The Outcry of Aemelia Lanyer

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Introduction

The outcry of Aemelia Lanyer presented in the Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum is against how the English belief system enslaves women. Knowledge, power, women, and freedom are the matters dealt with in the poem. Subversive statements and flattery techniques about women are used by Lanyer to make sure her work is preserved for many generations and gets support from the female audience. The Christ Passion is the central theme in the Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum poem. However, the sin of eating the forbidden fruit in "Eve's Apology" is described from a feminist perspective by Lanyer. The paper aims to depict the evolutionary messages portrayed in Lanyer's work based on the reinterpretation of the Genesis story. The essay's objective is achieved through proper examination and reflection on excerpts and structures in the poem.

There are many non-traditional ideas about the roles of women and religion in the Deus Rex Judaeorum. The Genesis story is portrayed in the light of feminism according to the "Eve's Apology" argument. Eve, as portrayed in Lanyer's work, is different from Eve in classical Biblical scriptures. She is Adam's good gift from God but not the wanton or seductive woman. Eve's mandate is to listen, obey, and ensure Adam is happy since she does not have the same power as Adam. The earth's Lord and King was Adam. During creation, Adam was superior to Eve. According to Lanyer, "what weakness offered, strength might have refused/being Lord of all" further exemplifies Adam's superiority. The biblical Genesis story is misunderstood since Eve has a "harmless heart" and is "simply good," as stated by Lanyer. Adam should have realized that the fruit from the Knowledge Tree should never be eaten since he had all knowledge; therefore, society should not paint Eve as a sinner.

All wrongdoings are not centered on Eve since Adam had been warned about the Knowledge Tree before Eve was created. Adam should have shared the knowledge about the Tree of Knowledge with Eve, which is an argument that Eve can use to defend herself because Adam controls her. Eve is unable to understand the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit because she cannot recognize the consequences. Eve listened to the serpent since Adam never shared the knowledge. All these could have been overcome since Eve was interested in the knowledge that was harbored by Adam. Furthermore, the sin committed by Eve was motivated by knowledge, not spite or evil.

The promise of equality and knowledge, the same as that of God, was the trick the serpent used, not wicked words. The reason Eve was pushed into evil actions was to gain knowledge, not because of

empty words. Eve had less knowledge than Adam; thus, she was not sure that it was a sin. The acts of Eve are less heinous and explicable, and for those reasons, they are defensible. According to Lanyer, the sin committed by Eve was for the sake of knowledge but not intentionally; hence, knowledge was the main reason that Eve ate the fruit (Poetry Foundation, n.d.).

The literary work Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum shows the issue of knowledge. Adam is portrayed as the creature who is given knowledge and one who keeps his knowledge to himself, while Eve is depicted as one who will try by all means to gain and share her knowledge. Adam and the Lord were supposed to be Eve's guardians, but Adam's being ill-equipped made him relinquish the responsibility by agreeing to eat the fruit when Eve convinced him. It shows without doubt that Adam was aware of what he was doing. "If Eve did erre, it was for knowledge's sake." Adam shows both cunning and disobedience to God at the same time by eating the fruit Eve gave him. The desire to gain forbidden knowledge made him choose to eat the fruit. Evidence of the difference between malice and ignorance is present when Adam's motivation to eat the forbidden fruit is considered (Lanyer, A., 1611).

Adam is the one who received the instruction that it was prohibited to eat the apple. Furthermore, Adam knew the meaning of the apple before the creation of Eve, and this implicates him further. Therefore, Adam should have advised Eve to stay away from the forbidden fruit since he knew the tree before Eve came to life. Adam disobeyed God and failed the task given to him twice because he allowed Eve to eat from the forbidden tree and even allowed himself to be swayed to do the same thing. The poem points out that Eve has been wrongly blamed for Adam's inability to refuse to eat the forbidden fruit. After all, he was supposed to guide Eve and not the other way around. Adam knows very well that eating the fruit will have grave consequences, and the action is punishable.

The points of responsibility and motive are the basis that Lanyer uses to defend Eve. Lanyer's poem illustrates that the reasons that made Eve eat the fruit are pure and that she should not be deemed responsible for the fall of all humankind. The poem points out that Eve does not purposely cause Adam's fall or try to sin. The new perspective Lanyer gave Eve shifts the culpability discussion to Adam. It is clear that Adam eats an apple for his own sake since Eve eats the fruit for Adam's sake. The selfish acts of Adam show that Eve sinned without being aware of the consequences and because of her love for Adam. However, Adam followed in Eve's footsteps and committed selfish acts.

Lanyer disagrees with the fact that men still subordinate women. Men still see themselves as the masters of women after all she endures and all Adam puts Eve through. No woman has come out before to defend Eve and her actions, making it possible for men to view women as their subjects. The poem shows how men interpret the Bible easily and use the interpretation to enslave women under the guise of religion. Men do not see the hypocrisy of Adam's actions, and they view women as unequal to them. According to Lanyer, it is irrational for men to be viewed as superior if Adam allowed Eve to tell him what to do. Lanyer demands that women should be treated as equal to men and not as their second-best.

Conclusion

The work of Lanyer provides a revolutionary way that women can use to argue against patriarchy. The arguments in the poem should be made a crucial part of feminist discourse. Lanyer's points are still as relevant as they were during her time. The poem reveals several revolutionary messages, such as the issue of knowledge in Eve's act, disagreements on the fact that men still subordinate women, and the feminist light of the Genesis story (Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.).

References

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