**The Children of Eve**

**Cain and Abel**

    1 Adam[[a](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-81a)] made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.[[b](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-81b)] She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth[[c](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-81c)] a man.” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

   Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

   6 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

   8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”[[d](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-88d)] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

   9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

   “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

   10 The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

   13 Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

   15 But the LORD said to him, “Not so[[e](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-95e)]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,[[f](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Genesis+4%3A1-16&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1" \l "fen-NIV-96f" \o "Go to)] east of Eden.

**The Child of Mary**

**The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

    26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

   29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

   34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

   35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[[a](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Luke+1%3A26-38&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-24929a)] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.”

   38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

**Mary’s Man**

**Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son**

    18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[[a](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Matthew+1%3A18-25&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-23163a)]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[[b](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Matthew+1%3A18-25&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-23164b)] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

   20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[[c](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Matthew+1%3A18-25&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1" \l "fen-NIV-23166c" \o "Go to)] because he will save his people from their sins.”

   22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”[[d](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Matthew+1%3A18-25&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1" \l "fen-NIV-23168d" \o "Go to)] (which means “God with us”).

   24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

**Mary’s Child**

**The Birth of Jesus**

    1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while[[a](http://www.biblica.com/bibles/chapter/?verse=Luke+2%3A1-20&versesearchform%5Bsearch_type%5D=v&version=niv&versesearchform%5Bmatch_type%5D=all&versesearchform%5Bsorting%5D=bookorder&versesearchform%5Bpage%5D=1#fen-NIV-24976a)] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

   4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

   8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

   13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

   14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
   and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

   15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

   16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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| **The Curse of Eve: A Jewish Perspective on Women in Society**By [Tova Bernbaum](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/4494/jewish/Tova-Bernbaum.htm)http://w2.chabad.org/images/global/spacer.gif |
| Fighting for equality can be a depressing sport at times. No matter how many women advance to positions of power, and in spite of all those progressive action flicks out to prove that scantily-clad blondes can karate chop and headbutt just as well as the men, there is still a grave imbalance in this world. This is the 21st century - we have instantaneous communication, XM radio, and G-d's gift to the cinephile, the DVD - yet women in this country are paid less than men for doing the same job, while women in other countries are currently being beaten, tortured, and imprisoned unjustly, all with the sanction of their governments and communities.Of course, just as my DVD player sometimes freezes up and crashes, the promises of social progress don't always pan out in reality. When I consider the injustices women have suffered throughout history and the battles still being fought today in regions such as Africa and the Middle East, I feel like there must be something about sexism that defies logical explanation. Technology and modernism advertise the promise of enlightenment, yet gender discrimination lingers on, as if the quality of unfairness is so ingrained in humankind that its elimination seems all but impossible.It's a defeatist thought, I realize, but not entirely unfounded. There *is* a primordial aspect to the struggle for equality, as we will read in this week's Torah reading of *Bereishit* (Genesis 1-6). It's been almost 6,000 years since Adam and Eve defied G-d and ate from the Tree of Knowledge on what was their first day in existence, yet their story still has an uncanny influence on gender politics. The image of woman as evil temptress persists to this day, and not just in the religious sphere. Eve is an oft-employed motif in art, literature and music. Though in modern times, she is portrayed less as the negative feminine influence and more like a symbol of the bridge between innocence and experience, her story still remains lodged in society's subconscious. Every time a woman is faulted for leading a man to evil thoughts or behavior, we are harking back to the era of Eden. The offensive notion that a woman can provoke rape or molestation by the way she looks is also a byproduct of this mentality. Interestingly, this portrayal of Eve as an icon of feminine deceit is featured more in Christian liturgy than in Jewish works, which may be linked to Judaism's divergent interpretation of the Original Sin. According to the Torah, the story of Adam and Eve is far more complex than a simple "she led him to sin" tale. Our sages explain that G-d commanded Adam not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and to relay the message to his wife. However, rather than entrusting Eve with G-d's exact commandment, Adam informed her that they were forbidden to *touch* the tree. He intended the addition as a safeguard, but the misinformation made Eve vulnerable to the trickery of the snake, who enticed her into sin by first proving that nothing bad will happen if she merely touches the tree. Thus, the birth of sin was not just the story of a seductive woman luring man into evil; it's also the world's first male-female miscommunication, laying the ground work for many, many more to come. (This mistake was later rectified when, prior to the giving of the Torah, G-d commanded Moses to teach the laws to the women first.)But even if you reconcile the issue by placing equal blame, there is still the matter of the curses. Adam and Eve both received punishments for their transgression, affecting all men and women of future generations, but Eve's curses included the added shame of subordination. G-d said "And he shall dominate you," and I would be lying if I didn't admit that every time I hear that line I want to declare myself a heathen. But even more troubling than the curse itself is the way I've seen it used to justify maintaining the status quo of male dominance. Mostly, I hear the argument from men, but some women are affected by this mentality, too. They contend that sexism is woven into the fabric of creation, as if existence itself would somehow unravel if we were to end gender inequality.Not only are these women suffering from a kind of slave mentality, they are also overlooking a simple truth: a curse is not a positive or desirable condition. In fact, describing something as a "curse" means just the opposite -- that this is *not* the way things ought to be. Nor does the fact that G-d is the author of a curse imply that G-d wants us to accept it as a fact of life -- at least not in the Jewish tradition, it doesn't. The Jewish people, for example, were punished to wander throughout history as strangers in a strange land, but we certainly didn't expel ourselves from various countries just to fulfill this punishment. In fact, we believe that G-d wants us to do everything in our power to get *out* of exile.Yes, G-d relegated Eve to a lesser social status and said that she'll endure painful childbirth, but that does not imply a divine commandment to accept less pay for the same work, or refuse epidurals. G-d said that this is a curse -- something negative, reflecting the negative change that occurred in creation with the first sin. In other words, something to change.Fighting inequality, arguing your point, revolting against the old guard -- this is the stuff Judaism is made of. G-d doesn't want a nation who will take its curses lying down. If He did, He wouldn't have chosen the Jews. |

