will it [i.e. this exchange] be made known?
EVE:	Not by me
DEVIL:	Now put me in your trust – I want from you no other pledge [than this]
EVE:	Really, you can believe what I say
DEVIL:	You have been well schooled. <sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> ‘Toi conustringrai a seignor / lui a paraille et forzor’, *ibid.*, 42 - 3.

<sup>48</sup> ‘E: Ore le commence e jo l’orraï / D: Oïrras me tu / E: Si frai bien / Ne te curcerai de rien / D: Celeras m’en E: Oil par foi / D: Iert descouert E: Nenil par moi / D : Or me mettrai en ta creance / Ne voil de toi altre fiance / E: Bien te pois creire a ma parole / D: Tu as este en bone escole’, *ibid.*, 211-19.

It is by enacting this role of the faithfully complicit and trustfully submissive *adiutoire* in response to the Devil's approach that facilitates Eve's capitulation to sin. Faced with the devil's combination of flattering persuasion and authoritative instruction, Eve yields to authority, doing exactly as she is told, as she has been instructed to do: 'jol ferai', she avers, 'I will do it'.<sup>49</sup> It is this act of obedience, dictated by the ideal of feminine passivity and wifely submission, which seals the fate of mankind. However, the Adam poet makes it clear that Eve is a conscious performer here. Unlike Adam, whom the Devil attempts unsuccessfully to approach in the previous scene, Eve knows exactly with whom she is conversing. She addresses Satan by name as soon as he approaches her, and it is made clear that she is fully aware that eating the proffered fruit would amount to a conscious act of sin.<sup>50</sup>

This sense of knowing and conscious performance becomes particularly apparent in Satan's flattery, and Eve's response. Satan approaches Eve as a seducer armed with the platitudes of amatory discourse; Eve responds as a 'well-schooled' recipient, obedient and only ostensibly unwilling to capitulate. Like a courtly lover, the Devil attempts to seduce Eve as the object of his illegitimate, that is, extra-marital, affection. He praises her beauty, her delicacy, and her absolute superiority to the undeserving husband whom she makes only cursory attempts to defend:

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., line 271, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> 'Di moi, sathan...', ibid., line 205, p. 17. In the temptation scene with Adam, 112-203, Adam does not appear to realise who the Devil is until line 195, 'tu es sathan / mal conseil dones', ibid., pp. 11 – 17. Eve later explains to Adam that she knows exactly whom, the devil is and that his intentions are sinful; see 276 – 285, pp. 21 – 22. This exchange is discussed more fully in Chapter III below.

DEVIL: I have seen Adam but he is too stupid  
 EVE: He is a little hard  
 DEVIL: He will be soft, [even though at present] he is  
 more hard than hell is  
 EVE: He is most noble  
 DEVIL : On the contrary, he is most slavish  
 He takes no care of himself  
 But he might at least take care of you  
 You are a delicate and tender thing  
 And are more fresh than is the rose  
 You are more white than crystal  
 Than the snow which falls on the ice of valleys  
 A grave fault has the Creator committed  
 [Because] you are too tender and he [Adam] is  
 too hard.<sup>51</sup>

In both the role of the obedient wife and that of the object of a courtly love, Eve behaves exactly as she is supposed to, and still succeeds in obtaining that which she desires; namely, the fruit and the knowledge it bestows. Both roles offer her the opportunity of accessing the fruit by conceding without having been obliged to make clear her desire for it. By yielding without ostensibly having wanted to do so, she has succeeded in her aim without appearing to have transgressed the limitations of the submissive role dictated to her. Eve allows herself to be seduced, and the portrayal of her doing so allows the poet not merely to rehearse the trope of the ideally malleable, obedient woman, the ‘*fieblette e tendre chose*’, but also to undermine it.

<sup>51</sup> ‘D: Jo ui Adam mais trop est fols / E: Un poi est durs D: Il serra mols / Il est plus dors que nest emfers / E: Il est mult francs D: Ainz est mult serf / Cure non volt prendre de soi / Car la prenge sevals de toi / Tu es fieblette e tendre chose / E es plus fresche que nest rose / Tu es plus blanche que cristal / Que neif que chiet sor glace en val / Mal culpe em fist li criator / Tu es trop tendre e il trop dur’, *ibid.*, 220-31, p. 19.

## II.II ‘MATER CUNCTORUM VIVENTIUM’: EVE’S AMBIVALENT FERTILITY

As in the case of Eve’s role as the first wife, in relation to Eve’s role as the ‘first’ mother there exists a difficulty in negotiating the prelapsarian and post-expulsion aspects of her function. Eve’s maternal potential emerges in the Genesis narrative as both a privilege and a burden. Despite the exhortation to ‘increase and multiply and fill the earth’, Eve’s fertile potential is not specifically addressed until she and Adam are expelled from Eden.<sup>52</sup> Having been apprised of the punishment that mankind has incurred, Adam ‘called his wife the name “Eve”, because she was the mother of all the living’.<sup>53</sup> Eve is thus literally defined by her maternal capacity - this is the first point in the biblical narrative at which Eve is referred to by name. The punishment attributed to Eve specifically is directly connected to her potential motherhood: ‘[God] said “I will multiply your sorrows and your conceptions, in sorrow shall you bring forth children”’.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, like her role as the ‘first’ wife, Eve’s status as the ‘first’ mother, and thus the mother of all the living, provides both a connection to the privileges of prelapsarian existence, and a perpetual signifier of its loss. Hence the figure of Eve as wife and mother inevitably draws attention to the disparity between what mankind is and what it ought to have been. Studying Eve as wife and mother forces an attempt to acknowledge humanity at its nadir and at its apex: she represents a problematic permutation of prelapsarian privilege and fallen disgrace, and of physical fertility and moral barrenness.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram’, Genesis 1.28.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Et vocavit Adam nomen uxoris suae Eva eo quod mater esset cunctorum viventium’, Genesis 3.20.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Dixit “multiplicabo aerumnas tuas et conceptus tuos in dolore paries filios”’, Genesis 3.16.

## SINLESS SEX: EVE AND PRELAPSARIAN PROCREATION

As was mentioned above, the notion of procreation in paradise is an area in which it becomes particularly apparent that commentary on Genesis provide vital context which, when overlooked, can exacerbate the ‘myth of Eve’ and the self-perpetuating expectation of misogyny in twelfth-century texts. Although Le Goff *et al* present an image of twelfth-century thought characterised by a hostile and horrified response to both the female body and to human sexuality, the commentaries with which this thesis is concerned present procreation as a basic and necessary human function that would have occurred in paradise even if Eve had not sinned. Lust is condemned as immoderate, and extramarital sex deemed a violation of the sacrament of marriage, but the original sin is deemed to have been disobedience, involving neither lust nor sexual activity of any kind.

This view is rooted in Augustine’s view, expressed in *De Genesi ad litteram*, that Genesis 1.28 indicates that procreation would necessarily have occurred in paradise even if Adam and Eve had not sinned:

Although, you see, it was when they had been turned out of paradise that that they are reported to have come together and brought forth, I still cannot see what could have prevented them their also being wedded with honour and bedded without spot or wrinkle. In Paradise, God granting this right to them if they lived faithfully in justice and served him obediently in holiness, so that without any restless fever of lust, without any labour or pain in childbirth, offspring would be brought forth.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> ‘Benedixitque illis Deus et ait “crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram”’, Genesis 1.28. *On Genesis* trans. Hill, pp. 378 – 79. ‘Quamquam enim iam emissi de paradiso conuenisse et genuisse commemorantur, tamen non uideo, quid prohibere potuerit, ut essent eis etiam in paradiso honorabiles nuptiae et torus immaculatus hoc deo praestante fideliter iuste que uiuentibus ei que oboedienter sancte que seruientibus, ut sine ullo inquieto ardore libidinis, sine ullo labore ac dolore pariendi fetus ex eorum semine gigneretur’, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.3. All the texts discussed likewise state that the first sin was disobedience, not lust; see Chapter III, section I below.

Hence, procreation could have taken place in paradise before the fall, and would have done so without the corrupting influence of lust. Eve's sin did not involve illicit sexual activity, because until the first sin occurred, such activity was impossible on account of mankind's prelapsarian inability to experience lust. Augustine does say that the transmission of original sin was necessarily facilitated in fallen humanity via procreation, but at no point does he suggest that the first sin itself was anything to do with lust.<sup>56</sup>

This opinion is widely shared. Abelard writes that it was not until 'after the eating of this tree [that] they at once felt the promptings of lust'.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Hugh of St Victor writes that since the union of Adam and Eve was instituted before the first act of sin with the benediction 'increase and multiply', undoubtedly, 'the mingling of flesh in the generation of offspring' would have occurred in paradise 'without disgrace and concupiscence'.<sup>58</sup> However, after the corruption incurred by the first sin, it became impossible for mankind to procreate without experiencing lust.<sup>59</sup> This is on account of the fact, Hugh continues, that prelapsarian mankind had complete control over all the members of the body because they were subject to the control of the soul, which was aligned with the will of God.<sup>60</sup>

When mankind disobeyed, part of the subsequent punishment consisted in mankind's losing the ability to control, or remain exempt from, sexual desire and its physical expression:

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 10. 11.

<sup>57</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 104 (italics mine). 'Quod post esum huius ligni statim senserunt incentiua libidinis', *Expositio*, 402.

<sup>58</sup> 'Quia ergo coniugium inter masculum et feminam ante peccatum a deo est institutum eisque ut crescerent et multiplicarentur dono benedictionis concessum atque coniunctum legimus commixtionem carnis in prolis generatione sine turpitudine et concupiscentia futuram nullatenus dubitare debemus', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 23.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 1.8, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 1.8, 13.

Therefore, so that disobedience might be made manifest in the human body, [God] removed from the power of the soul the member through which posterity was to be engendered in the flesh... In this member through which human propagation had to proceed a sign of disobedience was placed, hence it was shown to all who came [to be] via this member that they were generated with the sin of disobedience.<sup>61</sup>

As prelapsarian mankind disobeyed the command of God, the fallen body disobeys the commandment of the soul. Lust is both a punishment for, and a corporeal manifestation of, the disobedience of which the first sin consisted. However, neither lust nor sexual activity were themselves part of this first sin, since the former was essentially a consequence thereof, and the latter would have occurred even if mankind had remained sinless.

Hildegard's *Scivias* similarly states that prior to sin, procreation would have been an innocent act, and that it became tainted with lust only after the first sin of disobedience. Hildegard recounts the voice of God telling her that

After falling thus from disobedience into death, when they knew they could sin, they discovered sin's sweetness. And in this way, turning My rightful institution [i.e. marriage] into sinful lust, although they should have known that the commotion in their veins was not for the sweetness of sin but for the love of children, by the Devil's suggestion they changed it to lechery; and, losing the innocence of the act of begetting, they yielded it to sin.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> 'Ut igitur inobedientia manifesta firet unde in corpore humano membrum potestati anime subtraxit per quod posteritas in carne seminanda fuit... In hoc membro per quod humana propagatio transire debuit signum inobedientie positum est cunctis per illud transuentibus manifeste ostenditur quoniam cum culpa inobedientie generatur', *ibid.*, 1.8, 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 80. 'Et ita de inoboedientia sua in mortem cadentes dulcedinem peccati conceperunt, cum se posse peccare cognouerunt. Sed ipsi hoc modo rectam constitutionem meam in libidinem peccati uertentes, cum commotionem uenarum suarum non in dulcedine peccati sed in amore filiorum scire deberent, eam diabolica suggestione in libidinem dederunt; quia innocentiam geniturae suae perdentes illam in peccatum miserunt', *Scivias*, 1.2, 407 – 413.



Thus Adam and Eve were created with the capacity for reproduction prior to sin, and it was only via the first sin of disobedience that, in their fallen state, procreation necessarily came to involve the sin of lust. Even Hildegard, a consecrated virgin, considers the begetting of children to be an inherently good thing; an act of love which does not incite horror or hostility, even whilst she acknowledges that for fallen human beings it necessarily involves experiencing the vice of lust.

Whilst neither Hugh nor Hildegard present Eve as a seducer, nor the first sin as a sexual act, they do nonetheless present sexual activity, even between spouses for the purpose of procreation, as less preferable than virginity. On the other hand Peter Lombard, whilst he also follows the Augustinian line of reasoning that Adam and Eve were intended to procreate without lust in paradise, presents a rather less austere view of sex within marriage. Of prelapsarian procreation, he writes that

Some hold that the first humans in paradise would not have been able to join sexually for the procreation of children, since they say that sexual intercourse cannot occur without corruption or stain. But there could be neither corruption nor stain in humankind before sin, because these things were the consequence of sin... If the first humans had not sinned, they would have come together in carnal coupling in paradise without any sin or stain, and there would have been a marriage bed without stain there, and a commingling without concupiscence.<sup>63</sup>

He also agrees that fallen mankind's 'disobedient' sexual organs represent a manifestation of the disobedience that humankind showed to God: had it not been for Eve's sin of disobedience, 'they would exercise the same control over their genitals as

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<sup>63</sup> *Sentences Book 2*, trans. Silano, p. 86. 'Quidam putant ad gignendos filios primos homines in paradiso misceri non potuisse nisi post peccatum, dicentes concubitum sine corruptione uel macula non posse fieri. Sed ante peccatum nec corruptio nec macula in homine esse poterat, quoniam ex peccato haec consecuta sunt...si non peccassent primi homines, sine omni peccato et macula in paradiso carnali copula conuenissent, et esset ibi thorus immaculatus et commixtio sine concupiscentia', *Sententiae*, II.20, 1.

over their other members, so that they would feel no unlawful motion there'.<sup>64</sup> However,

Lombard also asserts that sex within marriage is not sinful:

For when, preserving the faith of the marriage-bed, partners come together for the sake of offspring, coitus is excused so that it has no fault; but when they come together by reason of incontinence, without the good of offspring yet preserving the faith, it is not excused so that it has no fault, but only a venial one.<sup>65</sup>

It is therefore possible to see that Eve's sin was widely considered to be disobedience rather than lust, and sexual activity was generally deemed to have been not merely permissible, but sanctioned as a necessity, in paradise. Mankind was created with both the ability and the imperative to procreate, and thus this would have occurred in paradise even had Eve not sinned. Whilst lust is condemned as immoderate, and sex even within marriage largely presented as something of a necessary evil, it is clear that major twelfth-century treatments of the hexaemeron and fall narratives do not deem the original sin to have consisted in lust. Le Goff's image of Eve's body as 'the devil's stomping ground' is thus difficult to justify, as is the persistent conception of Eve as a seducer.

#### THE LIMITATIONS OF THE EVE/MARY PARALLEL

Despite the tradition of arguing that procreation would have occurred in paradise even had mankind not sinned, the biblical creation and fall narratives discuss Eve as the first

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<sup>64</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, pp. 86 – 7. 'Atque genitalibus membris sicut ceteris imperarent, ut ibi nullum motum illicitum sentirent', *Sententiae*, II.20, 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Sentences Book 4* trans. Silano, p. 182. 'Quando enim, seruata fide thori, causa prolis coniuges conueniunt, sic excusatur coitus ut culpam non habeat; quando uero, deficiente bono prolis, fide tamen seruata, conueniunt causa incontinentiae, non sic excusatur ut non habeat culpam, sed ueniam, *Sententiae*, IV. 31, 1. He also writes that whilst lust is sinful, physical pleasure *per se* is not sinful so long as it is not immoderate, *ibid.*, IV. 31, 8.

mother only in relation to her punishment and expulsion. The sinless and unproblematic nature of prelapsarian procreation is necessarily only ever a hypothetical theological problem, whereas fallen human procreation and childbirth were identifiable realities.

However, within Eve's punishment there is necessarily the prospect of redemption, since it is her sin which necessitates the coming of Christ. On account of this, much attention has been devoted in modern scholarship to the relationship between Eve and the Virgin Mary.<sup>66</sup> Several aspects of this view are problematic. The Eve/Mary parallel represents only the surface of twelfth-century representations of both Eve and Mary, and it is difficult to find a substantial quantity of evidence which demonstrates that medieval texts employed the parallel as a simplistic classification of women in general. In addition, whilst there exists a typological affinity between Eve and Mary, the 'Eva'/Ave' palindrome and the 'Second Eve' idea are no more than a convenient means by which to identify and indicate this affinity. The theology of the creation, fall and redemption is too complex to be reduced to a convenient apothegm. The redemption is not a straightforward reversal or erasure of the fall, and the Virgin Mary's bearing of Christ does not erase, invert or reverse the sin of Eve. However, like the 'devil's gateway' phrase discussed in the historiographical survey above, the Eve/Mary parallel has come to function as a form of shorthand for perceived misogyny in the middle ages, and is now often deemed so self-evidently accurate a description of medieval conceptions of women that it is cited with very little representative evidence, or indeed without any substantiation at all.<sup>67</sup>

The secondary texts cited above tend to conflate two related but essentially different traditions; namely, that of Mary as the 'Second Eve', and that of the 'Eva/Ave'

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<sup>66</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>67</sup> This is certainly the case for all the examples cited in note 4 above.

palindrome. The ‘Eva/Ave’ palindrome and its employment in medieval texts, despite its obvious connection, is a tradition quite distinct from the conception of Mary as a second Eve. It has been variously attributed, but this palindromic construction developed independently from, and much later than, the tradition of the Second Eve. Rather, it is taken from the Vespers hymn, ‘Ave maris stella’ (‘Hail, Star of the Sea’), the earliest extant copy of which dates from the ninth century.<sup>68</sup> Most importantly, however, neither the ‘Ave/Eva’ palindrome nor the ‘New Eve’ idea are employed by medieval authors with anything like the frequency described by Newman, Duby, Swanson *et al.* The ‘Eva/Ave’ formulation has appeared more times in the scholarship of the last three decades than it does in the entirety of the *Patrologia Latina*.<sup>69</sup> The phrase is best viewed as a principally literary or linguistic device rather than an exegetical tool, or a site of sustained theological enquiry.<sup>70</sup> Rather, it appears, like the figure of Eve herself, to have become a form of shorthand for the supposed theological conception of women during the middle ages, as can be seen from the texts cited above.<sup>71</sup> The ‘New Eve’ idea does appear to have had some currency, although

<sup>68</sup> St Gallen, Codex Sangallensis 95, f. 2. ‘Ave maris stella / Dei mater alma / atque semper virgo / Felix coeli porta / Sumens illud “Ave” / Gabrielis ore / funda nos in pace / mutans Evae nomen’, 1 – 8. The catalogue attributes it to Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530-c. 609); see Gustav Scherrer, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St. Gallen* (Halle: 1875) pp. 37-38. In PL, Migne also groups it among the works of Venantius Fortunatus; see PL vol. 88, cols 265 C- 266 C. However, this attribution has widely been called into question – Graef, for example, posits the late eighth century as a more likely date for its composition, as does Andrew Breeze; see Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1985) p. 174, and Breeze, ‘Two Bardic Themes: the Virgin and Child, and “Ave-Eva”’, *Medium Aevum* vol. 63 (1994) pp. 17-33, p. 24.

<sup>69</sup> It appears eight times over the two hundred and seventeen volumes, in three sermons, two poems and the work of three minor twelfth-century authors. See the sermon dubiously attributed to Fulbert of Chartres, PL vol. 141, col. 336 D; Innocent III, PL vol. 217, cols 581 D and 506 B; the ‘Ave maris stella’, PL vol. 88, col. 265 C; Peter Damian, PL vol. 145, cols 937 C – 939 B; Helinand of Froidmont (c. 1160 – 1237), PL vol. 212, col. 745 C; Joannes Beletus (fl. 1135 – 1182), PL vol. 202, col. 77 B; Henry of Marcy (c. 1136 – 1189), PL vol. 204, col. 343 B.

<sup>70</sup> Tony Hunt, ‘Wordplay Before the Rhetoriquers’, *De Sens Rassis: Essays in Honour of Rupert T. Pickens* ed. Keith Busby, Bernard Guidot and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2005) pp. 283-296; see pp. 283-286; and Breeze, ‘Two Bardic Themes’, pp. 23-30 of which give a useful survey of the occurrences of the ‘Eva/Ave’ phrase in vernacular poetry after the twelfth century, and suggests that it was more frequently employed in the later middle ages than it was in the twelfth century.

