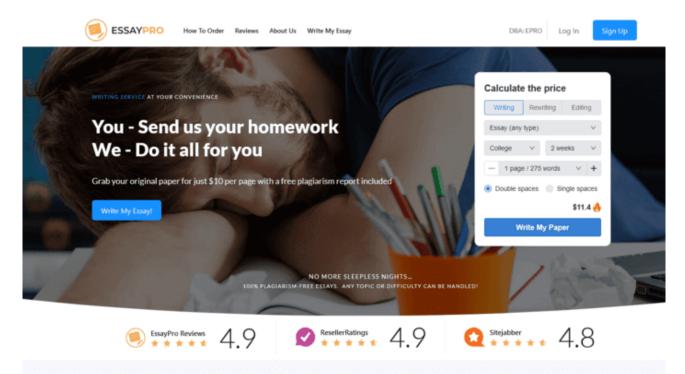
Portrayal of Eve in John Milton's Paradise Lost



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Milton's Portrayal of Eve in Paradise Lost

The seventeenth century poet, John Milton, takes the attitude common to the time period while portraying Eve in Paradise Lost. This epic, telling of Adam and Eve's fall from Paradise and the story of creation, constantly describes Eve as a weak individual, while Adam is often compared with God. The idea of women's inferiority has been fixed through time, making Milton's characterization of Eve not surprising, but rather expected and accepted. However, Milton shows a suggestion of women's inner strength while describing the control Eve has over Adam. Nevertheless, except for this instance, Eve is depicted as subordinate to Adam. This is evident through Adam and Raphael's treatment of Eve, her own actions, and Milton's description of her.

The first weakness Eve shows is her vanity. Following her creation, she finds herself staring into a stagnant pool. She tells Adam, "There I had fixed Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire" (IV 465-6). From the beginning of Eve's life in Paradise, it was understood that she needed Adam to guide her. During her first talk with him, she whimpers, "And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh, And without whom am to no end, my guide And head!" (IV 441-3). Thus, she believes that only with Adam's guidance

will she be able ...

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