# Eve's Legacy: Burden of Blame

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By Mary E. Hunt

The issues for women in a media world have a long history.

Long before there was advertising to objectify women's bodies to sell liquor; long before there were sitcoms to trivialize women's lives; long before there were movies to stereotype women as lusty, jealous bimbos who suspect other women of capital offenses; long before there were magazine covers, soft and hard porn and comic books to make little girls grow up thinking that being curvacious, slender and blonde will make them happy, there was Eve.

If Eve had not appeared in the Bible, patriarchal society would have created her. She could have been called Penelope. The point is that some one had to take the blame for society's lesser side. And in a male-dominated world, guess who?

The image of Eve is still a powerful reminder of innocent times when women and men roamed a mythic garden in search of knowledge. But society's all time scapegoat has become the model, and excuse, for woman-as-temptress, seductress or marriage-breaker.

In western Christian thought, Eve was summarily replaced by Mary, the virgin most pure, who would not have eaten the apple if she had been starving to death. Over the centuries, she came to stand for willful Eve's "other" side: woman as obedient, docile, submissive, modest, quiet.

The problem with Eve, Mary and the rest of the idealized, and often vilified, women of myth and history is that they live on in the fertile imaginations of script writers, photographers and advertising creators, both women and men. What to do?

One is to recognize dualistic images of women for what they are: simplistic cliches. We must all become familiar with media programs and advertising messages and in classes and counseling, in preaching and teaching, name how pop-culture images are inadequate and insufficient for expressing the potential of women's full humanity.

Secondly, we can work to expand opportunities for women in every sphere of the real world so that cliches and stereotypes no longer hold any power. Whether that's insisting on the inclusion of 50 percent women on all Boards of Directors or providing scholarships for older women to finish college, we must use whatever positions of influence we have in today's world to exonerate Eve -- and all of her sisters down through the centuries.

**EXPLORING THE VIRGIN WHORE DICHOTOMY**

By Erica West

When Kesha, the popstar famous for her party anthem radio hits, released an album of acoustic songs the general reaction was a pleasant surprise. You can hear the range of her voice without auto-tune and lots of people were shocked that she could “actually” sing. When these songs were released I was happy to see her getting recognition for her talent, but confused as to why said talent came as such a surprise. True, these songs are a change of pace musically, but since when did a slower tempo correlate to an increase in talent? Besides, if you’ve been paying attention you would know she was always talented. Say what you want about the current state of pop music, but most of the pop stars that rise to fame are truly talented. Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, and Kesha are just some examples. These women have great voices, are great songwriters and talented musicians—for Katy Perry, it’s the guitar, Lady Gaga the piano, for Kesha, it’s both. Listen to any of their albums and in addition to their upbeat party anthems you’ll find some [beautiful songs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4r76dWuH_o) that [showcase](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cq-sC82IVQw) their [talents](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsybPJfD3ZM). So I found myself asking again, why the shock? I realized that in addition to talent, what these women have in common is the way in which they showcase their sexuality.