<sup>71</sup> The comparative absence of the phrase within sustained theological analysis in the middle ages is reflected in the fact that the major modern works the role of the Virgin Mary in medieval devotion and theology make little use of it. It does not, for example appear in the studies of Rachel Fulton or Hilda

principally in very early Christian thought rather than the middle ages.<sup>72</sup> Supposedly, the Virgin Mary erases or reverses Eve's sin: conjugal subjugation is reformed as the role of *ancilla domini*, the pains of childbirth are vindicated by the Virgin Mary's giving birth to Christ, and it is the propagation of sin which itself necessitates Christ's birth.

However, like the 'Ave/Eva' formulation, the 'New Eve' idea appears to have been a convenient shorthand rather than a locus of sustained theological analysis and exegesis - Kevin McNamara has suggested that despite its attractive neatness, the parallel cannot be said to have contributed a great deal either to Mariology or to the theology of the creation, fall and redemption:

It may indeed be said that the principle enunciated by him [i.e. St Irenaeus] never quite fulfils its promise... Its attraction...was often the attraction of a literary theme lending itself to numerous variations, rather than that of a theological locus providing sure guidance concerning revealed truth. An understandable consequence of this has been a wariness and even suspicion of the New Eve idea; a theme which seems to imply in so facile a manner so many major Marian doctrines...naturally seems to many to have little place in serious theological discussion.<sup>73</sup>

As McNamara suggests, the 'New Eve' idea is perhaps too flippant a way to describe and analyse the theological complexity of the Virgin Mary's redemptive capacities, or Eve's role in the fall of mankind. The same can be said of the 'Ave/Eva' formulation.

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Graef; Miri Rubin and Jaroslav Pelikan mention it once in passing but certainly do not base their overall theses on it. See Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009) p. 312; Jaroslav Pelikan refers to it as a mere linguistic coincidence, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1996) p. 52; Rachel Fulton, *From Judgement to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800 – 1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Steed and Ward, 1985).

<sup>72</sup> St Irenaeus of Lyons has been deemed the originator of the 'Second Eve' idea; see *ibid.*, pp. 39 – 54; Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 36 -7; Graef, *Mary: A History*, pp. 39 – 55.

<sup>73</sup> Kevin McNamara, review of *La Nouvelle Ève II-III*, *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Études Mariales*, 1959 in *The Furrow*, vol. 10, no 4 (1959) pp. 268-69; see p. 268.

The assumption that medieval authors conceived women in general, and the theology of creation and redemption, in terms of a simplistic dichotomy is both misleading and reductive. Given that none of the texts with which the present study is concerned use this phrase or, with the exception of Hildegard, mention a parallel between Eve and Mary, examples of its use must be found elsewhere. There are two lengthier poetic redactions of the 'Eva/Ave' idea which originate in the twelfth century, namely those of Wace and Adam of St Victor. Both provide excellent examples of how the phrase was employed and why it is misleading to assume that phrase bore any substantial theological significance, or that it was employed as a conception of women in general. Adam of St Victor's version reads as follows:

Gabriel was sent from Heaven  
Faithful messenger of the words  
For the sacred utterances he discussed  
With the blessed Virgin.  
The good and sweet Word  
He set out within her chamber  
And from 'Eva' formed 'Ave'  
The name of Eve reversed...  
The dry rod without dew  
In a new rite, by a new manner  
Bought forth fruit with flower,  
And so a virgin gave birth.  
Blessed be such a fruit  
Fruit of joy, not strife.  
Adam would not have been seduced  
If he had tasted it.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> 'Missus Gabriel de coelis / Verbi bajulus fidelis / Sacris disserit loquelis / Cum beata virgine / Verbum bonum et suave / Pandit intus in conclave / Et ex Eva format Ave / Evae verso nomine... / Virga sicca sine rore / Novo ritu, novo more / Fructum protulit cum flore / Sic et virgo peperit / Benedictus talis fructus / Fructus gaudii, non luctus / Non erit Adam seductus / Si de hoc gustaverit', Adam of St Victor, 'Annunciatio beatae Mariae virginis', *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St Victor from the Text of Gautier*, vol. II, ed. Digby S. Wrangham (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1881) 1-8 and 33-40.

Eve's name is contrasted with the 'Ave' that heralds the Annunciation, and the *fructis ventris* of Mary's sinless fertility is contrasted with the *fructus ventitus* which Eve took. It is difficult to see any intended misogyny in this, and it is also clear that sustained exegesis is not the purpose of the text. The 'Ave/Eva' palindrome receives a similar, if slightly more developed, treatment in Wace's *La vie de la Vierge*:

St Mary returned to us  
The good that Eve took away  
This is signified to us in the greeting bought  
By the angels who first said 'Ave'  
Which is the name [of Eva] having been turned around  
Each letter exchanging its place with the others  
The spelling turned backwards.  
Leave 'E' then 'v' and 'a':  
Thus you will find it is the name of Eva.  
For this is given to us [to emphasise]  
Whence Eva made us fall  
That we might go back  
Whence Eva forced us to be ejected  
To return to paradise.<sup>75</sup>

Wace's text is distinguished by its development, rather than mere repetition, of the phrase, by his explicit presentation of the linguistic reversal as an analogue of redemptive re-Creation.<sup>76</sup> However, in both these texts, the phrase is not pursued for its theological significance but for its lexical felicity – its exposition is clearly motivated more by the opportunity it affords for wordplay than it is by desire to provide a commentary on the role of the Virgin Mary or the theological complexities of the fall

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<sup>75</sup> 'Saint Marie nos rendi / Le bien que Eve nos toli / Li salus nos segnefia / Que li angles li aporta / Qui premierement dist Ave / Qui cest nom aureit trestorné / De letre en autre remué / Ariere en espelant torné / Desist E, puis v et a / Si troverait cest nom Eva / Por ce nos a doné / Là dunt Eva nos fist descendre / Tenz est venus d'ariere aler / Là dunt Eva nos fist geter / De retourner en paradis', *La vie de la Vierge de Maître Wace* ed. Victor Luzarche (Tours: J. Bouserez, 1859) pp. 55-6.

<sup>76</sup> In the thirteenth century, Gautier de Coinci develops this even further in his 'Li salus de nostre dame'; see Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame* ed. V.F. Koenig (Geneva: Droz, 1955) pp. 545-6, 17-56.

and the redemption.<sup>77</sup> Theological commentary *per se* is not, and was not intended to be, the distinguishing feature of these treatments of the ‘Ave/Eva’ palindrome since they are merely restating an opposition between Eve and Mary. These are essentially narratives of the Annunciation, which rely heavily on the aforementioned ‘Ave maris stella’.

#### CONCEIVING THE WORD OF GOD: HILDEGARD, EVE AND THE VIRGIN MARY

As was mentioned above, Hildegard of Bingen’s *Scivias* is the only text discussed in this thesis whose representation of Eve makes any use of a comparison between Eve and the Virgin Mary. Uniquely among the hexaemeral commentaries discussed hitherto, Hildegard includes the Virgin Mary as a component of her discussion of the fall and its consequences, and Mary functions as an emblem of the spiritual and physical integrity which the rest of mankind, male as well as female, are denied as part of the punishment incurred for the sin of Eve. Hildegard is not concerned with Mary as a remote and gender-specific paragon of inaccessibly faultless purity. Rather, Mary functions as a connection to, and representation of, the integrity and innocuous fertility which distinguished mankind’s prelapsarian existence. It is in fact Eve who provides a model of inaccessible perfection, in the sinless fertility of her prelapsarian existence which Hildegard depicts by representing Eve as a cloud filled with stars.

Hildegard’s juxtaposition of Eve and Mary does not correspond with the ‘Ave/Eva’ dichotomy that has so often been described by modern scholars as a widespread medieval formulation of the qualities and theological position of women. Rather, the juxtaposition of the two comprises a significant element of Hildegard’s

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<sup>77</sup> Tony Hunt, *op. cit.* pp. 286-93; idem, *Miraculous Rhymes: The Writing of Gautier de Coinci* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007) pp. 169-174.



conception of Eve's punishment and fertility; subjects with which Hildegard displays considerable concern. This concern is most prominently expressed in the following passages, in which the text establishes the times at which both women and men are forbidden from entering a church. The first states that:

During the wife's menses... the woman is in pain and in prison, suffering a small portion of the pain of childbirth. I do not remit this time of pain for women, because I gave it to Eve when she conceived sin in the taste of the fruit, but therefore the woman should be cherished in this time with a great and healing tenderness. Let her contain herself in hidden knowledge; she should not, however, restrain herself from going into My Temple, but faith allows her to enter in the service of humility for her salvation. But because the Bride of My Son is always whole, a man ['vir'] who has open wounds because the wholeness of his members has been divided by the impact of a blow shall not enter My Temple... lest it be violated, as the intact members of Abel, who was a temple of God, were cruelly broken by his brother Cain.<sup>78</sup>

Hildegard presents the fallen human body as an entity that is characterised by painful fracture and disorder. It is susceptible to violation, to wounds, to fragmentation and even dismemberment.

The choice of Cain and Abel as exemplars of this fallen physical state is significant. As the first descendants of Eve, they are the first human beings born within the remits of Eve's punishment, and they represent both the consequences of this punishment and the way in which fallen humanity is subsequently condemned to perpetuate it. In the case of Eve and Cain, the 'harvest' of sin is death; in Mary and

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<sup>78</sup> 'Sed nolo ut idem opus fiat in diuisione mulieris, cum iam fluxum sanguinis sui patitur... Ubi se mulier in dolore et in carcere positam uidet, portionem scilicet doloris partus sui tangens. Sed tempus doloris in muliere non abicio, quoniam illud Euae dedi quando in gustu pomi peccatum concepit, unde et mulier in hoc eodem tempore in magna medicina misericordiae habenda est; ipsa etiam se continente in absconso disciplinae, non autem ita ut ab incesso templi mei se contineat, sed fideli permissione ipsum in officio humilitatis pro salute sua ingrediatur. Quia autem sponsa Filii mei semper integra est, uir apertis uulneribus si integritas membrorum ipsius in tactu percussione diuisa est templum meum nisi cum timore magnae necessitatis non intrabit ne uioletur, sicut integra membra Abel, qui templum Dei fuit, Cain frater suus crudeliter fregit', *Scivias*, 1.2, 506 – 523.

Christ, the ‘harvest’ of virtue is redemption. The connection between sin and wounding or dismemberment presented here is also significant, and appears on numerous occasions in Hildegard’s writing. For example, *Causae et curae* states that the fall resulted in the flesh of mankind becoming ulcerated (‘ulcerata’) and perforated (‘perforata’), whereas prelapsarian mankind had been characterised by impenetrable physical intactness.<sup>79</sup> This sense of fragmentation is echoed in Hildegard’s description of the devil as scattered and divided, in contrast to God whose divinity is whole and complete like a wheel.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the antiphon ‘O virga ac diadema’ refers to Eve’s sin as originating in ‘the wounds of ignorance’ (‘vulneribus ignorantiae’), on account of which Eve plucked and reaped (‘decerpsit’) pain for both herself and for all her descendants.<sup>81</sup>

However, for Hildegard, the prelapsarian figure of Eve is a paragon of perpetual physical integrity and uncompromised fertility, and the permeable and fragmented corporeal state of fallen mankind is starkly and unfavourably contrasted with her inviolate wholeness. It is the prelapsarian Eve, not Mary, who provides a model of unattainable perfection and wholeness. Moreover, the passage quoted above is not aimed specifically at women. Both male and female bodies are referred to since it is mankind in as a whole, regardless of gender, that Hildegard deems subject to the fragmentation and permeability which marks human physicality after the fall.

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<sup>79</sup> ‘Nam de gustu mali versus est sanguis filiorum Adae in venenum seminis, de quo filii hominum procreantur. Et ideo caro eorum ulcerata et perforata est. Quae ulcera et foramina quandam tempestatem et humectatem fumi in hominibus faciunt’, *Causae et curae* ed. Paul Kaiser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903), 2, 21.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Deus autem integer ut rota permansit... Sic paternitas est quomodo circulus rotae, paternitas est plenitudo rotae. Deitas est in ipsa... Lucifer autem integer non est, sed in dispersione divisus est’, *ibid.*, 1, 8 – 9, 23.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Nam ipsa mulier / quam Deus matrem omnium posuit / viscera sua / cum vulneribus ignorantie decerpsit / et plenum dolorem / generi suo protulit’, Barbara Newman ed., *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of ‘Symphonia armonie celestium,’* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998) 5 b.

These same concerns emerge in the second passage relating to the times at which people are allowed to enter a church. This passage forbids women from entering after childbirth or the loss of their virginity, but also points out that the ‘injuries’ of both women and men (‘viri ac mulieris’) are liable to violate the sanctity of the church:

So a woman, too, when she bears offspring, may not enter My Temple except in accordance with the law I give her, because her hidden members have been broken, that the holy sacraments of My Temple may be unviolated by any masculine or feminine pain or pollution; because the most pure Virgin bore My Son, and she was whole without any wound of sin. For the place that is consecrated in honour of my Only-Begotten knew in himself the integrity of the Virgin Birth. Therefore, let a woman who breaks the wholeness of her virginity with a man also refrain from entering My Temple while injured by the bruise of her corruption, until the injury of that wound is healed.<sup>82</sup>

Both Eve and Mary provide the *Scivias* with potent symbols of female fertility here, and the description of perforated flesh and the fracture of corporeal boundaries echoes Hildegard’s repeated remarks concerning wholeness and physical integrity. This concern with the polluting influence of injury and fracture leads Hildegard to assemble an indictment against new mother entering a church that is markedly more severe than the canon law which addresses this situation. Gratian states that there is nothing to prevent women from entering a church after they have given birth, because prohibiting them from so doing would amount to an unjust and theologically inconsistent

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Sed et mulier cum prolem pepererit fractis occultis membris suis templum meum non nisi secundum legem per me sibi datam ingrediatur, quatenus sancta sacramenta eiusdem templi mei ab omni pollutione et dolore uiri ac mulieris inuiolabilia sint; quia Filium meum purissima Virgo genuit, quae integra absque ullo uulnere peccati fuit. Locus enim, qui in honorem eiusdem Unigeniti mei consecratus est, integer ab omni corruptione liuoris ac uulneris esse debet; quoniam idem Unigenitus meus integritatem uirginei partus in se nouit. Unde et mulier quae integritatem uirginitatis suae cum uiro corrumpit, in liuore plagae suae qua corrupta est ab ingressu templi mei se contineat, usque dum plaga uulneris ipsius sanetur’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 525 – 37.

punishment for having endured the pain of childbirth, which is not sinful.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, for Hildegard, the fragmentation that accompanies human fertility after the fall is sufficiently damaging that it ought to prevent entry into a church. Eve's sin disordered the elements, which should be harmonious and which, before the fall, 'had existed in great calm, were turned [after the Fall] to the greatest agitation'.<sup>84</sup> This elemental disorder parallels the fragmentation of the fallen human body itself.

After the fall, Eve retains her status as mother of all the living, although as a consequence of her disobedience, childbirth becomes something that Hildegard considers both physically and spiritually damaging. Fertility is something about which Hildegard is ambivalent: procreation may be beneficial, but virginity is infinitely preferable. Female fertility is both a blessing and a curse; it is a problematic signifier both of the miracles of creation and of mankind's ability to damage them.

Augustine Thompson, in his assessment of Hildegard's views on the priesthood and women preaching, points out her failure to elaborate on her initial assertion that women were 'appointed to bear children'.<sup>85</sup> She is unable to pursue this point because, he says, Hildegard was writing for an exclusively monastic audience which would, understandably, have been unresponsive to this claim. Similarly, Rebecca Garber claims that 'by offering Eve redemption through Mary, Hildegard offers a means to redeem the female body: Eve's potential yet spoiled fecundity is fulfilled by Mary's corporeal yet

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<sup>83</sup> 'Si mulier eadem hora, qua genuerit, actura gratias intrat ecclesiam, nullo pondere peccati grauat; uoluptas etenim carnis, non dolor in culpa est. In carnis autem commixtione uoluptas est, in partu uero prolis gemitus. Unde ipsi primae mulieri dicitur: "In doloribus paries." Si itaque enixam mulierem prohibemus intrare ecclesiam, ipsam ei penam in culpam uertimus', Emil Friedberg ed., *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, Corpus Iuris Canonici, vol. 1 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959) 1.5, 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Scivias*, trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 73. 'Et ita omnia elementa mundi, quae prius in magna quiete constiterant, in maximam inquietudinem', *Scivias*, 1.2.

<sup>85</sup> Augustine Thompson, 'Hildegard of Bingen on Gender and the Priesthood', *Church History* 63.3 (1994), pp.349-364; see p. 351.

non-carnal fertility'.<sup>86</sup> Whilst Thompson and Garber are right to identify a concern with the potential conflict between virginity and fertility, Hildegard's juxtaposition of Eve and Mary goes further than merely identifying this conflict as a straightforward dichotomy. Hildegard does not 'fail to elaborate' on account of the ostensible contradiction of a consecrated virgin declaring childbearing to have been the ultimate purpose for the creation of women. She in fact pursues and solves this conflict, on an individual and personal level at least, by employing the Virgin Mary not as an inaccessible paragon, but as an active and immediate symbol of how a workable semblance of Eve's impossible prelapsarian sinless fertility might be possible to achieve after the fall.

Hildegard does this by establishing a parallel not between Mary and Eve, but between Mary and herself. In the visionary persona she constructs, Hildegard like Mary is able to 'conceive' the Word of God in such a way that utilises female fertile potential whilst remaining sinless and physically intact. In the first *Scivias* vision, Hildegard makes numerous allusions to her own intellectual fertility. She represents her own ability to conceive the word of God in stark contrast to the barren and fruitless intellects of other scholars, reporting that she is instructed by God to:

Cry out and speak of the origin of the pure salvation until those people are instructed, who, though they see the inmost contents of the Scriptures, do not wish to tell them or preach them... Unlock for them the enclosure of mysteries that they, timid as they are, conceal in a hidden and fruitless field. Burst forth in a fountain of abundance and overflow with mystical knowledge, until they who now think you contemptible because of Eve's transgression are stirred up by the flood of your irrigation.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Rebecca L. R. Garber, 'Where is the Body: Images of Eve and Mary in the *Scivias*' in *Hildegard of Bingen: A Book of Essays* ed. Maud McInerney, Garland Medieval Casebooks vol. 20 (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 103-132. See p. 103.

<sup>87</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 67. 'Clama et dic de introitu incorruptae saluationis, quatenus hi erudiantur qui medullam litterarum uidentes eam nec dicere nec praedicare uolunt, quia tepidi et hebetes ad conseruandam iustitiam Dei sunt, quibus clausuram mysticorum resera quam ipsi timidi in abscondito

The preface to the text establishes Hildegard's visionary epiphany as an intellectual 'Annunciation': she describes receiving a divine visitation after which she finds herself carrying within her the meaning of the scriptures. After a painful and arduous period of gestation and final delivery, Hildegard brings forth the word of God in the form of the *Scivias* text.<sup>88</sup> The image which accompanies this preface likewise contains visual references to the Annunciation.<sup>89</sup> The image depicts Hildegard seated and writing, with the word of God emanating in the form of light from the sky. Her scribe Volmar, entering through a window or door to the right, occupies the position of the Angel Gabriel. The overall composition of the image corresponds with many of the characteristics displayed in visual representations of the Annunciation during this period, as does the presence of emanating light from heaven, the architectural detail, and the fact that Hildegard is depicted, as Mary frequently was from the eleventh century onwards, seated and holding a book.<sup>90</sup> Hildegard thus presents her authorial self as possessing, like Mary, a means by which to approach the God-given maternal potential which glorified Eve before the Fall, whilst simultaneously avoiding Eve's legacy of physical disorder and fragmentation. Hildegard is 'fertilised' by divine knowledge, and is thus able to 'give birth' to her books in a way which is aligned with Mary's sinless maternity.

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agro sine fructu celant. Ergo in fontem abundantiae ita dilatate et ita in mystica eruditione efflue, ut illi ab effusione irrigationis tuae concutiantur qui te propter praeuaricationem Euae uolunt contemptibilem esse', *Scivias*, 1.1, 31 – 40.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., *Protestificatio*, 1 – 60.

<sup>89</sup> See illustration, p. 2 above.

<sup>90</sup> On the presence of these features in high medieval images of the Annunciation, see *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* ed. Leslie Ross (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996) pp. 15 – 16, and Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 1, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Lund Humphries, 1971) pp. 33 – 52.

## CONCLUSION

The representations of Eve as the first wife discussed here provide an excellent demonstration of the way in which discussion of matrimony and procreation forged a potentially problematic nexus between exegesis and conduct, and between prelapsarian and fallen human nature. As a potential archetype of motherhood and uxorial conduct, the twelfth-century Eve is necessarily an ambivalent figure rather than a vehicle for misogyny. As the 'first' wife and mother she represents a prelapsarian ideal. Eve is the 'mother of all the living' and a participant in the sinless union which provided the sacramental model and scriptural ratification of matrimony.<sup>91</sup> By the end of Genesis 3, however, these roles have become intrinsically connected with her transgression. Having led mankind out of paradise and into sin, Eve is condemned to fulfil her unparalleled maternal capacity in sorrow and in servitude.

The institution of marriage and the begetting of children were considered characteristic of human existence both before and after the fall, and thus Eve's position as the 'first' wife and mother provides a connection to mankind's unblemished prelapsarian nature, and a perpetual reminder of its loss.<sup>92</sup> The institution of marriage and the begetting of children were considered characteristic of human existence before the fall as well as after, and thus Eve's position as the 'first' wife and mother provides both a connection to mankind's unblemished prelapsarian nature, and a perpetual reminder of its loss. Problematically, therefore, Eve's marital role and maternal potential embodied both the image of mankind as the glory of creation, and also that of mankind as the bringers of sin.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Mater... cunctorum viventium', Genesis 3.20.

<sup>92</sup> Genesis 3.16.

This image of Eve as the first wife and mother, rather than merely confirming extant assumptions about the supposed ubiquity of misogyny during this period, demonstrates that representations of Eve as the first wife and mother go substantially beyond well-worn tropes of wayward wives and aversion to female corporeality and procreation. These representations of Eve reveal that the figure of Eve was employed as a means by which to address and reconcile the prelapsarian ideal of mankind with the reality of its fallen and supposedly tainted nature, since Eve's uxorial and maternal functions provide a link between prelapsarian and fallen human nature.



# CHAPTER III

## REPRESENTATIONS OF EVE AS THE FIRST SINNER

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### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the extent to which several of the major twelfth-century treatments of the fall and expulsion narrative employ the figure of Eve as a means by which to examine the state of virtue, and the actions of temptation and sin within the human soul. Rather than being portrayed as an expedient model of the wayward woman, or as a credulous victim of diabolic casuistry, throughout the texts with which this thesis is concerned, exegesis of Genesis 3 emerges as a vital means by which to approach the theological problems posed by human capacity for both sin and virtue, and the entry of evil and vice into the divinely established harmony of prelapsarian existence. The figure of Eve is developed in this context as a fundamentally instructive means of scrutinising and elucidating the complex subjects of sin, temptation and virtue. On account of the central position that the figure of Eve occupies in the ethical and doctrinal frameworks which these texts construct, representations of Eve as the first sinner are able to illuminate some of the most complex and influential writing on ethics and human moral agency that this period produced.

Eve's encounter with the devil, and the act of sin to which she subsequently consents and persuades Adam to follow, form the crux of the fall narrative. However, the scriptural account of this formative episode devotes little attention to the exposition of, or motivation for, its occurrence; an issue which had been acknowledged in

commentary on Genesis 3 as far back as Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*.<sup>1</sup> Genesis recounts the temptation of Eve with a brevity that belies its determinative significance: the serpent asks Eve why she and Adam cannot eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, and when Eve replies that it is forbidden lest they die, the serpent assures her that not only will they not die if they eat it, but that they will be 'as gods', knowing good and evil.<sup>2</sup> There is no explanation of why the serpent wished to tempt Eve, or of why she capitulated and subsequently persuaded Adam to do likewise. The serpent itself is not even explicitly connected with the devil, being described simply as the most cunning of all the earth's animals ('callidior cunctis animantibus terrae').<sup>3</sup> The actual process of Eve's sin, and her persuasion of Adam to join her in committing it, occupies a single verse: 'thus the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and beautiful to the eyes, and delightful to behold, and she took of its fruit and ate, and she gave to her husband, and he ate'.<sup>4</sup>

However, these verses defined the nature of fallen mankind, and as such they became the subject of extensive discussion. As far as the twelfth-century interpretations of Genesis 3 are concerned, much of this discussion focuses on Eve's motivations for sin and the interior processes which comprise the actions of temptation and sin. Flood has rightly remarked that high medieval exegesis of the fall is particularly concerned with providing 'a more literal psychological account of Genesis 2-3'. However, Flood's assertion that writing about the medieval figure of Eve necessitates remaining 'silent about many of the great themes to be found in Genesis such as the nature of evil and

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<sup>1</sup> 'The place of conjecture where scripture is silent'; also Flood, *Representations of Eve*, p.67.

<sup>2</sup> 'Serpens... dixit ad mulierem, "cur praecepit vobis Deus ut non comederetis de omni ligno paradisi?" Cui respondit mulier, "de fructu lignorum quae sunt in paradiso vescemur; de fructu vero ligni quod est in medio paradisi praecepit nobis Deus ne comederemus et ne tangeremus illud ne forte moriamur". Dixit autem serpens ad mulierem, "nequaquam morte moriemini. Scit enim Deus quod in quocumque die comederitis ex eo aperientur oculi vestri et eritis sicut dii scientes bonum et malum"', Genesis 3.1 – 5.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3.1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum et pulchrum oculis aspectuque delectabile et tulit de fructu illius et comedit deditque viro suo qui comedit', Genesis 3.6.

divine providence' is particularly questionable in this context.<sup>5</sup> Nowhere is it more apparent than in twelfth-century writing on the fall that analysing the figure of Eve not only permitted, but demanded, exploration of these very subjects, in addition to other equally complex themes. Representations of Eve as the first sinner demonstrate that the figure of Eve was employed as a means by which to address some of the most critical issues raised by the Genesis narrative; namely, the nature of sin, temptation and virtue, human moral agency, and the more challenging questions of why human beings were created to be susceptible to temptation, and why God permitted the existence of sin and evil.

Throughout the texts discussed here, Eve's encounter with the serpent is portrayed as one in which the devil attacks the weakest part of human nature; that is, the part of the soul which is most susceptible to temptation, and which is ultimately responsible for whether or not an act of sin is committed. However, Eve is not portrayed in this way in order to highlight the failings of women specifically. The texts discussed here destabilise the assumption that twelfth-century exegetes discussed the fall in order to, as Newman puts it, expand their 'arsenal of misogynist barbs'.<sup>6</sup> Rather than being employed as a simplistic model of female weakness, she is employed as a means by which to examine human weakness and human agency. Eve is also consistently associated with an inordinate desire for knowledge and experience, rather than being presented as lustful and disorderly. More Everyman than femme fatale, the twelfth-century figure of Eve is a case study of human sin, and her actions are examined in order to elucidate the process of temptation and sin which occur in every human soul, regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, p. 116.

## I. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE ADVANTAGES OF SIN

The tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the commandment which prohibited it, form a crucial component of the narrative of mankind's sin and expulsion from paradise. Unsurprisingly, the nature of both the tree and its associated commandment was the cause of much debate during this period. This section will first discuss responses to the nature of the tree itself and the question of whether or not the commandment which forbade it was issued to Eve as well as Adam, since both Eve's culpability and the properties of the tree itself are subjects which receive consistent attention. The texts discussed here present Eve as a conscious and morally active participant in the process of the first sin, and the tree as a mere test, which did not in fact possess any knowledge-giving properties. The first sin is presented by these texts as consisting principally in disobedience, and failure to abide by the rules of the moral test that the tree represented.

The section will then discuss the most striking aspect of the way in which this subject is approached by the writers discussed here; namely that the tree and the commandment against it are employed in exegesis of the fall narrative in order to facilitate discussion of the notion that mankind as a whole actually benefited from Eve's sin, in spite of the severity of the punishment they subsequently received. The most readily apparent of these benefits is that the first sin necessitated the coming of Christ, and without it, mankind would not have experienced the glory of redemption. However, several of the texts discussed here also argue that Eve's failure to remain obedient increased mankind's knowledge and understanding of good and evil, and of sin and virtue, by providing the human mind with concrete experience of concepts which they had hitherto only known *a priori*. Whilst the tree itself was deemed to have had no

inherent abilities, the moral test that it presented is portrayed as something which did ultimately expand human knowledge, albeit at a grave cost.

### THE TREE, THE COMMANDMENT, AND EVE'S MORAL AGENCY

The forbidden tree is described in the Book of Genesis as 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' ('*lignum scientiae boni et mali*') but no indication is given of the tree's capacities, if any.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the devil is the only character in the narrative who ascribes any definite capability to the tree and its fruit, with his assertion that if Eve and Adam eats the fruit, their eyes will be opened and they will be as gods, knowing good and evil.<sup>8</sup>

The nature and ability of the tree receives particular attention from Abelard, Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard. They are concerned specifically with whether or not the tree had any actual knowledge-giving capacity, or was simply chosen by God arbitrarily in order to test the obedience of Eve and Adam, with the latter answer being generally deemed correct. Hugh and Lombard are also concerned with establishing that Eve's sin could not be excused by her ignorance, and devote some time to demonstrating that the commandment which forbade the tree was issued to both Adam and Eve.

Before discussing the properties of the tree of knowledge and the issuing of the commandment which prohibited it, it worth pointing out here that Abelard makes a singular contribution to the exegesis of Genesis 3 by clarifying an issue that does not receive any attention elsewhere. Regarding the literal, physical nature of the tree, it is customarily assumed that the forbidden fruit is an apple. The apple, proffered enticingly by Eve, has come to be an iconic image of the fall of mankind. However, this was

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 2.17.

<sup>8</sup> '*Aperientur oculi vestri et eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum*', Genesis 3.5.

apparently not unanimously agreed in the twelfth century. Abelard writes that the exact type of fruit in question remains unclear, since the word ‘pomum’, which is usually translated as ‘apple’, is ‘understood to stand in general for the fruit of every tree’.<sup>9</sup> The Genesis narrative too refers simply to the tree’s ‘fruit’ (‘fructus’), and commentaries on Genesis tend to do the same – none of the writers of the texts discussed in the present study refer to any specific type of fruit.<sup>10</sup> Abelard proposes two suggestions for which fruit the tree of knowledge might have produced. Firstly, he suggests figs, since Eve and Adam dress themselves in fig leaves immediately after their act of sin.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, he states that it makes sense, as Jewish tradition apparently suggests, to think that the tree of knowledge was in fact a vine, and the fruit consumed was the grape. The fruit of the vine is known, Abelard says, for its ability to cloud judgement and incite lust, hence St Paul’s warning against wine, and it was after consuming the fruit that mankind experienced lust and shame for the first time.<sup>12</sup>

The literal nature of the forbidden fruit does not, however, seem to have been the main concern about the tree of knowledge, and more interest is generally given to its possible abilities than to its botanical classification. Hugh of St Victor is quick to point out that the forbidden tree could not actually have conferred knowledge of any kind. He writes that the tree of life (‘lignum vitae’), mentioned alongside the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2.9, did indeed have genuinely life-giving properties. However, the tree of

<sup>9</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 61. ‘Solet quippe pomum generaliter pro omni arboris fructu intelligi’, *Expositio*, 160.

<sup>10</sup> See Genesis 2.2 – 6. The Adam poet does however sometimes use the word ‘pome’, which can mean ‘apple’ specifically as well as ‘fruit’ more generally; see for example *Mystère* ed. Sletjõe, 304.

<sup>11</sup> *Expositio*, 400.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Hebrei autem hoc lignum scientie boni et mali autumant uitem fuisse... Cui fortassis opinioni, illud quoque non incongrue attestari uidetur, quod post esum huius ligni statim senserunt incentiua libidinis. Calide quippe nature fructum hunc uel uinum hinc expressum esse constat, et in luxuriam maxime commouere, iuxta illud apostoli: nolite inebriari uino, in quo est luxuria. Secundum quem etiam luxurie motum in primis illis hominibus inde factum, de quo erubescens uirilia texerunt, non incongrue uidetur dictum scientie boni et mali fuisse illud lignum’, *Expositio*, 401 - 403. The warning against wine occurs in Ephesians 5.18 (‘Et nolite inebriari uino, in quo est luxuria, sed implemini Spiritu’), which Abelard quotes directly here.

knowledge of good and evil could not literally give Adam and Eve any knowledge by itself, and was so called for only one reason; namely, that it was intended to test their obedience.<sup>13</sup> This opinion is shared by Peter Lombard, who cites Bede and the *Glossa ordinaria* as authorities who concur.<sup>14</sup> Mankind could only have come to know and experience good or evil through obedience or disobedience, and not from the tree itself.<sup>15</sup> However, Hugh continues, the tree of knowledge of good and evil could not actually give Adam and Eve any knowledge at all and was so called for only one reason; namely, that it was used in order to test human obedience.<sup>16</sup> Again, Lombard agrees, although he seems more concerned with establishing, in habitual agreement with Augustine, that the tree itself was not evil; it was merely so called because of the moral test it was to provide.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, Hugh and Lombard display concern with clarifying the ambiguity surrounding the issuing of the commandment to avoid the tree, since it is not entirely apparent from the scriptural account whether this commandment was given to both Eve and Adam, or to Adam only. The scriptural account of the instruction prohibiting mankind from consuming the fruit of the tree proceeds as follows in Genesis 2: ‘and he [God] commanded him, saying, “You shall eat of every tree in paradise. Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil however, you may not eat, for on whatever day that you

<sup>13</sup> ‘Lignum etiam scientie boni et mali ibi fuisse narrator quod non similiter quidem ex natura sua scientiam boni et mali boni et mali homini dare potuit quemadmodum lignum vite vitam in homine corporalem ex natura sua, et virtute sibi indita a Deo potuit conservare, sed idcirco tantum lignum scientie boni et mali dicitur quia ad probandum hominis obedientiam sive inobedientiam experiendam probatur’, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Sententiae*, 2.17, 6.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Sic ergo in loco isto sive boni mali cognoscendi occasionem accipere debuit, non tamen ex natura ligni, quia hoc homini ex se dare non potuit. Sed quia in eo vel obediendo boni vel non obediendo mali pro debita remuneratione occasionem accepit’, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 32.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Lignum etiam scientie boni et mali ibi fuisse narrator quod non similiter quidem ex natura sua scientiam boni et mali boni et mali homini dare potuit quemadmodum lignum vite vitam in homine corporalem ex natura sua, et virtute sibi indita a Deo potuit conservare, sed idcirco tantum lignum scientie boni et mali dicitur quia ad probandum hominis obedientiam sive inobedientiam experiendam probatur’, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 75. ‘Augustinus, super genesim: arbor enim illa non erat mala, sed scientiae boni et mali ideo dicta est, quia post prohibitionem erat in illa transgressio futura, qua homo experiendo disceret quid esset inter obedientiae bonum et inobedientiae malum’, *Sententiae*, 2.17, 7.

eat of it, you will die”<sup>18</sup>. The commandment is issued in verses 16 and 17 of this chapter, and thus it is given immediately after the placing of Adam in paradise, but it precedes the creation of Eve in verses 22 – 23. In addition, when Eve explains the commandment to the devil in Genesis 3, she describes the tree simply as the one ‘which is in the middle of paradise’ (‘quod est in medio paradisi’), giving no indication that she knows the tree to have any particular significance, beyond the fact that touching it or eating its fruit has been prohibited ‘lest we might die’ (‘forte moriamur’).<sup>19</sup> This ambiguity presents the possibility of arguing that since Eve had not actually been created when the commandment was issued, her culpability is lessened because she did not receive the same instruction as Adam.

Hugh of St Victor writes that although it may seem that Eve was not fully aware of the prohibition, she did in fact know that touching or eating of the tree would incur death, because this is precisely what she says to Satan when he first approaches her in the garden: ‘the woman herself’, he writes, ‘testifies that this was decreed to her, that she would not touch the tree of knowledge of good and evil’.<sup>20</sup> He adds, however, that Eve did not receive this instruction from God directly, rather she received it through the medium of the man, because ‘she was subject to the man and by the counsel of the man she was to be instructed’.<sup>21</sup> Again, Lombard agrees with Hugh on this matter, and repeats Hugh’s assertions that Eve herself attests her awareness of the commandment,

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Praecipitque ei dicens, “ex omni ligno paradisi comede, de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne comedas in quocumque enim die comederis ex eo morte morieris”’, Genesis 2.16 - 17.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 3.3.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Ipsa enim mulier hic testatur sibi quoque mandatum ut lignum scientie boni et mali non tangeret’, *De sacramentis*, 1.7, 5.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Ut sermo dei primum quasi mediante ad virum fieret deinde mediante viro ad mulierem quoque que subiecta fuit et consilio viri instituenda perveniret’, *ibid.*, 1.7, 5.



and that even if God did not instruct her directly, she received it through Adam, to whom she was subject.<sup>22</sup>

The *Mystère d'Adam* likewise establishes firmly that both Adam and Eve were aware of the commandment to avoid the tree of knowledge, by restructuring the order in which the events of Genesis 2-3 occur. The Adam poet depicts God issuing the commandment after Eve has been created and presented to Adam, and thus whilst the command is addressed to Adam, she is present as it is given.<sup>23</sup> Adam agrees to do as he is commanded, and answers on Eve's behalf, assuring his creator that neither he nor Eve ('ne jo ne Eue') will violate his orders, particularly not for the sake of a mere single fruit ('por un sol fruit').<sup>24</sup>

Eve is thus represented here as a subject, dependent on her husband for instruction. Evidently, these passages conflict with the earlier claims that Eve was neither inferior nor superior, but created to associate with Adam in an equal partnership. As the first woman, Eve is a peer and an equivalent. As the first wife, she is a subject and a dependant. However, Eve is also portrayed in these passages as a being in possession of reason and free will who consciously consented to perform an act she knew to be transgressive; an act for which she is thus duly held accountable. She may have been reliant on Adam for instruction, but the moral agency she exercised in consenting to and committing the first sin was entirely independent.

On the subject of why the devil chose to appear in the form of the serpent, answers vary regarding the specific choice of animal. However, they agree that the devil needed to appear in disguise in order to proceed successfully with his deceptive act, since had he appeared in his own form he would have been easily recognised and

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<sup>22</sup> 'Ipsa mulier testetur sibi etiam esse mandatum, dicens: "praecepit nobis deus" etc... Quia mulier, quae subiecta uiro fuit, nonnisi mediante uiro diuinum debuit accipere praeceptum', *Sententiae*, liber II, dist. 21, ch. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Mystère* ed. Sletsjoe, 100 – 103.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 104 – 106.

dismissed. Hugh explains that the devil could only tempt mankind by resorting to fraudulence, adding that he would likely have preferred to appear as a dove, had this form not been reserved for the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup> Lombard also refers to the devil's thwarted desire to take the form of a dove, concluding that the form of a serpent was deemed a more suitable disguise because it was unappealing, and thus Eve should have detected the deceitful cunning of the tempter.<sup>26</sup> Hildegard writes that the devil saw that it would be easy to bring down Adam and Eve but that he could not approach them without a disguise, and thus chose the form of the serpent simply because the serpent most closely resembled his actual appearance.<sup>27</sup>

#### WHY THE EXISTENCE OF SIN WAS PERMITTED

Whilst the discussions of the tree and the commandment are useful components of the debate which surrounded the figure of Eve during this period, the most significant aspect of interpretations of Genesis 2.17 in this respect is the way in which they present the consequences of Eve's sin. Exegesis of Eve's temptation in the texts discussed here reveals a striking degree of unanimity regarding the notion that mankind benefited from the first act of sin, in spite of the grievous consequences incurred by it. Before the act of sin itself is discussed, there is an identifiable tendency to present the argument that by transgressing the boundaries of divine mandate, mankind's knowledge and experience increased and developed. Both the act of sin and the consequences it incurred are presented as processes which were damaging to mankind, but which were at the same time instructive, since they reinforced and augmented mankind's appreciation both of God and of human nature. For Abelard, it is the interpretation of Genesis 2.17 which

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<sup>25</sup> *De sacramentis*, 2.7, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Sententiae* 2. 21, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Scivias*, 1.2, 216.

lays the foundations for his argument that Eve's sin renders her dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men. However, this argument is not unique to Abelard's exegesis of the fall narrative. Although Abelard presents the argument more forcefully than other commentators, as will be discussed below, Hugh of St Victor, Peter Lombard and Hildegard of Bingen all share his opinion that mankind as a whole benefited in some ways from Eve's act of transgression, since it forced a more developed understanding of obedience, free will and the nature of virtue.

Whilst it seems paradoxical to argue that the first sin was beneficial to mankind, this argument serves two vital purposes. Principally, it provides a satisfactory answer to the problematic questions of why God permitted mankind to sin, and why mankind was created with the capacity to sin in the first place. In addition, the argument facilitates the definition of virtue as a complex interior process, the value of which is defined by the difficulty of the struggle to achieve it.

It is possible to identify a longstanding precedent for the idea of advantageous sin in Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, which suggests that mankind was created with the capacity to be tempted 'because it is an effective test and exercise of virtue, and because the palm for not having given in when tempted is more glorious than for having been beyond the possibility of temptation'.<sup>28</sup> Had mankind simply been unable or unwilling to sin, they would not have been able to experience the worthy and instructive process of resisting temptation; the 'prize' for which is virtue. Although mankind failed the spiritual test presented by the commandment forbidding the tree of knowledge, the process of being tested was still inherently valuable. Indeed, there would have been no point in a test that was impossible to fail.

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<sup>28</sup> *On Genesis*, trans. Hill, p. 433; *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.6.

The notion that mankind had to experience temptation and sin in order to appreciate virtue is most prominently expressed in the work of Abelard. Abelard comments on Genesis 2.17 conceptualise sin and temptation in a way that makes it possible for him to argue that Eve becomes more worthy and more pleasing before God *because* she consented to temptation and defied the commandment which God had issued. In fact, the figure of Eve emerges as a fundamental component of Abelard's ethical framework. Abelard states explicitly that the sin itself - the tasting of the fruit – was indeed an essentially minor act of transgression ('tam modicum peccatum de gustu illo pomi'), particularly given the magnitude of those frequently committed by Eve and Adam descendants, which necessitate neither so great a punishment nor so great an act of redemption.<sup>29</sup> However, the human being needed to experience sin, and the consequences of sin.<sup>30</sup> The sin lay in violating the commandment rather than the act of eating the fruit itself, which was merely a pretext for the establishment of a test of human obedience. He continues:

But perhaps you will ask why he [God] forbade something which he knew they [Eve and Adam] would transgress, something in which there would have been no sin had there not been a command? Who will not see that he was almost seeking an opportunity for them to do something for which as transgressors they could be punished or proven guilty, [for which they] deserve to be condemned?<sup>31</sup>

Abelard thus rather boldly confronts here several of the most problematic issues raised by Genesis 2.17; namely, the questions of why God permitted sin to happen, whether or not this was deliberate, whether it was predestined or at least anticipated by

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<sup>29</sup> *Expositio*, 459.

<sup>30</sup> 'Quibus respondeo quod in illo primo etsi leuiori peccato, homo debuit experiri quantum deo grauiores culpe displicerent quas non corporalibus et transitoriis penis uindicaret, sed etiam perpetuis et hoc grauissimis, non illis mitissimis quas, ut ait beatus Augustinus, paruuli non regenerati sustinent', *ibid.*, 460.

<sup>31</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. 'Sed fortassis requiris cur illud prohibuit in quo sciebat eos transgressuros et in quo nullum fieret peccatum si non precessisset preceptum? Quis non uideat quasi occasionem eum querere qua tale quid committerent, in quo transgressi punirentur, uel rei constituti dampnari mererentur?', *Expositio*, 452.

God, why God issued a commandment that he knew might be broken, and why mankind were created with the capacity to sin in the first place. The answer to all these questions is, according to Abelard, that the first act of sin, regardless of the punishing consequences it incurred, was ultimately both instructive and beneficial to mankind. As a consequence of sin, mankind improved their knowledge both of the love of God, and of the nature of virtue and temptation, and thus through sin, mankind was made better:

But I say: what if before the human being sinned he [God] sought an opportunity to make him better after sin, by seeking him through himself and redeeming him by his own death, and by showing us so great a love that, as he himself says, 'Greater love hath no man'? For in fact from this supreme love, we love God so much the more, the more we have greater cause to love him. By loving him more after sin, we are made better, and by his mercy, our wickedness is turned into the highest good for ourselves.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, whilst the first act of sin was rightly and duly punished, it also made mankind more faithful, and more loving toward God, since it allowed mankind to witness and experience divine love for mankind to its fullest possible extent.

As the first sinner, it is Eve who was responsible for initiating the improving processes which accompanied the devastating loss to humanity that her transgression incurred. Moreover however, the first act of sin made mankind more knowledgeable in a way that was crucially significant: Eve's act of sin enabled mankind to become virtuous. The fruitful paradox of this occurrence is what allows Abelard to represent Eve as dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men. He explains that

In fact, one woman [Eve] is now worth more to God, and appears more pleasing to him through merit than might many thousands of men, if they had persevered forever without sin. For if there were no fight against adversity, where would be the crown of victory? This is what he who

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<sup>32</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. 'Sed dico: quid si occasionem querebat ante hominis peccatum qua meliorem eum redderet post peccatum, eum scilicet per se ipsum requirendo et propria morte redimendo, tantam que nobis caritatem exhibendo, qua sicut ipsemet ait: "maiores dilectionem nemo habet". Ex hac quippe summa dilectione nobis exhibita, tanto amplius deum diligimus, quanto diligendi eum maiorem causam habemus. Quo uero eum amplius diligimus post peccatum, meliores ex hoc efficitur, et per eius misericordiam ipsum malum nostrum in maximum nobis conuersum est bonum', *Expositio*, 452.

blesses the Paschal candle is carefully thinking as he exclaims over the mercy of God: ‘O wondrous condescension of your affection for us, O immeasurable love of charity: so that you might redeem a slave you sent a son. O certainly necessary sin of Adam which was erased by the death of Christ, O happy fault, that merited such and so great a redeemer’.<sup>33</sup>

Before Eve sinned, mankind was without sin; having had no experience of it, and having no way to know or to define it. However, before Eve sinned mankind was also without virtue. Within Abelard’s ethical framework, being sinless is not the same as being virtuous. Prelapsarian sinlessness was a passive state, and one which was inferior to being virtuous, since it involved nothing more demanding than simply abstaining from wrongdoing in the absence of genuine temptation.

On the other hand, virtue, like sin, is not so much a state of being as it is a process. In order to be actively virtuous, the soul must experience temptation and must consciously refrain from capitulating to this temptation. Eve clearly failed to resist the temptation she was proffered, and thus the first act of sin occurred. However, in consenting to temptation and bringing sin into the world for the first time, she also bought with it the means by which virtue could be identified and pursued. Eve, in her transgression, enabled mankind to know for the first time what sin and virtue were, and how virtue might be defined and achieved. This is why she was, after having sinned, dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men. Remaining passively and indefinitely sinless, immune to temptation but thus also to virtue, would have been much less spiritually demanding, and thus ‘the crown of victory’ would have remained

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<sup>33</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. ‘Plus quippe una femina modo apud deum ualet et gratior ei per meritum existit quam multa milia hominum facerent, si semper sine peccato perseuerassent. Si enim nulla esset aduersitatum pugna, ubi esset uictorie corona? Quod quidem ille diligenter attendebat qui in benedictione cerei paschalis super hac misericordia dei exclamans, ait: “O mira circa nos tue pietatis dignatio. O inestimabilis dilectio caritatis: ut seruum redimeres, filium tradidisti. O certe necessarium Ade peccatum quod Christi morte deletum est. O felix culpa que talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem”’, *Expositio*, 454.

unattainable and undeserved. Mankind would not have had the ability or the opportunity to be virtuous had Eve not first defined what it meant to sin.

It is true that Eve could also have defined virtue and sin by refusing to consent to the temptation she experienced. She failed to refuse and was thus punished appropriately – Abelard is not attempting to lessen Eve’s culpability, or seeking to deny the gravity of her misconduct. Eating the fruit might have been a nugatory action in itself, but the violation of divine mandate was a wilful error of great magnitude. Nonetheless, it remains clear, to Abelard at least, that in defining the process of sin, Eve also defined the process of virtue. She thus made it possible for mankind both to reach their full spiritual potential, and to experience the very fullest extent of divine love.

As was mentioned above, it is important to bear in mind that Abelard is unsurprisingly singular in his articulation of this argument. None of the other commentators discussed here express any outright praise of Eve, and nor do they declare that Eve’s sin made her dearer to God. However, whilst Abelard’s generous representation of Eve is atypical, it should not be dismissed as an aberration. The ethical framework which sanctions it draws on a well established source of Patristic authority, and the relationship between temptation and virtue which underpins it is by no means unique to Abelard. Peter Lombard, Hildegard of Bingen and Hugh of St Victor all state that the first act of sin had some improving effect on both the status and the knowledge of mankind; an effect which could not have occurred had mankind remained in their prelapsarian state. More importantly, they all rely to varying degrees on the notion of experience and testing as a fundamentally instructive procedure, regardless of the fact that mankind failed the test of their obedience that was presented by the commandment forbidding the tree.

Whilst the arguments of Lombard and Hildegard are more cautious than those which constitute Abelard's defence of Eve, they nonetheless display an equal level of accordance with the Augustinian precept which authorises it. Lombard's answer to the question of why God allowed mankind to be tempted when he knew that they would fall consists entirely of quotations from the aforementioned passage of Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, as does his answer to the question of why God created mankind with the capacity for evil.<sup>34</sup> He later argues more explicitly that it is precisely this capacity for evil which enables mankind to be virtuous. He offers the following response to the hypothetical creation of a human being who did not possess any capacity for evil:

To this we say that to resist evil and not consent to temptation would not have gained him any merit, even if he had not consented, because there was nothing in him that might impel him to evil... For it is sometimes a merit for us if we do not do evil, but resist it, but only where a cause is present which moves us to commit it, because our steps are prone to fall due to the corruption of sin. But where no cause intervenes to impel us to evil, we gain no merit if we forbear from it. For to resist evil always avoids punishment, but does not always deserve the palm [of victory].<sup>35</sup>

If mankind had been created without the capacity for evil, to resist temptation would have required no particular spiritual exertion, and thus the 'victory' of virtue would always have been inaccessible. Thus, like Abelard, he concludes that remaining sinless without any capacity for evil is not as worthy a process as the active resistance of sin where there exists an inherent capacity for evil.

Likewise, Hildegard answers the question of why mankind was created with capacity to sin with the response that mankind had to be tested. As gold must be tested

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<sup>34</sup> 'Et est gloriosius non consentire quam tentari non posse...', *Sententiae*, 2.23, 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 108. 'Ad quod dicimus quia resistere malo et non consentire tentationi non fecisset illi meritum etsi non consensisset, quia nihil in eo erat quod ad malum impelleret... Nobis autem meritum est aliquando si malum non facimus, sed resistimus: Ibi dumtaxat ubi causa subest quae nos facere mouet; quia ex peccati corruptela proni sunt ad lapsum gressus nostri. Ubi autem non interuenit causa nos ad malum impellens, non meremur si ab eo declinamus. Declinare enim a malo semper uitat poenam, sed non semper meretur palmam', *Sententiae*, 2.24, 1.



in fire, Hildegard explains, and precious stones must be polished, mankind, must be likewise be tested, and more so than all the other creatures who occupy earth, because mankind alone enjoys the privilege of having been made in the image and likeness of God.<sup>36</sup> She also argues that the fall of mankind was predestined, or least foreseen, by God.<sup>37</sup>

Like Abelard, she is certain that the first act of sin had an improving effect on the status and capacities of mankind. She states that mankind ‘shines brighter’ in redemption than in prelapsarian sinlessness:

And thus Man [‘homo’], having been delivered, shines in God, and God in Man; Man, having community in God, has in Heaven more radiant brightness than he had before. This would not have been so if the Son of God had not put on flesh, for if Man had remained in Paradise, the Son of God would not have suffered on the cross. But when Man was deceived by the wily serpent, God was touched by true mercy and ordained that his Only-Begotten would become incarnate in the most pure Virgin. And thus after Man’s ruin many shining virtues were lifted up to Heaven.<sup>38</sup>

Hildegard also echoes Abelard’s and Lombard’s comparison between the exertion involved in being virtuous and the crown or palm of victory won in a difficult battle:

*Scivias* recounts Hildegard’s being told by God that fallen humanity must

Extinguish within yourself the burning flame of lust and other things of this world, casting out anger, pride, wantonness and other vices of that sort and attaining this victory by a great struggle. These battles to Me are full of great beauty and much fruit, brighter than the sun and sweeter than the love of spices; for when you trample underfoot the burning lust within you, you imitate my Only-Begotten in his pains. And when you

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Quomodo tam magna gloria et tantus honor qui vobis datus est, posset esse sine probatione: cum tamen aurum quod quasi nihil est et aliquid inane, debeat in igne probari, et pretiosi lapides in purgatione poliri, et hujusmodi omnia in omnibus perquiri? Ergo, O stulti homines, hoc quod ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei factum est, quomodo sine probatione posset subsistere? Nam homo super omnem creaturam examinandus est’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 685 - 90. Regarding gold being tested in fire, cf. I Peter 1.7.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Qui te in primo homine creavit, ille haec omnia praevidit’, *ibid.*, 1.2, 715.

<sup>38</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 87. ‘Et sic homo liberatus fulget in Deo, et Deus in homine; consortium homo cum Deo habens, fulgentiorem claritatem quam prius haberet, possidet in coelo. Quod non fuisset, si Filius Dei carnem non induisset, quoniam, si homo in paradiso permansisset, Filius in cruce passus non fuisset. Sed cum homo per callidum serpentem deceptus est, Deus in vera misericordia tactus, Unigenitum suum in purissima virgine incarnari voluit, atque ita post ruinam hominis elevatae sunt plurimae virtutes in coelo fulgentes’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 720 - 26.

persevere in this, you will attain much glory for it in the celestial kingdom. O sweetest flowers! My angels marvel at your struggle.<sup>39</sup>

Again, like Abelard, Hildegard is thus particularly focused on the value of such battles in the eyes of God. The mention of crushing sin under foot alludes to the punishment of the serpent in Genesis 3.15, in which the serpent is condemned to fear Eve and the enmity God places between him and the woman.<sup>40</sup> This allusion reinforces the crucially instructive nature of the figure of Eve by suggesting that her transgression is re-enacted in every subsequent human sin. It also indicates, however, that the consequences of Eve's sin and punishment provide a means by which fallen human beings might become dearer to God than they could have been had they remained in prelapsarian sinlessness – a moral and spiritual feat at which the sinless angels, immune to temptation, can only marvel.

Hugh of St Victor also concedes that sin benefited mankind, by furthering their understanding of good and evil. Mankind, he writes, could only have come to know and experience good or evil through obedience or disobedience.<sup>41</sup> Lombard takes this idea and adds it to his Augustinian argument about the experience of temptation: closely following the words of Hugh, he writes that before sin, mankind already knew good and evil, but had not yet *experienced* evil:

For mankind knew evil before he touched this tree; he knew good, however, through both prudence and experience, but the evil only

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<sup>39</sup> 'Cum uobismetipsis resistitis ardentem flammam libidinis uidelicet in uobis exstinguentes et alia saecularia quae mundi sunt scilicet iram, superbiam, petulantiam et cetera huiusmodi uitia abicientes, atque uictoriam istam magno certamine perficientes. Vnde tunc proelia ista magno decore et multo fructu clariora super solem et dulciora super amorem aromatum coram me apparent; quia Vnigenitum meum in doloribus eius imitamini cum ardentem libidinem tam forti certamine in uobis conculcatis. Et cum sic perseueratis multam gloriam exinde in caelesti regno habebitis. O dulcissimi flores, angeli mei in uestro certamine admirantur', *Scivias*, I.2, 613-626.

<sup>40</sup> 'Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem et semen tuum et semen illius ipsa conteret caput tuum et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius', Genesis 3.15. N.b. also the image of the Virgin Mary crushing the snake under her feet.

<sup>41</sup> 'Sic ergo in loco isto sive boni mali cognoscendi occasionem accipere debuit, non tamen ex natura ligni, quia hoc homini ex se dare non potuit. Sed quia in eo vel obediendo boni vel non obediendo mali pro debita renumeratione occasionem accepit', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 32.

through prudence. He knew it also by experience, however, after his illicit use of the tree which had been forbidden to him, because by his experience of evil he learned the difference between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.<sup>42</sup>

Hugh explains this rather more clearly, stating that before sin, mankind understood good through both abstract knowledge and concrete experience ('per scientiam et per experientiam'), but understood evil through abstract knowledge only ('per solam scientiam').<sup>43</sup> After sin, mankind understood evil through both knowledge and experience.<sup>44</sup> Had Eve not committed the first act of sin, mankind's understanding of the nature of good and evil, and of virtue and sin, would forever have remained imperfect.

Hugh and Lombard present a definition of cognition that relies on knowledge ('scientia') in combination with experience ('experientia') - genuine understanding is not possible without a reliable experiential basis with which to corroborate abstract knowledge. Prelapsarian mankind possessed an abstract, theoretical understanding of goodness, which was reinforced by concomitant experience of goodness and its effects. However, they possessed only an abstract understanding of evil, and had no experiential basis to substantiate it. Thus, before sin, mankind cannot truly be said to have understood the nature of disobedience, sin, or evil, because they had never experienced it. Eve's sin enabled mankind to experience evil, and thus to know it fully for the first time. Moreover, by fully understanding evil for the first time, mankind developed a fuller appreciation of the significance of good and the consequences of obedience.

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<sup>42</sup> *Sentences Book II* trans. Silano, p. 75. 'Cognouit enim homo, priusquam tangeret hoc lignum, bonum et malum; sed bonum per prudentiam et experientiam, malum vero per prudentiam tantum. Quod etiam per experientiam nouit usurpato ligno uetito, quia per experientiam mali didicit quid sit inter bonum obedientiae et malum inobedientiae', *Sententiae*, 2.17, 7.

<sup>43</sup> 'Adam ante peccatum bonum et malum scivit, bonum quidem et per scientiam et per experientiam, malum vero per solam scientiam', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 32.

<sup>44</sup> 'Postquam autem lignum vetitum tetigit malum etiam per experientiam cognoscere cepit atque ipsius mali bonum quoque quam stricte fuerat tenendum cognouit', *ibid.*, 1.6, 32.

## II. ‘SERPENS DECEPIT ME ET COMEDI’: EVE AND THE MECHANICS OF TEMPTATION AND SIN

Eve’s temptation and the subsequent sin she committed comprise one of the most challenging areas of the Genesis narrative. The texts discussed here provide a selection of different approaches to this complex material; however, there are several significant features that they all share in common. Principally, they all employ the figure of Eve as a means by which to elucidate the mechanics of sin and virtue. Despite the prominent conception of the figure of Eve as temptress and seducer, these treatments of the fall evince no interest in rehearsing misogynistic platitudes about wayward women or female weakness, and there is no discernible emphasis on the notion of Eve’s having seduced Adam.

Instead, the figure of Eve is employed in order to define and elucidate the concepts of sin, temptation and virtue as they are experienced by human beings in general, regardless of gender. Eve is constructed as something of a case study of the tempted human soul, and her actions and motivations are subject to extensive and measured analysis. More broadly significant is the fact that representations of Eve as the first sinner reveal the extent to which sin was conceived during this period as a process rather than the external act of transgression itself, and virtue as an achievement which was defined by the difficulty of the soul’s struggle against temptation. In addition, there emerges a surprisingly consistent tendency to associate the figure of Eve with knowledge, or more specifically, with *scientia* (that is, *a posteriori* understanding as opposed to wisdom or abstract cognition).

For all the authors discussed here, the figure of Eve provides a central component of the ethical and moral frameworks that they construct. They represent Eve not as a wayward temptress or a credulous victim, but as the spiritual and didactic locus

of a crucially informative scriptural event. Caught between the enticement of temptation and the rectitude of virtue, Eve lies at the centre of both the process of the first sin, and the re-enactment of this process which was deemed to occur in every subsequent human soul which experienced temptation. In the commentaries of Abelard, Guibert of Nogent and Peter Lombard, Eve forms the crux of an ethical framework in which sin is defined by intention and interior consent, and virtue is defined by the struggle against temptation. In the *Mystère d'Adam*, the process of Eve's transgression forms the site of conflict between different definitions of knowledge, dramatising the distinction between understanding and experience that characterises the theological arguments about the advantages of the first sin that were discussed in the previous section of this chapter. For Hugh of St Victor, Eve is an instructive example of the way in which sin operates, and also of the disruption that can result from doubt and inordinate desire for knowledge. Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias* gives what is perhaps the least generous of these accounts of Eve's fall, presenting Eve's sin as act which induces a profound sense of disorder within the organisation of the cosmos and, concomitantly, within the fallen human being. This section will discuss these representations of Eve's sin in the following order. Firstly it examines Abelard's conception of Eve's sin as act without which it would have remained impossible for mankind to exercise virtue. It then examines the authors who employ Eve's sin as an allegory of the action of the tempted soul; namely Guibert and his representation of Eve as the will, and Lombard and his representation of Eve as the reason of knowledge. Subsequently it explores the representation of Eve as a different form of knowledge in the *Mystère d'Adam*. Finally, it explores Eve's sin as an act of human doubt and disorder in the work of Hugh of St Victor and Hildegard of Bingen.

## EVE AS THE WILL OF THE SOUL: GUIBERT OF NOGENT'S ALLEGORICAL EXEGESIS OF THE FALL

As was discussed above, the early part of Guibert of Nogent's *Moralia in Genesim* represents Eve as an analogue of the body, whereas Adam represents the soul. However, in his account of the processes of temptation and sin, Guibert's representation of Eve undergoes significant development, and the figure of Eve emerges as a vital means by which to examine the action of sin within the tempted soul.

Guibert's interpretation of Genesis 2.24 ('wherefore a man... shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh') marks the beginning of this development in his representation of Eve.<sup>45</sup> Whereas Eve previously represented the feminine and the corporeal, Eve now comes to signify the will ('voluntas') of the soul. Guibert employs the prelapsarian union of Adam and Eve as a symbolic representation of the virtuous soul, which is characterised by the harmonious co-existence of the will (Eve as the wife) and the intellect (Adam as the husband):

On account of this, [Genesis] says, he who has been separated from bestial life will leave his father, the devil, and his mother, concupiscence, and will cleave to his wife, that is, to his will, ruled by reason, and they shall be two - evidently will and intellect - in one flesh, that is, in one disposition of mind.<sup>46</sup>

Eve is thus no longer aligned with the body and with the base physicality which was, for Guibert, the root of sin, and instead represents the soul's will.

The will and the intellect comprise the two principal components which comprise the human soul, operating as two different but complementary forces operating within one disposition of mind ('affectus'). An appropriately organised

<sup>45</sup> 'Relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adhaerebit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una', Genesis 2.24.

<sup>46</sup> 'Propter hoc, inquit, relinquet is, qui a bestiali semotus est vita patrem diabolum, matremque concupiscentiam, et adhaerebit uxori, id est, voluntati suae rationabiliter regendae, et erunt duo, intellectus videlicet ac voluntas, in carne una, id est in affectu uno', *Moralia*, col. 70 C.

‘affectus’; that is, a disposition of mind in which the intellect controls the will successfully, will incline towards Heaven regardless of any external tempting forces:

As soon as it begins to accommodate God, it is made to stand, willingly or unwillingly, toward one [i.e. it becomes focused on one thing]. And so they are two in one flesh, since these aforementioned two are, as it were, placing for themselves the seat of rule in a third [i.e. God] and they walk in concord toward [God].<sup>47</sup>

Thus in order to remain virtuous, the will (Eve) must adhere to the guidance of reason (Adam), because the virtuous soul must by definition remain focused on God and aligned with his will. However, sin diverts the mind from God, ‘because our disposition of mind is never fixed in the same state [i.e. aligned with God] when it is gaping at worldly things’.<sup>48</sup> Sin occurs when the will attempts to override the guidance of the intellect and reason, forcing the mind away from its inclination upwards toward heaven, and forcing it instead to move, like the serpent, *super pectus*.<sup>49</sup> The serpent represents the external influences likely to persuade the will to concede to temptation, and thus override the guidance of the intellect. When the will thus capitulates to temptation and the intellect does not prevent it from so doing, the whole *affectus*, the disposition of the mind, abandons the rectitude of virtue and descends in accordance with the proffered temptation, thus consenting to sin.

In contrast to Guibert’s original formulation of Eve as the flesh and Adam as the spirit, the action of sin and the struggle to resist it are now located entirely within the soul, and it is the will (Eve) which possess the ultimate moral agency necessary to define whether or not the soul consents to sin. Sin is defined in accordance with cerebral and spiritual processes subject to external stimuli - rather than being an essentially

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<sup>47</sup> ‘Mox ut Deo vacare incipit, velit nolit ad unum sistitur. Sunt itaque duo in carne una, cum praefata duo quasi regni sedem sibi ponunt in tertio, et ad idem duo gradiuntur concorditer’, *ibid.*, col. 70 C.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Affectus etenim noster quia in eodem statu nunquam saecularibus inhians figuratur’, *ibid.*, col. 70 C.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Super pectus tuum gradieris. In pectore cor habemus, et in corde rationem. Affectus itaque super pectus ambulat, quando sibi imperium rationis usurpat’, *ibid.*, 74C.

corporeal phenomenon as it was previously presented, it is committed as when the mind in which the will has overruled the intellect and subsequently capitulated to temptation.<sup>50</sup> The struggle against temptation has been relocated and redefined as a psychological, rather than physical, process.

Whilst Guibert's allegory of opposing factions within the soul is markedly less misogynistic than his representation of Eve as the flesh subordinate to the 'masculine' authority of the soul, his revised representation of Eve remains identifiably patriarchal. The relationship between Adam and Eve is certainly not one of equals. Adam represents the 'superior' component, and Eve must still be governed by him. The spiritual concord necessary for the achievement of virtue has to function as a harmonious matrimonial hierarchy: Adam must control and guide Eve, because the will must be an obedient 'wife' to her 'husband', the intellect.

However, reading Guibert's Eve solely in terms of gender is not particularly illuminating, leading only to the predictable and inexact conclusion that Guibert thought wives ought to be obedient to their husbands. This conclusion obscures the significance of the text, because Guibert is not in fact concerned with literal, biological gender here; his concern is the human soul and the function of the will. Guibert discusses the prelapsarian state not as a literal model of interaction between men and women but as a model of the virtuous soul, regardless of the gender of the body in which it resides. Eve's function in the *Moralia* is exegetical and didactic rather than polemical. Her weakness is not the weakness with which an intrinsically flawed female nature undermines a masculine rationality, nor is it some form of punishment inflicted on women generally. It is a weakness that abides in humanity as a whole – Guibert's formulation of an inherently flawed disposition of mind that can never reconcile the

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, 'Quod non sit peccatum nisi in voluntate...', 'De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato' ed. F. Schmitt, *Anselmi Opera Omnia*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Verlag, 1984), 2.3.



disparity between flesh and spirit or intellect and will is universally applicable, with no regard for gender. Guibert's assessment of the consequences of sin for the human race, himself included, may be one that is negative to the point of misanthropy, but it is not one that is misogynistic - the language used to describe Eve is negative not because of the pernicious impulses he identifies specifically in women, but because of those which he identifies in himself and in the human race in its entirety.

As such, Guibert's developing representation of Eve's creation charts the development of his conception of ethics and morality. The first representation of Eve as the body demonstrates that Guibert initially conceived the human being as an entity composed of spirit (Adam) and flesh (Eve), and his initial conception of sin and virtue is equally simplistic. Sin occurs when the spirit fails to ignore the enticements proffered to the body; virtue occurs when physical desire is overridden by the spirit. The second representation of Eve as the will demonstrates Guibert's formulation of a more sophisticated approach to human nature and morality. The straightforward body/soul dualism is replaced with a symbiosis of will and intellect. Sin was initially defined as a failure of corporeal restraint; a failure of Adam ('spiritus') to reign in the desires of Eve ('caro') and prevent her from succumbing to the physical delights proffered by the devil. In the second representation of Eve, the fight against sin takes place within the soul alone, as a conflict between the intellect (Adam) and the will (Eve). Eve as the body was a locus for physical temptation; Eve as the will is a locus of moral agency, since it is the 'Eve' section of every human soul which ultimately dictates whether a person's actions are sinful or virtuous. The representation of Eve as the will, instead of the body, demonstrates that Guibert has come to think of sin and virtue as questions of agency rather than action. Sin and virtue are now conceived as interior spiritual processes.

They are characterised by internal volition rather than external conduct; they no longer depend on a concomitant physical act in order to define them.

Eve as 'voluntas' represents the part of the soul most vulnerable to temptation, as opposed to being synonymous with sin itself. Eve operates instead within the precarious balance between vice and virtue rather than functioning as a straightforward representation of carnality. The flesh is no longer considered inherently sinful, since sin only occurs when Eve, signifying will, consents to temptation and Adam, signifying reason, fails to prevent this. Prior to the fall, they were to live in a harmonious symbiosis in which Eve willingly submitted to Adam – will governed by reason. This is the state of grace which was lost after Eve's sin: 'voluntas'/Eve became disobedient in Paradise and thus in all subsequent human minds. In capitulating to temptation, Eve ceased to be obedient to God, and thus 'voluntas' will not now submit willingly to 'ratio'.

The representation of Eve is of central significance, since it is the direction that the will decides to take – either toward the divine, or toward earthly desire – that defines the process by which a mind becomes devoted to virtue or vice. Eve represents the will taking the wrong path and choosing to overrule the intellect in favour of desire, which why she, rather than Adam, is held responsible by Guibert for the fall. Rather than merely witnessing the conflict between reason and sin, interior and exterior, Eve/'voluntas' governs the relationship between the two, emerging as the deciding factor in the struggle between sin and virtue. Thanks to insufficient will, mankind is condemned to repeat the process of the Fall, even after he has seen the light of fear which leads to conversion. The will, and the direction it chooses to take, defines the action of the soul, and in the case of Eve, that of every subsequent human being. Eve is thus employed to elucidate the process of the first act of sin, and the process of sin as it

occurs within every tempted soul which is, on account of the original transgression, condemned to re-enact it.

#### ‘UBI ESSET CORONA VIRTUTEM?’: EVE’S FALL AND ABELARD’S ETHICS

Abelard, as was discussed above, describes Eve as being dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men because in defining what it was to sin, Eve simultaneously gave mankind the opportunity to be actively virtuous as opposed to passively sinless. Given its neglected status in Abelard’s oeuvre, the *Expositio* has been overlooked in relation to Abelard’s ethics.<sup>51</sup> However, the text’s representation of Eve as the first sinner elucidates the theological framework which underpins Abelard’s understanding of human moral agency, whilst the figure of Eve herself is crucial to Abelard’s definition of virtue as an active process.

The significance of the figure of Eve to Abelard’s exploration of sin and virtue is apparent not only in the *Expositio*, but also in his *Ethics*, whose representation of Eve provides an interesting complement to that of the *Expositio*.<sup>52</sup> Whereas the *Expositio* employs Eve principally as a means by which to elucidate the process of the first sin and its consequences, the *Ethics*, written around the same time as the *Expositio*, uses Eve to demonstrate the way in which the actions of the tempted soul lead to sin in all human beings who transgress.<sup>53</sup> Thus, as will be discussed below, whilst the *Ethics* explains the action of sin, the *Expositio* explains its very existence. In both cases, Eve emerges as a pivotal figure. The representation of Eve in the *Ethics* elucidates the action

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<sup>51</sup> Marenbon’s is the only major treatment of Abelard which mentions the *Expositio* within the context of Abelard’s ethical writing, exploring the text in relation to Abelard’s conception of free will; see *ibid.*, pp. 249 – 250. Marenbon even quotes the line about Eve being dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men, but offers no comment on this description of Eve nor any indication of the way in which the figure of Eve informs the definition of virtue expressed in the *Expositio*; *ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>52</sup> *Peter Abelard’s Ethics: A Critical Edition with English Translation, Notes, and Introduction*, ed. David Luscombe, Oxford Medieval Text Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

<sup>53</sup> The text was completed during the 1130s: Luscombe suggests 1133, with which Marenbon agrees; see *ibid.*, p. xxx, and John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard*, pp. 67 – 69.

of the first sin, and its re-enactment in all subsequent human transgression. In the *Expositio*, the representation of Eve reveals the genesis and function of sin, and the more problematic issues surrounding the emergence of sin and evil into the paradise of prelapsarian existence.

According to the *Ethics*, the process of Eve's transgression consisted of three stages: suggestion (*suggestio*), pleasure (*dilectio*) and consent (*consensus*). These stages are re-enacted in all subsequent acts of temptation and sin.<sup>54</sup> Temptation comprises the first two of these stages, Abelard continues, as Eve was initially persuaded by the devil's suggestions and promises of immortality, and then by the prospect of the pleasure that the fruit's sweetness and beauty promised.<sup>55</sup> However, it is the final only the final stage, that of consent, in which sin is comprised. Eve should have resisted her longing, but she consented to eat the fruit and was thus guilty of an act of sin – the physical act of eating was merely the conclusion to this process, and her consent would have surmounted to an act of sin necessitating repentance even if she had not in fact eaten it.<sup>56</sup> Just as Eve progressed thus through the three stages of sin, so do all human beings reach the point of performing an act of sin; although it is the *consent*, rather than the concomitant act, in which the sin consists.<sup>57</sup>

Whilst the Eve of the *Ethics* elucidates the action of sin, the Eve of the *Expositio* is principally employed as a means by which to understand the existence of virtue, and also to demonstrate that the existence of virtue is dependent upon the existence of

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<sup>54</sup> 'Cum ergo peccatum vel tentationem tribus modis dicimus peragi, suggestione scilicet, delectatione, consensu, ita est intelligendum: quod ad operationem peccati per haec tria frequenter deducimur, sicut in primis contigit parentibus', *Ethica*, 1.21.

<sup>55</sup> 'Persuasio quippe diaboli praecessit, cum ex gustu vetitae arboris immortalitatem promisit; delectatio successit, cum mulier videns lignum pulchrum et ipsum intelligens suave ad vescendum, in concupiscentiam ejus exarsit, cibi voluptate quam credebat correpta', *ibid.*, 1.21.

<sup>56</sup> 'Quae cum reprimere concupiscentiam deberet, ut praeceptum servaret, consentiendo in peccatum tracta est. Quod etiam peccatum cum per poenitentiam deberet corrigere, ut veniam mereretur, ipsum denique consummavit in opere', *ibid.*, 1.21.

<sup>57</sup> 'Et ita tribus gradibus ad perpetrandum peccatum incessit. Sic et nos frequenter non ad peccandum, sed ad peccati perpetrationem, iisdem passionibus pervenimus... Cui videlicet delectationi dum assentimus per consensum, peccamus. His tandem tribus ad operationem peccati pervenimus', *ibid.*, 1.21.

temptation and sin. Thus whilst the *Expositio* has been largely neglected amid modern scholarship on Abelard, its representation of Eve forms a significant component of Abelard's ethical framework. The *Ethics* conceives virtue as being dependent on the first two of the stages described above; that is, the experience of suggestion and the prospect of pleasure, prior to the consent by which sin is defined. The virtuous person 'represses his desire [for the proffered temptation], he does not extinguish it, but because he is not drawn to consent, he does not incur sin'.<sup>58</sup> Virtue thus presides not in a soul which lacks interior vices, but in one which refutes them. Conversely, sin does not consist of the *presence* of interior vices, but in consenting to perform the deeds they incline towards. Therefore, vice is that which makes the soul prone to sin; sin itself consists in the soul's consent to that which it knows will earn damnation and guilt. Those who resist vice, Abelard continues, 'have the material for this struggle, so that triumphing over themselves through the virtue of temperance they may obtain a crown'.<sup>59</sup> Sin is dependent on internal consent to vice, and virtue on the struggle against it. Abelard describes the internal struggle against vice as the material by which a potentially sinful person triumphs over themselves and thus acquires the crown of virtue.

The capacity for sin is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the existence of virtue. However, the *Ethics* does not elaborate on this or explain why this is the case. Rather, this material is discussed in the *Expositio*, and it is again the figure of Eve who is crucial both to the existence of this aspect of human nature, and to the way in which Abelard explains it. Abelard's description of the 'crown of victory' deserved by those who attain virtue appears, in his description of why Eve's sin made her dearer to God:

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<sup>58</sup> *Ethics*, trans. Luscombe, p. 15. 'Desiderium ille reprimat, non extinguit, sed quia non trahitur ad consensum, non incurrit peccatum', *Ethica*, 1.9.

<sup>59</sup> *Ethics*, trans. Luscombe, p. 5. 'Pugnae materiam ex hoc habent, ut per temperantiae virtutem de se ipsis triumphantes coronam percipiant', *Ethica*, 1.2. See also 'Cum enim nonnunquam peccemus absque omnia mala voluntate, et cum ipsa mala voluntas refrenata, non extincta, palmam resistentibus pariat, et materiam pugnae et gloriae coronam conferat, non tam ipsa peccatum quam infirmitas quaedam iam necessaria dici debet', *ibid.*, 1.4.

But I say: what if before the human being sinned he sought an opportunity to make him better after sin... By loving him [God] more after sin, we are made better, and by his mercy our wickedness is turned into the highest good for ourselves. In fact one woman is now worth more to God, and appears more pleasing to him through merit than might many thousands of men, if they had persevered forever without sin. For if there were no fight against adversity, where would be the crown of victory?<sup>60</sup>

However, whilst the crown of victory image reappears, it is here and not in the *Ethics* where Abelard explains the wider theological and cosmological framework in which it belongs. The capacity for sin is a prerequisite for the existence of virtue because virtue is itself impossible without the experience of genuine temptation; an experience which would forever have remained impossible had mankind remained in perpetual obedient innocence. The emergence of sin and iniquity into this unsullied prelapsarian state was thus simultaneously a deplorable lapse, and means by which mankind might profit spiritually. Eve is dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men, because she initiated the process by which mankind could ‘become better through sin’ and thereby attain both a greater appreciation for divine love, and a state of spiritual advancement in which the capacity for sin removed the possibility of perpetual blamelessness, but replaced it with the potential for reaching the worthier and more fruitful state of active, hard-won virtue.<sup>61</sup>

Abelard’s conception of the prelapsarian state as perpetual perseverance in the absence of sin thus amounts to a form of epistemological virginity – blameless, certainly, but ultimately unproductive in spiritual terms. According to the *Expositio*, this

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<sup>60</sup> *Expositio* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. ‘Sed dico: quid si occasionem querebat ante hominis peccatum qua meliorem eum redderet post peccatum... Quo uero eum amplius diligimus post peccatum, meliores ex hoc efficimur, et per eius misericordiam ipsum malum nostrum in maximum nobis conuersum est bonum. Plus quippe una femina modo apud deum ualet et gratior ei per meritum existit quam multa milia hominum facerent, si semper sine peccato perseuerassent. Si enim nulla esset aduersitatum pugna, ubi esset uictorie corona?’, *Expositio*, 452 - 453. Cf. *Ethica* 1.7: ‘unde premium grande si non sit quod toleremus grave?’.

<sup>61</sup> Hildegard of Bingen also describes the struggle against temptation as a form of spiritual ‘fertility’ and fruitfulness, comparing it to the superior crop attainable from a field that has been worked intensively: ‘Nam cum ager multo labore colitur, multum fructum profert, sicut in humano genere ostensum est; quia post ruinam hominis plurimae uirtutes ad subleuationem eius surrexerunt’, *Scivias*, 1.2, 731-3.

was intended to be only a temporary state; its end not merely anticipated but predetermined by God:

But perhaps you ask why he [God] forbade something which he knew they [mankind] would transgress, something in which there would have been no sin had there not been a command? Who will not see that he was almost seeking an opportunity for them to do something for which as transgressors they could be punished or proven guilty, deserve to be condemned? ...If you were to object that no human being would have sinned if those first human beings had not sinned or if they had received no command to obey, no reason or authority can support you.<sup>62</sup>

Whilst sin owed its origins to human free will, it was both a necessary and a foreseen element of the divinely established cosmos, and the execution of moral action within it. God did not expect mankind to remain to remain unblemished, but he did intend them to profit by their flaws and the punishment they incurred.

This is possible because human propensity for sin is precisely what enables human capacity for virtue in Abelard's ethical framework – sinless and untempted prelapsarian mankind could not struggle with temptation, and thus could not win the crown of virtue. Eve's transgression enabled all subsequent human beings to experience the temptation necessary for them to become virtuous. Just as Eve became dearer to God in sinning than she was when she was sinless, all fallen human beings have the capacity to become dearer to God than their prelapsarian state would have allowed. Eve both defined and initiated this process. For Abelard, Eve has, in her failure of will, identified and exemplified the processes which are crucial to the understanding of virtue and how it can be attained. Her actions, though sinful, are crucially instructive to subsequent generations of the human race, because they highlight the fundamental

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<sup>62</sup> *Exposition* trans. Cizewski, p. 113. 'Sed fortassis requiris cur illud prohibuit in quo sciebat eos transgressuros et in quo nullum fieret peccatum si non precessisset preceptum? Quis non uideat quasi occasionem eum querere qua tale quid committerent, in quo transgressi punirentur, uel rei constituti dampnari mererentur? ...Quod si etiam obicias neminem hominum peccaturum, si illi primi homines non peccassent uel si preceptum obedientie nullum accepissent, nulla id ratione uel auctoritate roborari potest', *Expositio*, 452 - 456.

process and apex of faith – salvation and redemption in Christ; virtue and the nobility of the struggle to obtain it. Rather than depicting Eve as wilful and destructively inconstant, Abelard constructs in the *Expositio* an argument about Eve which defines her actions in relation to virtue and eventual salvation.

#### EVE AS THE REASON OF KNOWLEDGE: THE FALL OF EVE IN PETER LOMBARD'S *SENTENTIAE*

Whereas Hugh described Eve simply as seeming weaker than Adam, Lombard states that Eve's capacity for reason was inferior to that of Adam, asserting that the devil tempted the woman first because knew that 'reason was less vigorous' in her.<sup>63</sup> However, he repeats the words of Hugh of St Victor almost verbatim in his assertion that Eve represents the part of human nature that is weakest and most susceptible to temptation.<sup>64</sup> In both her literal role as protagonist in the narrative of the first sin, and her symbolic function as a representative of the soul's reason, Eve is vital to the exploration of what it meant to sin and what it meant to be a sinner.

This symbolic function is consistently emphasised throughout Lombard's exegesis of Eve's temptation and sin, and once again, the figure of Eve as the first sinner is associated with knowledge. Unlike Hugh, Lombard offers a clear explanation of Eve's figurative purpose: Eve represents the reason of knowledge (*ratio scientiae*), whilst Adam represents the reason of wisdom (*ratio sapientiae*), and the devil represents sensuality.<sup>65</sup> All these components exist and interact in the soul of every human being irrespective of their physical gender: 'the woman, the man and the serpent are in us',

<sup>63</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 92. 'Unde et mulierem tentavit, in qua minus quam in uiro rationem uigere nouit', *Sententiae*, 2.21, ch. 1.

<sup>64</sup> 'Eius enim malitia, ad tentandam uirtutem timida, humanam naturam in ea parte ubi debilior uidebatur aggressa est, ut si forte illic aliquatenus praeualeret, postmodum fiducialius ad alteram, quae robustior fuit, pulsandam uel potius subuertendam accederet', *ibid.*, 2.21, 1.

<sup>65</sup> 'Ut enim tunc serpens mulieri malum suasit ipsa que consensit, deinde uiro suo dedit, sic que consummatum est peccatum; ita et nunc in nobis pro serpente est sensualis motus animae, pro muliere inferior portio rationis, pro uiro superior rationis portio', *ibid.*, 2.24, 7 - 9. Lombard acknowledges his debt to Augustine's *De trinitate* for this model, 2.24, 5.



Lombard confirms.<sup>66</sup> He describes sensuality (that is, the ‘devil’ component) as a ‘lower power of the soul, from which comes a motion which is directed to the senses of the body and to the appetites for things that pertain to the body’.<sup>67</sup> Reason, however, is ‘a higher part of the soul’, which is itself subdivided into a higher part and a lower part. The higher part (the ‘Adam’ component) is the reason of wisdom, which governs ‘the contemplation and observance of the highest things’. The lower part (the ‘Eve’ component) is the reason of knowledge, which ‘looks after the disposition of temporal things’.<sup>68</sup>

Within this tripartite model of the soul, Eve thus occupies a crucial position. Whilst her position is inferior to that occupied by Adam, she represents the portion of the soul which is responsible for either consenting to, or rejecting, the lure of sensuality which incites the soul to sin. Like Guibert of Nogent, Lombard compares the relationship between the soul’s ‘Adam’ and ‘Eve’ components to the marriage of Adam and Eve themselves. Ideally, the higher and lower portions of reason ought to co-exist harmoniously, and despite their different statuses within the soul’s hierarchy, ‘the man and the woman in us’ should interact according to the ‘natural contract’ that exists between them.<sup>69</sup>

However, it is possible for the temptations proffered by sensuality to intervene and compromise the stability of this union. In the case of the first sin, Lombard writes, Eve was faced with three different kinds of external temptation; that is, temptations proffered by an external agency rather than by the mind of the potential sinner

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<sup>66</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 111. ‘In nobis est mulier et uir et serpens’, *Sententiae* 2.24, 7.

<sup>67</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 109. ‘Est enim sensualitas quaedam uis animae inferior, ex qua est motus qui intenditur in corporis sensus, atque appetitus rerum ad corpus pertinentium’, *Sententiae* 2.24, 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 109. *Sententiae* 2.24, 4-5 and 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 111. ‘Viri et mulieris in nobis... Atque inter hunc uirum et hanc mulierem est uelut quoddam spirituale coniugium naturalis que contractus’, *Sententiae* 2. 24, 8.

himself.<sup>70</sup> Lombard categorises these temptations as follows. Firstly, there was the temptation of gluttony, which impelled Eve to eat the fruit for the sensual pleasure it might afford. Secondly, there was the temptation of vainglory, enticing Eve with the promise that she and Adam might be ‘as gods’. Thirdly, there was avarice, which took the form of greed for knowledge and power.<sup>71</sup> Eve was unable to resist the lure of this threefold temptation and, compelled by the pride and greed which the devil’s suggestions drew from her, she consented to perform the act she knew to be sinful.<sup>72</sup>

It is precisely this process, Lombard writes, that takes place in the soul of every human being who experiences temptation and consents to sin. ‘The order of sinning or falling’, he explains, ‘is the same in us... the order and progression of temptation is the same now in a single human person as it was then in our first parents’.<sup>73</sup> Eve’s transgression, and the internal discourse which precipitated it, are re-enacted within the soul of every subsequent sinner. Consequently, Eve is a formative and crucially instructive figure in terms of the way in which human nature operates, and in terms of the doctrinal intricacies which accompany the endeavour of elucidating the process of temptation and sin. The process of sin begins when the soul’s sensuality identifies a source of temptation and brings it to the attention of the soul’s ‘Eve’ component (*ratio scientiae*):

For just as there the serpent persuaded the woman, and the woman persuaded the man, similarly in us, when the sensual motion has perceived the attraction of sin, it suggests it, like the serpent to the woman, namely to the lower part of our reason, that is, to the reason of knowledge.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Sententiae*, 2.21, 5 – 6.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.21, 5.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.22, 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 110. ‘Talis est ordo peccandi uel cadendi in nobis, qualis in primis hominibus... nunc in uno homine tentationis est ordo et progressio, qualis tunc in primis praecessit parentibus’, *Sententiae* 2. 24, 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 112. ‘Ut enim ibi serpens suasit mulieri, et mulier uiro, ita et in nobis sensualis motus, cum illecebram peccati conceperit, quasi serpens suggerit mulieri, scilicet inferiori parti rationis, id est rationi scientiae’, *Sententiae* 2.24, 9.

The point at which the ‘Eve’ component of the soul consents to capitulate to the proffered temptation is the point at which a sin is committed - ‘if the latter [that is, the reason of knowledge] consents to the attraction, the woman eats the forbidden fruit’.<sup>75</sup>

At this point, no external act has occurred as result of capitulating to temptation, but the consent of the ‘Eve’ component still constitutes a sin, even if no physical deed accompanies it: the sin is ‘confined only to the pleasure of thought, without the will of fulfilling [the desire]’, but it remains a sin nonetheless.

In the case of Eve in the Genesis narrative however, Eve not only consented to the serpent’s enticements, but persuaded Adam to do likewise. In terms of the action of the tempted soul, the point at which Eve tempts Adam to sin represents the point at which the *ratio scientiae* overrides the *ratio sapientiae*, persuading this higher part of reason to capitulate to temptation alongside it. This is the point at which the sin can be classified as a mortal sin:

Afterwards, she gives of the same to the man, when [the lower part] suggests the same attraction to the higher part of our reason, that is, to the reason of wisdom; if the latter consents, then the man also tastes the forbidden fruit together with the woman... If there is present a full will to fulfil the desire, so that, if the occasion rises, the deed is done, then the man also eats, because the higher part of our reason consented to the attraction; and then it is a grave and damnable sin.<sup>76</sup>

Even if the concomitant deed itself is not ultimately carried out, having both parts of the soul’s reason unanimously consent to perform it means that a mortal sin has been committed. Hence like Abelard, Lombard defines sin in terms of intention and interior consent to temptation, regardless of whether or not any external action accompanies it.

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<sup>75</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 112. ‘Quae si consenserit illecebrae, mulier edit cibum uetitum’, *Sententiae* 2.24, 9.

<sup>76</sup> *Sentences Book 2* trans. Silano, p. 112. ‘Post de eodem dat uiro, cum superiori parti rationis, id est rationi sapientiae, eandem illecebram suggerit; quae si consentit, tunc uir etiam cum femina cibum uetitum gustat... Si uero adsit plena uoluntas perficiendi, ut si adsit facultas, ad effectum perducatur, uir quoque manducat, quia superior pars rationis illecebrae consensit; et tunc est damnabile et graue peccatum’, *Sententiae* 2.24, 9.

Thus it is possible to see the way in which Lombard employs Eve in order to elucidate his conception of sin as a fundamentally interior phenomenon, and as process rather than a single act. The figure of Eve occupies a crucial role within this process, in both narrative of the first sin, and the symbolic re-enactment of this narrative in the soul of every subsequent sinner. In both cases it is Eve who defines sin and Eve alone who has the moral agency necessary to decide whether or not an act of sin is committed.

#### ‘SUNT MES OIL TANT CLER VEANT’: EVE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE *MYSTÈRE D’ADAM*

The Anglo-Norman Eve has been described in modern scholarship as a character distinguished by ‘wilful credulity’ and ‘unreflectingly sinful curiosity’.<sup>77</sup> However, the Adam poet’s representation of Eve is neither as simplistic nor as disparaging as such criticism suggests, and more recent work has commented on the centrality of Eve’s role in elucidating the text’s conception of knowledge and experience, and the poet’s use of the etymological correspondences between the verbs ‘saver’ (‘to know’) and ‘savor’ (‘to taste’).<sup>78</sup> This theme becomes more apparent when the play is situated alongside contemporary theological accounts of the fall: as Lynette Muir asserts, the Adam play is the work of a writer ‘seeking to expound a difficult problem of moral theology... rather than merely to dramatise the Bible’.<sup>79</sup> The process of Eve’s transgression forms a site of conflict between different definitions of knowledge in the play, dramatising the epistemological divergence between understanding and experience that was raised by

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<sup>77</sup> Rosemary Woolf, ‘The Fall of Man in Genesis B and the *Mystère d’Adam*’, *Art and Doctrine: Essays on Medieval Literature*, ed. Heather O’Donoghue (London: Hambledon Press, 1986) pp. 15 – 28, see p. 24; Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 147.

<sup>78</sup> In particular, Michele Warren, ‘The Flavour of Sin in the *Ordo representationis Ade*’, *Neophilologus* 86 (2002), pp. 179 – 195; also Joseph A. Dane, ‘Clerical Propaganda in the Anglo-Norman *Representacione Ade*’, *Philological Quarterly* 62.2 (1983), pp. 241 – 52; p. 246; Lynette R. Muir, *Liturgy and Drama in the Anglo-Norman *Jeu d’Adam**, Medium Aevum Monographs New Series III (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973) p. 70.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

the arguments about the advantages of the first sin that were discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Read in this context, the Anglo-Norman Eve emerges not as a credulous victim of diabolic casuistry, but as a conscious and instructive performer in the moral action which comprises the process of sin.

In a considerable departure from the tenor of the scriptural account of the temptation scene, and also from the representations of the tempted Eve found in the other texts with which this thesis is concerned, the Anglo-Norman Eve is fully aware of the devil's duplicity and of his treacherous intentions in trying to persuade her to eat the fruit.<sup>80</sup> The knowledge that Eve possesses is made clear in the exchange conducted between her and Adam after her initial encounter with the devil:

ADAM:	Do not believe the traitor He is duplicitous
EVE:	I know it well
ADAM:	How do you know? ...He'll make you change your mind
EVE:	He will not, because I wouldn't believe anything that I hadn't put to the test. <sup>81</sup>

Eve thus clearly states that she knows the devil to be treacherous, and that his words are not capable of altering her ideas. She asserts that she will not believe anything that she had not tried or experienced, and whilst she is aware of what both God and the devil have told her about the fruit, she possesses no evidence or direct experience of its capacities. The words of Satan will not change her mind because they are epistemologically inadequate in comparison with her own potential experience of both consuming the fruit itself, and of the knowledge it supposedly confers.

It is on account of this exchange that Auerbach describes Eve here as displaying

<sup>80</sup> An additional departure from the scriptural account is that Satan approaches Adam first, only approaching Eve after Adam has turned him away. Woolf discusses the connections in this regard with *Genesis B*, 'The Fall of Man', pp. 15 – 17.

<sup>81</sup> 'A: Il est traître E: Bien le sai... A: Il te fera changer savor / E: Nel fera pas, car nel crerai / de nule rien tant que l'asai', *Mystère* ed. Sletsjöe, 279 – 85.

‘a naïve, childishly hardy and unreflectingly sinful curiosity’.<sup>82</sup> However, Auerbach’s distribution of the lines to Adam and Eve in this duologue is incorrect, and this compromises the validity of his argument significantly. Insisting that most editions of the text attribute the lines in way that is ‘impossible’, Auerbach claims that line 280 is Adam’s in its entirety, and that it is Eve who asks the question ‘How do you know?’ (‘E tu coment?’).<sup>83</sup> This question, he writes is ‘the sort of question which has been asked a thousand times by naïve and impetuous people who are governed by their instincts’, and it demonstrates that Eve has ‘failed to grasp the ethical problem’ presented by the apple.<sup>84</sup> Faced with Adam’s supposed assertions of understanding (‘Bien le sai’), Eve ‘feels she cannot cope with his clear and reasonable and manly will’, because of ‘her lack of any innate moral sense’.<sup>85</sup>

However, according to the single extant manuscript witness, Auerbach’s distribution of these lines is erroneous – the manuscript clearly labels ‘Bien le sai’ as Eve’s line, and ‘E tu coment?’ as Adam’s.<sup>86</sup> When the scene is read with the lines distributed as they are in the manuscript, Auerbach’s claims are rendered doubtful, as is Woolf’s insistence that Eve listens to the devil ‘with a wilful credulity springing from nascent pride’.<sup>87</sup>

In addition to contradicting the distribution of lines in the manuscript, Auerbach’s reading of this exchange overlooks the significance of Eve’s role in the poet’s dramatisation of the action of sin. The Anglo-Norman Eve is used both to highlight and to exemplify an epistemological lacuna which is far more complex than a

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<sup>82</sup> Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 147.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147 – 48.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149 – 50.

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix. Auerbach’s argument regarding these lines has received particular criticism from Muir, who argues strongly in favour of following the attribution of lines as it exists in the manuscript. She writes that ‘It is always dangerous to argue that what an author has apparently written *must be* contrary to what he meant, and although it is possible that the copyist of *Adam* has erred in his attribution, the onus of proof should be on the critic’, *Liturgy and Drama*, p. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Rosemary Woolf, ‘The Fall of Man’, p. 24.

straightforward dichotomy between physical desire and spiritual rectitude; namely, the gulf between theoretical understanding, represented by Adam, and the need for an experiential basis with which to substantiate this understanding. Eve's statement that she will not believe anything she has not put to the test sets the tone for the rest of the scene, in which Eve tempts Adam not with erotic enticements, but with the prospect of greater knowledge. His curiosity aroused, Adam asks if the fruit can really be so good.<sup>88</sup> Eve responds that he will never know unless he tastes it, and assures his consent by continuing to lure him with the prospect of sharing her direct experience with that of which he possesses only an abstract understanding:

ADAM: Is it that good?  
 EVE: Eat it. You cannot know without trying it...  
 Eat it and you will know both good and evil.  
 I will eat it first.  
 ADAM: And I afterwards.  
 EVE: Certainly...  
 [Eats fruit] Of such flavour is this fruit!  
 ADAM: Of what flavour?  
 EVE: Of such that mankind has never tasted.  
 My eyes are open and see clearly...  
 Eat, Adam...  
 ADAM: I will believe you...<sup>89</sup>

Eve's persuasion of Adam is thus not so much a seduction as a challenge from a different kind of knowledge; one that depends on experience rather than belief. Eve presents a distinct and conscious challenge to Adam's purely abstract knowledge, encapsulated in Eve's assertions that it is impossible to know something without having put it to the test. As Michele Warren has observed, the Anglo-Norman Eve 'is as interested in knowledge as she is in flavour... [the text] draws attention to her

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>89</sup> 'A: Est il tant bon / E: Tu le saveras nel poez saver sin gusteras... Maniue ten par co saveras e mal e bien / Jo en manierai premirement / A: Et io apres / E: Seurement... Ditel savor est ceste pome / A: De quel / E: Ditel nen gusta home / Or sunt mes oil tant cler veant... Maniue Adam... A: Jo ten crerra',  
 ibid., 294 – 312.

individual experience, affirming an autonomy that defies her union with Adam'.<sup>90</sup> As Guibert of Nogent and Peter Lombard employ the union of Adam and Eve as an analogy for the relationship between the components of the soul, with sin the result of disruption to the harmonious 'wedlock' of these components, the Adam poet literally and figuratively re-enacts this conception of the process of sin. Whilst the Anglo-Norman Adam and Eve recount the process of the original sin, they simultaneously rehearse the discourse which occurs within the tempted soul.

#### 'MULIER DUBITAVIT, DIABOLUS NEGAVIT': EVE AS DOUBT AND DISORDER

*De sacramentis* and *Scivias*, despite their ostensible disparity, in fact have numerous common features which have only rarely been recognised in modern scholarship.<sup>91</sup> The mutual points of contact between these two texts are particularly apparent in the way they represent the temptation and fall of Eve. For Abelard, Guibert, Lombard and the Adam poet, the figure of Eve is representative of universal human impulses and qualities. However, whilst Eve remains crucial to their examinations of the process of sin, and her failings are human, rather than female, failings, Hugh and Hildegard place more distance between the figure of Eve and the individual tempted soul as it is experienced by her fallen descendants. They employ the fall narrative as a means by which to explore temptation and sin, but they do not explicitly posit Eve as an identifiable aspect of human of the soul.<sup>92</sup> As in the other texts discussed above, Hugh and Hildegard represent Eve as a means by which to elucidate temptation as a contested

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<sup>90</sup> Warren, 'The Flavour of Sin', pp. 183 – 84.

<sup>91</sup> An exception can be found in Barbara Newman, whose introduction to the Bishop and Hart translation of *Scivias* discusses the similarities between it and *De sacramentis*, and includes a table of contents for the latter in order to highlight the thematic and structural correspondences that the texts share; *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, pp. 23 – 25.

<sup>92</sup> In addition, the tripartite conception of the human being as a composite of soul, body and senses demonstrates some further similarities between the two texts; cf. 'Porro tres sunt motus in homine, motus mentis, motus corporis, motus sensualitas', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 4 and 'Homo autem tres semitas in se habet. Quid est hoc? Animam, corpus et sensus', *Scivias*, 1.4, 609 – 10.



but ultimately instructive space between capitulation and resistance to sin. For Abelard in particular, this space provided the site of spiritually fruitful struggle with temptation. However, for Hugh, the tempted soul is a locus of doubt which signals divergence from the will of God; whilst for Hildegard, Eve's intermediate position represents an unsuccessfully defended boundary between disorderly fragmentation and harmonious prelapsarian integrity.

Taking the opportunity for some uncharacteristic wordplay on 'vidit' and 'invidit', Hugh writes that the devil became jealous when he saw Eve and Adam in paradise, because mankind had the opportunity to ascend through obedience where he himself had fallen through pride.<sup>93</sup> These parallels of pride, humility, ascent and decline are echoed in Hildegard's account of the fall. She also describes the devil's jealousy on seeing mankind reigning childishly innocent in paradise, and describes his desire both to vanquish them as rivals in the order of creation, and to perfect in others the malice he contained within himself.<sup>94</sup> The devil's desire for malice perfected in innocence prefigures the reversal of this process via redemption in Christ, who represents strength perfected in weakness.<sup>95</sup> As was discussed above, these writers place considerable emphasis on the spiritual and epistemological benefits of sin. However, in Hugh and Hildegard's representations of Eve there remains a tangible sense of misplaced nostalgia for the unattainable and inviolate innocence of the prelapsarian state which is more difficult to identify in the other texts discussed here.

Both describe the devil's approach to Eve as being motivated by his realisation that Eve was weaker than Adam. Hugh writes that Eve represented 'the part of human

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<sup>93</sup> 'Vidit diabolus et invidit quod homo per obedientiam illuc ascenderet unde ipse per superbiam corruisset', *De sacramentis*, 1.7, 1.

<sup>94</sup> 'Quia cum diabolus hominem in paradiso vidit, cum magna indignatione exclamavit, dicens: "O quis assequetur me in mansione verae beatitudinis?" Et ita in semetipso sciebat quod malitiam suam quam in se habuit nondum in alia creatura compleverat, sed Adam et Evam puerili innocentia in horto deliciarum degere videns, cum magno astu extulit se ad eos decipiendum per serpentem', *Scivias*. 1.2, 212 - 15

<sup>95</sup> 'Sufficit tibi gratia mea nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur', 2 Corinthians 12.9.

nature where it appears weakest', and the devil thus saw that if he could prevail upon Eve, he might approach 'with greater courage the other part [of human nature], which was stronger', that is, Adam. Likewise, Hildegard attributes the devil's approach to Eve's more malleable and trusting nature rather than inferiority *per se*, stating that he knew Eve's 'softness' to be more easily conquerable than Adam's strength.<sup>96</sup> More importantly, in both texts, the process of sin is rooted in the asking of questions and the presence of doubt. Hildegard writes that the devil persuaded Eve into revealing the nature of the forbidden tree and the commandment which prohibited it through his test of cunning questioning ('secundum probationem dolosae interrogationis'), and discerning the truth according to the answers she gave ('secundum responsa eorum adinuenit').<sup>97</sup>

Hugh writes that the devil had to begin by questioning Eve partially as a result of his cowardice in her presence, and partially because he needed to question her in order to test her susceptibility to temptation.<sup>98</sup> However, whilst Hildegard maintains that Eve's soul was innocent at this point, Hugh suggests that Eve had already begun to doubt.<sup>99</sup> This extant doubt was what gave the devil the ability to tempt Eve, because in beginning to doubt, she had already begun to move away from God:

However, the devil would certainly not have presumed to deny the words of God in the presence of the woman, if he had not discovered the woman herself to be in doubt. She who doubted therefore moved away from he who affirmed and approached he who denied.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> 'Quia sciebat mulieris mollitiem facilius vincendam quam viri fortitudinem', *Scivias*, 1.2, 236.

<sup>97</sup> *Scivias*, 1.2, 226-7.

<sup>98</sup> 'Non audet exire in verba persuasionis donec animum temptande interrogatione presenciat', *De sacramentis*, 1.7, 4.

<sup>99</sup> 'Evam innocentem animum habentem', *Scivias*, 1.2, 228. 'Ipsam igitur secundum aliquid invocavit malitiam que temptatori inique persuasionis dedit audaciam', *De sacramentis*, 1.7, 4.

<sup>100</sup> 'Deus affirmavit, mulier dubitavit, diabolus negavit. Nequaquam autem diabolus coram muliere verba dei presumpsisset negare si non prius ipsam mulieram dubitantem invenisset. Que ergo dubitavit ab affirmavit recessit et neganti appropinquavit', *ibid.*, 1.7, 4.

Hugh categorises the devil's incitement to sin as a threefold temptation involving the promise of the fruit itself, the prospect of being 'as gods', and increased knowledge of good and evil.<sup>101</sup> His conception of Eve's desire for knowledge is particularly noteworthy. He characterises Eve as possessing a form of intellectual avarice consisting of an excessive appetite for having or possessing knowledge.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, her genuine belief in the validity of the devil's promises provides Hugh with the evidence he requires to demonstrate that her sin was greater than Adam's.<sup>103</sup> Whilst God had never prevented mankind from seeking knowledge of good and evil, Hugh continues, the inordinate level of desire for knowledge that Eve displayed was contrary to both human reason and human nature.<sup>104</sup> Thus the figure of the fallen Eve is not characterised by lust, weakness or wilfulness, but by an intransigent desire for knowledge, and the capacity for doubt. Similarly, Hildegard refers to fallen human nature as being characterised simultaneously by desire for knowledge and an insufficiently rigorous grasp of the truth.<sup>105</sup>

Hugh's formulation 'God affirmed, the woman doubted, the devil denied' places Eve at the centre of the action of sin – caught between the divergent directions of virtue and vice, it is Eve who is responsible for disrupting the spiritual progress of mankind. This conception of Eve *in media res* in terms of the process of sin is rendered visually in Hildegard's depiction of the fall in the illustration which accompanies the second vision

<sup>101</sup> 'Humanam naturae in eam partem ubi debilior uidebatur aggressus est. Ut si forte illuc aliquatenus preualere potuisset postmodum cum maiori fiducia ad alteram que robustior fuit', *ibid.*, 1.7, 3.

<sup>102</sup> 'In persuasione igitur cibi hominem temptavit gula, in promissione deitatis et cognitionis vana gloria et avaricia. Immoderata namque concupiscentia edendi gula est. Desiderium autem inordinatum excellendi vana gloria nimius vero appetitus habendi vel possidendi avaricia', *ibid.*, 1.7, 6.

<sup>103</sup> 'Eva quippe seducta est. Quia uerum esse credidit quod diabolus dixit... Adam vero non est seductus quia quod diabolus promisit falsum esse sciebat... Vere ergo dictum est quia minus peccauit', *ibid.*, 1.7, 10.

<sup>104</sup> 'Quia tamen inordinate hoc concupiscens contra rationem suam fecit quodammodo naturalis precepti prevaricator extitit', *ibid.*, 1.7, 7.

<sup>105</sup> 'Tu uero nescis quomodo creatus sis. Sed nunc, o homo, caelum et terram uis perscrutari et iustitiam eorum in constitutione Dei diiudicare et summa dignoscere, cum nec infima ualeas examinare', *Scivias* 1. 2, 711-12.

of *Scivias*. The image locates Eve between the serpent and Adam; a position analogous to her centrality within the fall narrative as the only thing standing between the ruinous blandishments of the devil and the harmony of prelapsarian existence. The serpent exhales the atramentous matter used to depict sin onto the cloud-shaped form of Eve:

A pit of great depth and breadth appeared... from which a loathsome cloud spread out and touched a deceitful, vein-shaped form [the serpent]. And, in a region of brightness, it blew upon a white cloud [Eve] that had come forth from a beautiful human form [Adam] and contained within itself many and many stars, and so doing, cast both the white cloud and the human form from that region.<sup>106</sup>

Rebecca Garber has claimed that Hildegard presents the serpent as ‘ejaculating’ the substance of sin onto Eve:

The phallic nature of the snake was an established tradition... For several reasons, I would identify the substance [of sin] as semen. The snake appears as a phallic image, and the sin itself is identified... as a sexual act, as a *seductionem*[sic] *serpentis*, in which semen would play a part.<sup>107</sup>

These are deeply questionable assertions. Garber provides no evidence of this ‘established tradition’, and in any case, the notion that serpent is intended to appear phallic in this image is anatomically rather dubious. Also, as was discussed in the previous chapter, the supposedly sexual nature of the first sin is principally a modern assumption, since it is widely agreed in commentaries on Genesis that procreation would necessarily occurred in paradise even if Adam and Eve had remained sinless. Moreover, there is simply nothing in the text to suggest that Hildegard envisaged the action of sin as analogous to ejaculation – the verb she uses is ‘afflare’ (‘to breathe’ or ‘to exhale’).

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<sup>106</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 73. ‘Et ecce lacus multae latitudinis et profunditatis apparuit... de quo etiam taeterrima nebula se extendens quasi uenam uisum deceptibilem habentem tetigit, et in quadam clara regione candidam nubem quae de quadam pulchra formam hominis plurimas plurimas que stellas in se continens exierat per eam affluit ac illam eandem que formam hominis de eadem regione ita eiecit’, *Scivias*, I, 2, 55 – 64.

<sup>107</sup> Rebecca Garber, ‘Where is the Body? Images of Eve and Mary in the *Scivias*’ in Maud Burnett McInerney ed., *Hildegard of Bingen: A Book of Essays*, Garland Mediaeval Casebooks (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 103 – 132; see pp. 113-14.

It is more likely that Hildegard's depiction of the fall represents the serpent breathing the substance of sin onto Eve as a malevolent inversion of the process by which mankind was created; that is, when they were animated by the breath of God.<sup>108</sup> This reversal of the benevolent creative process by which mankind was given life is reflected in the sense of fragmentation and disorder that Hildegard describes as occurring as a result of Eve's transgression. The hitherto harmonious concord between the elements of the cosmos was disrupted:

And so all the elements of the world, which before had existed in great calm, were turned to the greatest agitation and displayed horrible terrors, because when Man chose disobedience, rebelling against God and forsaking tranquillity for disquiet, that Creation, which had been created for the service of humanity, turned against humans in great and various ways so that Man, having lowered himself, might be held in check by it.<sup>109</sup>

The disorder that Eve inflicted on the fabric of the cosmos both forms and reflects the punishment that she herself receives as a result – the unblemished and intact fertility which characterises Eve before the fall, in the form of a star-filled cloud, cannot be fulfilled in the fragmented form of the fallen human body.

## CONCLUSION

The texts discussed above demonstrate that the figure of Eve, and indeed commentary on Genesis itself, occupied a central position within debate about ethics, human nature and the action of sin. Eve also emerges as a means by which to approach the problematic issues surrounding the existence of evil, the existence of the human

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<sup>108</sup> Genesis 2.7.

<sup>109</sup> *Scivias* trans. Bishop and Hart, p. 86. 'Et ita omnia elementa mundi, quae prius in magna quiete constiterant, in maximam inquietudinem uersa horribiles terrores ostenderunt: quia creatura illa quae ad seruitutem hominis creata fuerat nec ullam aduersitatem in se senserat, homine inoboedientiam arripiente, ita quod Deo inoboediens fuit et ipsam tranquillitatem suam reliquit et inquietudinem suscepit, maximas et plurimas contrarietates hominibus inferens, quoniam homo se ipsum ad deteriora inclinauerat ut per illam coereretur', *Scivias*, I.2, 660 - 667.

capacity for sin, and the emergence and function of vice and temptation in a harmonious cosmos presided over by an ultimately benevolent creator. Far from providing a model of female iniquity, Eve is overwhelmingly employed as a representative of human nature, in both the literal and allegorical interpretations of the fall offered by the authors discussed. Thus, the texts discussed above present a challenge to the image of Eve as wayward temptress, fuelling and provoking a supposed 'arsenal of misogynistic barbs'.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, they reveal the extent to which the figure of Eve both stimulated and facilitated examination of the most challenging theological issues raised within the scriptural narratives of mankind's creation and fall.

The representations of Eve as the first sinner discussed above illuminate the ethical and theological frameworks in which they operate, both in terms of human action and disposition, and the wider cosmological and doctrinal context in which fallen mankind exists. In the first instance, there is an identifiable tendency to locate Eve in a central position between the incitement of temptation and the capitulation to sin, and she emerges as a crucially instructive case study of the process of transgression as it occurred for the first time, and as it occurs within every subsequent act of sin. Whether she provides a symbolic representation of the will, or a didactic exemplum, the figure of Eve is a powerful and enlightening representation of the tempted human soul. More broadly, Eve emerges as a vital tool for the justification and exploration of the paradoxical theodicy of these texts. The Genesis narrative demands that the exegete reconcile the notion of benevolent creator with the existence not only of iniquity, but with an inherent human capacity for sin. It is the figure of Eve who reconciles the tension between these ostensibly conflicting views, by demonstrating the incongruous advantages of sin and the formative benefits of the struggle against temptation.

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<sup>110</sup> Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, p. 116.

# CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters of this thesis have endeavoured to demonstrate the centrality of the figure of Eve within twelfth-century responses to the creation and fall, and the concomitant utility of examining responses to Eve as a means by which to illuminate some of the prominent intellectual concerns of this period. The texts discussed demonstrate that treatments of Eve provided a crucial and informative component of responses to the most challenging issues raised by the narratives of mankind's creation and fall. These issues include the physical composition of mankind and the created world, the purpose of mankind's having been created in paradise, the existence and emergence of sin, the action of the tempted soul, and the development of human nature from prelapsarian ideal to fallen reality. Amid the twelfth century's flourishing intellectual activity, exegesis of the hexaemeron provided both a vehicle and an impetus for submitting the enigmas of the creation and fall to systematic analysis. Thanks to Eve's centrality within the debates surrounding these issues, the representations of Eve that these texts construct offer a valuable and previously neglected source of insight into the cultural and intellectual history of the twelfth century.

The prevalent image of Eve as a credulous victim of the devil, or as an iniquitous temptress seductively proffering forbidden fruit, does not correspond with that constructed in the treatments of Genesis 1 - 3 with which this thesis is concerned. Rather, the various representations discussed throughout this thesis collectively construct a multifaceted, complex and revealing image of the twelfth-century figure of Eve. Eve is seen to embody, and is used to represent, not only the consequences of fallen knowledge and awareness, but also the perfection of prelapsarian innocence. Eve

embodies virtue as well as sin, compunction as well as pride, and she epitomises mankind as fallen and inherently sinful beings who are nonetheless indelibly and perpetually distinguished by the image of the creator. In short, the twelfth-century figure of Eve is a reflection and conceptual repository of twelfth-century ideas about human nature.

For the corpus of twelfth-century commentaries on the creation and fall discussed above, Eve is a fundamentally formative and instructive figure. Eve's part in the events of Genesis 1 -3 is viewed as one to be examined rather than condemned, because doing so offers the opportunity to comprehend more fully the nature of mankind and its world. It is of course difficult to deny that it often falls to Eve and the female to represent the negative elements of human nature; equally, it difficult to deny that anyone looking for evidence of incipient feminism within responses to Genesis will likely be disappointed. However, Eve as she is depicted in these texts ultimately represents and embodies the faults of mankind in general rather than those of women specifically.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND ARGUMENTS

This study began by looking at Abelard's assertion that Eve's sin made her dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men. It has endeavoured to demonstrate that this ostensibly remarkable claim is not an isolated or atypical occurrence, but one that forms part of a prevalent twelfth-century propensity to elucidate, rather than vilify, the transgressive actions of Eve, and the consequences they incurred for mankind as a whole. Abelard's unequivocal praise of Eve's sin does not wholly exemplify the tenor and mentality of twelfth-century responses to the first act of sin, but he is not alone in presenting a case for the benefits as well as the punishment that this sin bought about.



However, the depictions of Eve discussed above go substantially beyond mere vindication. Throughout their discussions of subjects ranging from atomic structure to the concept of the *felix culpa*, Eve emerges as a crucially informative and instructive figure. Representations of Eve as the first woman reveal the extent to which she was considered a peer and equivalent to Adam rather than feminine subordinate to be subjected to his superior authority. The three most prominent authors discussed here, namely Abelard, Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard, argue that the very process of Eve's creation was demonstrated the parity she was intended to share with Adam. Her creation from his rib, they suggest, functioned as a demonstration directly from God that Eve was neither an inferior, as would have been the case had God elected to create her from Adam's feet, nor a superior, as would have been the case had she been formed from Adam's head.<sup>1</sup> Instead she was taken from Adam's side in order to signify that she was 'neither a slave nor a mistress but a partner'; a phrase which finds a vernacular equivalent in the Anglo-Norman God's declaration that Eve 'is your wife and your equivalent'.<sup>2</sup> Whilst offering a less emphatic avowal of Eve's parity with Adam, Hildegard's interpretation of Eve's creation as being facilitated by a process akin to the propagation of new plants through grafting emphasised her compositional homogeneity with Adam. With the exceptions of Abelard and Guibert of Nogent, these writers also agreed that Eve was created in both the image and likeness of God. Despite there being a trend in some modern scholarship of arguing that twelfth-century theologians denied Eve the privilege of bearing the *imago Dei*, Abelard and Guibert are in fact exceptional cases here, and ones which have been misrepresented.

An image thus emerges of the twelfth-century figure of Eve as an esteemed partner in the privileges of prelapsarian existence and the qualities which distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Abelard, *Expositio*, 454; Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 35; Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, 2.18, 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Nec ancilla nec domain sed socia', *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 35; 'Ce est ta femme e tun pareil', *Mystère* ed. Sletsjöe, 10.

mankind as the apex of terrestrial creation. However, unlike Adam, Eve is also employed to explain and interpret this plane of creation and its disposition and construction. It is the creation of Eve specifically which motivates and ratifies some of the most striking discussions which comprise the hexaemeral components of the texts discussed here, prompting Hugh of St Victor to present a discourse on the fundamental fabric of the universe, and Peter Lombard to identify the disparity between the world depicted in scripture and that manifested in observable physical phenomena. More generally, with the exception of Guibert's exclusively allegorical interpretation of the hexaemeral narrative, Eve lies at the heart of what can be seen as an increasingly developed and revealing engagement with the hexaemeron as a means by which to scrutinise and comprehend the physical elements of the created world. Ratified by repeated reference to the idea expressed in Romans 1.20 that the invisible and eternal can be clarified via the visible and temporal, these texts present Eve as an essential element of, and tool for comprehending, an intelligible universe with mankind at its centre.<sup>3</sup>

Representations of Eve as the first wife and mother suggest that the twelfth century's reputation for hostility toward marriage, procreation and female fertility is something which needs to be questioned, as is the idea that the first sin comprised illicit sexual activity. Rather, following the ideas of Augustine, the authors here discussed were in agreement that procreation would necessarily have taken place sinlessly in paradise, even had mankind had not sinned. Before the fall, mankind was unable to experience lust, and thus no sin would have been committed. After the fall, mankind, as part of their punishment, was condemned to experience lust and various other forms of concupiscence, but whilst original sin was subsequently transmitted via the act of

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<sup>3</sup> 'Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur', Romans 1.20.

procreation, the first act of sin itself consisted in disobedience rather than lust.

In addition, there is little to suggest that the Pauline conception of marriage ('it is better to marry than to burn') was one widely favoured in this period.<sup>4</sup> Rather, marriage was praised as a sacrament; a gift bestowed by God in order to assist and improve humanity. Alone of all the sacraments, it was deemed to have been established before the fall on account of Genesis 2.24.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, despite the expectation that Eve might function as an exemplar of the perils of matrimony and iniquitous uxorial conduct, Eve necessarily operates as a positive and definitive exemplary wife, because the sacrament of marriage depends on its scriptural ratification in Genesis 2. However, what is also necessary to reconcile this faultless prelapsarian union with the fallen human state for which Eve is responsible, which complicates arguments which present Eve as an equal participant in the order of creation.

As the 'first' wife, Eve provides a problematic connection between prelapsarian ideal and fallen reality. This can also be said of her status as "mother of all the living", which is inextricably connected to the punishment which condemns her to fulfil this role in sorrow and in servitude. Modern scholars have, in response to this, frequently seen the twelfth-century's conception of women as one reliant on the parallel between Eve and the Virgin Mary. However, both the utility and dissemination of this parallel have been somewhat overstated. Whilst the 'New Eve' idea had some currency in Patristic writing, and the 'Ave/Eva' formulation occurs as a linguistic felicity in the twelfth century, the Eve/Mary parallel does not appear to have provided a substantial theological purpose. It is difficult to find consistent or substantial evidence, in the texts with which this thesis is concerned or in twelfth-century writing more widely, that the Eve/Mary parallel was employed in order to impose an inflexibly dichotomous sense of

<sup>4</sup> 'Melius est enim nubere quam uri', 1 Corinthians 7.9.

<sup>5</sup> 'Quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adhaerebit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una', Genesis 2.24.

female identity and purpose. Even in terms of typological affinity, Eve is compared to the Church rather than to Mary in the texts discussed here. Hildegard presents something of an exception in this regard, since she does compare Eve with Mary. However, she does so by comparing Mary with the sinless prelapsarian Eve, not by contrasting her with the mother of fallen mankind, and thus it is Eve herself rather than Mary who provides the unattainable ideal.

Representations of Eve as the first sinner complete the picture of Eve as a means by which the twelfth century's scholars approached and elucidated some of the most challenging aspects of the fall narrative. In the works this thesis has discussed there is a consistent level of emphasis on, and consensus about, the advantages of Eve's sin as well as its grave consequences. In disobeying God, Eve condemned mankind to mortality and expulsion from paradise. However, her sin also enabled mankind to understand comprehensively, and appreciate more fully, the nature of disobedience and divergence from the will of God; things of which sinless mankind had only an incomplete and abstract comprehension. Eve's sin also brought about the necessity for redemption in Christ; a privilege and expression of divine benevolence of which mankind would otherwise not have known.

The arguments about the advantages of Eve's sin go beyond the notion of the *felix culpa*. In fostering the emergence of sin, Eve also fostered the human capacity for virtue. Had Eve not disobeyed, mankind would have remained merely sinless; a state less laudable than being actively virtuous, since virtue and good moral action are impossible without the experience of genuine temptation and without the ability to sin. As Peter Lombard says, avoiding temptation might ensure that no sin is committed, but it does not in itself bring about the crown of virtue or moral victory.<sup>6</sup> This is why

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<sup>6</sup> *Sententiae*, 1.23, 1.

Abelard describes Eve as being dearer to God than many thousands of sinless men, since by ensuring that mankind has the ability to sin, subsequent battles with temptation are spiritually and morally beneficial. By paradoxically emphasising that her weakness was a prerequisite of the privileges of redemption, Abelard succeeds in untangling an ostensibly irreconcilable contradiction. Out of this he constructs an account of the creation and fall which allows him to assert that Eve was created less strong and less wise, yet simultaneously privileged within the order of creation, and dearer to God than many sinless men. In this vindicating formulation, the faults which condemn Eve are also the merits which bring about salvation. Abelard is the only author who goes so far as to praise Eve for her actions, but even Hildegard of Bingen, whose *Scivias* is perhaps of all the texts discussed here the one that is most concerned with lamenting the loss of prelapsarian order and harmony, writes that on account of Eve's sin, 'mankind now shines brighter in heaven than before'.<sup>7</sup>

Eve is also employed as a means of examining and explaining the action of temptation within the human soul. Hence Eve is employed either as a model of the tempted soul, or as an allegorical representation of the part of the soul which is responsible for either resisting or capitulating to temptation. Following the punishment and expulsion of mankind from Eden, there is in the texts discussed here a sense that Eve's first sin was re-enacted in the soul of every subsequent human soul which experienced temptation. It is Eve rather than Adam who represents the human potential for both sin and virtue, and it is Eve's sin rather than Adam's which informs some of the most significant ethical discourse of this period.

## THE FIGURE OF EVE AND TWELFTH-CENTURY THOUGHT

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<sup>7</sup> 'Homo nunc clarior fulget quam prius in caelo', *Scivias*, 1.2, 719.

The representations of Eve discussed above reveal a profound concern for and interest in the nature of mankind, and a fundamental preoccupation with explaining why mankind is as it is. A significant component of this concern with the reasons for the ways in which human beings perceive and act consists in the comparison between mankind's observable fallen state and the ideal but ultimately unknowable nature of mankind before the fall. The texts discussed above also reveal a remarkably stable and consistent conception of mankind's place and purpose on earth and their function within the cosmos as a whole. Whilst Eve's sin was an act which resulted in destruction and punishment, there is a sense in which the fall was not considered to have fundamentally changed mankind's ontological trajectory: divine love was still considered to be both the cause and objective of humanity's creation. Rather, the fall might be seen as having reinforced the significance of this trajectory, even whilst the consequences of sin made it more difficult to follow. Fallen mankind might have been deemed flawed and condemned to experience mortality, concupiscence and inherent predisposition to sin. However, this made humankind's ultimate purpose more difficult to attain, rather than bringing about any fundamental change to that purpose itself.

Examinations of Eve's creation from the rib in particular reveal a substantial degree of interest in analysing what was external to mankind, just as examinations of Eve's sin reveal an interest in interior human machinations and perceptions. These two concerns are closely connected. These texts testify to an outlook which deemed the physical components of creation to be inherently significant and revealing, rather than one which deemed terrestrial existence to be characterised only by contemptible worldly distractions. The interpretations of Eve's creation bear witness to a conception of the created world as an intelligible system worthy of study in its own right. At no point is it suggested that human cognition alone is sufficient to comprehend fully the way in

which it operated, but at the same time, human attempts to do so are considered eminently worthwhile.

Connected with this is the preoccupation with sin and human perfectibility that these texts also reveal. They demonstrate that sin and virtue were both conceived as interior processes rather than static states, and that studying the first act of sin committed by Eve was considered a means by which these processes might better be understood and, in the case of virtue, pursued. Representations of Eve as the first sinner bring to light the extent to which both sin and virtue were defined in the twelfth century by internal processes and intentions rather than by the external actions which they precipitated. As is demonstrated by the consistent emphasis on the validity and merit of battles with temptation, the human soul and its capacity to engender good moral action were conceived during this period as having the capacity to be refined and improved. This process of perfecting or refining was itself considered beneficial, and is related to the way in which representations of Eve also demonstrate the extent to which the first sin was deemed to have been beneficial as well as damaging. Whilst prelapsarian privilege was deemed irretrievably lost, it also becomes apparent fallen mankind was seen to have had a fuller understanding and a more concrete appreciation of the magnitude of divine benevolence, in addition to possessing the means to become virtuous as opposed to merely sinless.

The inherent flaws of fallen mankind are, like the physical world in which they are played out, presented as ultimately knowable and observable. The first sin of Eve is conceived as an immediate and instructive reality, not only because of the transmission of original sin, but because the process involved in this first sin is subsequently re-enacted in every human experience of temptation. Eve's failure to resist temptation is something which must be confronted and analysed, since its consequences shaped the

nature of every one of her descendants: to examine the motivations and actions of Eve is to examine those of fallen human nature in general. The study of the actions of temptation and sin are thus vital in order that these processes might be sufficiently understood. On account of this, Eve is often presented as a ‘case study’ of the tempted soul whose actions demand analysis rather than, or at least alongside, repudiation.

Moreover, these representations of Eve elucidate also a profound concern with examining basic human motivations and desires; a concern which both informs and explains the discernible level of emphasis on moral action in twelfth-century responses to Eve’s temptation and fall. This concern underpins the understanding of the events of the Genesis narrative as universally relevant and immediate: as Peter Lombard writes Eve is, in a sense, an identifiable part of the human psyche.<sup>8</sup>

The texts discussed above devote considerable attention to questions which go unanswered in the Genesis narrative, and whilst this is a period which reveres extant authorities more than it values intellectual innovation, there emerges a distinct preoccupation with developing the events of Genesis 1 - 3 into a convincing and thus instructive account of human purpose and desire. Hence the extensive discussions of issues such as why would the devil have wanted Eve to sin, why would Eve have believed what the devil said, why did Eve want to take the fruit in the first place, and whether or not Satan’s serpentine disguise was convincing. Whilst the attempt to assemble a series of plausible responses to these questions might be seen as something particularly characteristic of the scholastic methodology employed in, say, Lombard’s *Sententiae*, the impulse to ask and answer such questions is perhaps most readily apparent in the conception of the *Mystère d’Adam*, which exemplifies the presentation of Eve as an identifiably human character.

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<sup>8</sup> *Sententiae*, 2.24, 7.



This sort of questioning led also to discussion of issues that might be considered rather more potentially problematic, such as how it was possible to create a fully-formed human body from a mere rib, and why God created mankind with the capacity for sin if he knew that they would fail to resist temptation. Whilst theirs was not an intellectual environment known for its tolerance of divergent or heterodox thought, there is little in the texts discussed above to suggest that these authors feared to raise such questions. Hugh of St Victor and Peter Lombard both refer, for instance, to people who were sceptical about the methods of Eve's creation, and Lombard appears to see no risk in his identification of the disparity between the scriptural account of Eve's creation and the observable 'course of nature'.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, questions of the motivation of God for having allowed mankind to be tempted and to sin are raised and answered in all of the texts discussed above except Guibert's *Moralia*.

In addition to functioning as a model of human tendencies in general, Eve also functions as a symbol of the feminine, both in the literal sense of the female half of mankind, but also in a more abstract sense (for example, where she symbolises the 'feminine' component of the soul). Representations of Eve as the abstract feminine demonstrate a flexible conception of the categories of masculine and feminine as concepts which do not necessarily correspond with the biological categories of male and female. Allegorical representation of Eve as the soul's will or reason elucidates the extent to which this period conceived all human beings, regardless of their biological gender, as entities which comprised both masculine and feminine components. In the less common instances in which Eve represents the body and Adam the soul, as in Guibert's *Moralia*, this is nonetheless presented as a division which exists in all human beings. Likewise, exegesis of Genesis 1.27 ('*masculum et feminam creavit eos*') tends

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<sup>9</sup> *De sacramentis*, 1.6, 37; *Sententiae*, 2.18, 5-6.

to interpret this passage as a reference to the soul only, since the body cannot bear the image of God, revealing that the soul was widely envisaged during this period as consisting of both masculine and feminine constituents, irrespective of the physical gender of the body in which it might reside.

Where Eve represents the female half of mankind, she demonstrates twelfth-century attitudes to be unsurprisingly patriarchal, but far from universally misogynistic. It is true that Eve is deemed weaker, more malleable than Adam, and ultimately in need of his guidance and authority. It should be noted that this attitude is as prevalent in the work of Hildegard of Bingen as much as it is in that of the male authors discussed. However, there exists an identifiably consistent emphasis on Eve's worth, significance and parity with Adam. In addition, the emphasis on equivalence and typological significance in allegorical exegesis of Eve's creation demonstrates that the theological position of women during this period was characterised by an emphasis on participation in the privileges that made humanity the apex of terrestrial creation.

In this light, it is perhaps unsurprising that representations of Eve as the first wife and mother demonstrate that both marriage and procreation were considered to be basic human necessities during this period rather than cause for monastic horror or misogynistic hostility. Given that both marriage and procreation were instituted prior to the fall and ratified by God directly, it was not possible to consider either of these things to be inherently sinful from their inception. To have done so would have constituted a challenge to the notion of unconditional divine benevolence. It is agreed almost unanimously in the texts discussed above that both marriage and procreation were part of human life before the fall, and that only after the fall did they become associated with lust and the transmission of original sin, since these were both part of fallen mankind's

punishment.<sup>10</sup> For the commentators of the twelfth century, marriage and procreation were both divinely sanctioned necessities, and potential incitements to lust. However, marriage and procreation were both thought to have been established with God's benedictions, lacking any inherent incitement to sin, whilst lust was decreed to be a problem of human making which needed to be overcome by human virtue. The broader implication here is that the theology of the twelfth century deemed humanity to have sole responsibility for its failings and also, with the assistance of grace, the responsibility for rectifying them. Vice was considered to have originated solely in human actions; that is, those of Eve and Adam. A possible objection to this, which is mentioned in several of the texts discussed, is that God should not have created mankind with the capacity to experience temptation in the first place; however, such objections are resolved by attributing this to God's benevolent desire for humanity to experience virtue rather than the mere absence of sin. Thus representations of Eve go some way to illuminate the twelfth-century concern with, and resolution of, the question of how to reconcile the notion of an omniscient and wholly benevolent God with the existence of evil and the emergence of sin.

#### THE PLACE OF THE PRESENT STUDY AND POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH

Overall, representations of Eve offer new insights into the attitudes and mentalities of the twelfth century, and also a hitherto neglected source of information about concerns that are already well documented as having been prominent during this period. However, despite the past few decades' proliferation of scholarship concerning both the theological and intellectual climate of the twelfth century, and conceptions of gender during this period, there has been little systematic attention devoted to the figure of Eve

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<sup>10</sup> The exception here is Guibert's *Moralia*, not because it presents a divergent view but because it simply does not mention these issues in literal, historical terms.

in the twelfth century or indeed the middle ages in general, and no substantial study of the significance of Eve beyond the confines of attitude toward gender. Eve is frequently mentioned in passing amid this scholarship, but has come to function merely as a form of convenient and misleading shorthand for women in general and their treatment during the middle ages. Although Flood's brief study has recently addressed this approach to Eve, he is too generous in accommodating the principal assumption which underpins it; namely, that the figure of Eve can reveal nothing more than the patriarchal nature of medieval attitudes toward gender and toward women. Consequently, there remains a prevalent modern conception of the medieval figure of Eve as 'the devil's gateway' and as the less favoured half of the supposedly widespread 'Eva/Ave' formulation.

In short, it remains widely assumed that medieval representations of Eve illuminate nothing more than the allegedly ubiquitous misogyny of this period. This thesis, whilst it operates within necessary confines and limitations, establishes that there exists a substantial and largely unappreciated corpus of twelfth-century material which poses a significant challenge to this view of Eve. A comprehensive and definitive study of the figure of Eve in the twelfth century (or in the middle ages more broadly) remains to be written; however, this thesis not only demonstrates that the material exists for such an undertaking, but the opportunities such study offers to elucidate twelfth-century thought.

There are various ways in which the remit of this thesis could be expanded, and numerous texts which could be added to the corpus of present study which is necessarily constrained in scale. From Thomas Aquinas's commentaries on the creation to the creation cycles of the later medieval vernacular Corpus Christi plays, there is no shortage of representations of Eve beyond the twelfth century which merit further and

more systematic examination. Likewise, there are Patristic and early medieval representations of Eve which be likely to further reward exploration.

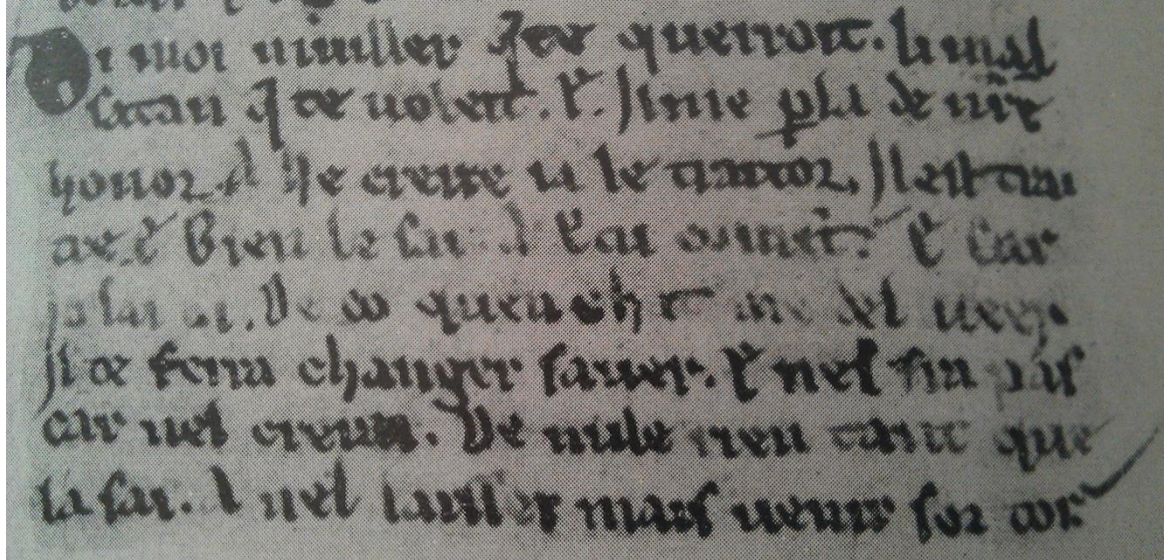
However, remaining within the twelfth century possibly offers the most potentially interesting and fruitful option for further study of the figure of Eve. As was mentioned above the list of twelfth-century writers who composed commentaries on the hexaemeron and fall during this period is a lengthy one populated by some of the most significant thinkers of the central middle ages.<sup>11</sup> These texts and their possible representations of Eve essentially amount to a substantial potential corpus of hitherto neglected material which might elucidate more consistently and comprehensively the twelfth century's responses to a range of fundamental concerns and questions relating to virtue, sin, the existence of evil, mankind's ontological trajectory, the place of mankind within the universe, and what would subsequently be labelled natural sciences. It is ultimately the responses to these questions that the twelfth-century figure of Eve illuminates.

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<sup>11</sup> See p.14 above.

## APPENDIX

Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 297, f. 24<sup>v</sup>



- [1] Di moi muiller que te querroit . li mal
- [2] satan que te volent . E . Il me parla de nostre
- [3] honor . A Ne creire ia le traitor . Il est trai | -
- [4] tre . E Bien le sai . A E tu coment.' E Car
- [5] jo sai oi<sup>1</sup> . De co quen chat me del veer
- [6] Il te ferra changer saver . E nel fra pas
- [7] car nel crerai . De nule rien tant que
- [8] l'asai [...]

<sup>1</sup> Almost every edition of the text gives a different reading of the beginning of this line. The variant readings are helpfully listed by Sletsjöe, as follows: Palustre gives 'Car oi l'ai'; Grass and Studer give 'Car l'asaiai'; Chamard gives 'Car jo sai oi', Aebischer gives 'Car l'asajai', and Sletsjöe himself gives 'Car jo lai oi'; see *Mystère d'Adam* ed. idem, p. 21.

Thus the manuscript attributes the lines to Eve and Adam as follows:

ADAM:	Di moi mulier que te querroit	276
	li mal satan que te volent	277
EVE:	Il me parla de nostre honor	278
ADAM:	Ne creire ia le traitor	279
	Il est traire	280
EVE:	Bien le sai	
ADAM:	E tu coment?	281
EVE:	Car jo sai oi	
	De co quen chat me del veer	282
[ADAM]:	Il te ferra changer saver	283
EVE:	Nel fra pas car nel crerai	284
	De nule rien tant que l'asai	285

Lines 280-1 are thus shared between Adam and Eve, and it is stated in the manuscript that Adam should assert 'Il est traire' and Eve should reply 'Bien le sai'. This reply is clearly labelled as being Eve's line. As can be seen above (see line 4 of the transcription), the words 'Bien le sai' are preceded by a capital letter 'E' to indicate that it is the character of Eve speaking here. The subsequent line 'E tu coment' is preceded by a capital 'A' which indicates that the line is Adam's.

The question at the beginning of line 281, 'E tu coment?', is meant to be spoken by Adam, and is thus preceded by the letter 'A', as can be seen above (line 4 of the transcription). Auerbach is incorrect in his attribution of this line to Eve, which is

unfortunate since part of his argument depends upon Eve's having asked this question.<sup>2</sup> Line 283, 'Il te ferra changer saver', is also Adam's line. Although there is no 'A' in the manuscript to indicate this, the 'E' before before Eve's 'Nel fra pas...' (see line 6 of the transcription above) would not need to be there had the previous phrase not been intended for the character of Adam. Sletsjöe suggests that the missing 'A' was written in the margins of the parchment and was thus lost when the manuscript was bound.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Auerbach describes Eve's supposed question as 'the sort of question which has been asked a thousand times... by naïve, impetuous people who are governed by their instincts'. This is part of his argument that the Anglo-Norman Eve is distinguished principally by 'unreflectingly sinful curiosity'; see *Mimesis*, pp. 145-47.

<sup>3</sup> *Mystère d'Adam* ed. Sletsjöe, p. 86.



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