More famous than their music is the way these women dress and present themselves. Kesha’s look, with her glitter, feathers and faux hawk, is constantly described as ‘trashy’ and her mere presence on the Billboard charts is used by some as proof of the downfall of music. Katy Perry’s penchant for candy and cupcake themed clothing is disregarded as silly, even stupid, and Lady Gaga is notorious for her outrageous fashion choices, a fact that often overshadows her music. For all these women, their sexuality is intertwined with their style, and while their choices are not made in a vacuum, it’s clear that to some extent they are exerting their own agency and are choosing to present their sexuality in an unapologetic and empowering way. Not surprisingly, it seems that the sexuality of these women somehow renders their talent null and void. It’s also reflective of the misogynistic  *virgin/whore dichotomy* that exists as a trope in our culture.

In psychology, this concept is referred to as the [Maddona-whore complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna%E2%80%93whore_complex). Coined by the father of psychology, Sigmund Freud, the Maddona-whore complex refers to men who cannot be sexually attracted to a woman who is “respectable” and “good”—the Madonna—and yet cannot respect a woman who is sexual—the whore. Freud’s theorized that this inability to mix sex and love caused anxiety in many men. The phrase “virgin whore dichotomy” expands on Freud’s idea and is often used in feminist media critiques and refers to the way women are portrayed and treated in media. If Kesha is the “whore” of pop music, then the “virgin” is undoubtedly Taylor Swift.  A blonde hair, blue eyed country girl, she embodies our society’s ideals of purity. Swift also perpetuates this virgin/whore dichotomy and places herself firmly on the virgin side with lyrics like, “she wears short skirts, I wear t-shirts.” By treating these identities as mutually exclusive, the virgin/whore dichotomy limits a woman’s sexuality and worse, always leave women lacking.  If these a woman is sexual, empowered, and unapologetic then she cannot be talented, smart, or “classy”. If she is soft, sweet, and “good” then she cannot be outgoing, loud or autonomous. They must be one or the other—the virgin or the whore—and when women do not fit neatly into one category it is met with confusion. This is why it is so hard for people to believe Kesha sings about day drinking and is also a [literal genius](http://www.theprophetblog.net/keha-talks-to-seventeen-about-being-misunderstood-her-album-and-more/).

The reactions make these expectations clear: She is a sexualized pop star, and the idea that she could be anything else, even something she already is (a talented, intelligent woman) is shocking. It’s sad and frustrating to witness, especially when the largest consumers and witnesses to this virgin/whore dichotomy are young girls. They quickly learn that they must choose a side and stick with it. Each side thinks the other is inherently ‘wrong,’ as if there is any ‘right’ way to be a woman. It’s a game we’ve all played, and a game in which all women lose. As Ally Sheedy so aptly put it in *The Breakfast Club*:

*Well, if you say you haven’t, you’re a prude. If you say you have you’re a slut. It’s a trap.*

It was relevant in 1916 when Freud first conceptualized the Madonna-whore complex and it’s relevant in 2014. We need to start allowing women and girls to be the complex, deep, sometimes sexual, sometimes talented, always wonderful people they are. Not virgins or whores, but people.

**Mary Versus Eve: Paternal Uncertainty and the Christian View of Women**

By Vladimir Tumanov, Western University

**Abstract**

The Virgin Mary and Eve constitute two opposite sexual poles in the way Christian discourse has approached women since the time of the church fathers. This stems from a predicament faced by the human male throughout hominid evolution, namely, paternal uncertainty. Because the male is potentially always at risk of unwittingly raising the offspring of another male, two (often complementary) male sexual strategies have evolved to counter this genetic threat: mate guarding and promiscuity. The Virgin Mary is the mythological expression of the mate guarding strategy. Mary is an eternal virgin, symbolically allaying all fear of paternal uncertainty. Mary makes it possible for the male psyche to have its reproductive cake and eat it too: she gives birth (so reproduction takes place) and yet requires no mate guarding effort or jealousy. Eve, the inventor of female sexuality, is repeatedly viewed by the church fathers, e.g., Augustine and Origen, as Mary's opposite. Thus, Eve becomes the embodiment of the whore: both attractive in the context of the promiscuity strategy and repulsive in terms of paternal uncertainty: "Death by Eve, life by Mary" (St. Jerome). The Mary-Eve dichotomy has given a conceptual basis to what is known in psychology as the Madonna-Whore dichotomy: the tendency to categorize women in terms of two polar opposites.

**Introduction**

Much of the discourse in the relatively new field of Evolutionary Psychology is based on a simple premise, namely, that the reproductive strategies, pitfalls and fears of human males and females are different because the female always knows that her genes are being passed on into the next generation while the male can never be absolutely sure. As Donald Symons (1979) puts it, extra-pair mating is a far greater threat to males than to females because "a man never can be certain of paternity, [i.e.], a cuckold risks investing in the offspring of [...] a reproductive competitor; as a woman is always certain of maternity [...], a wife may risk little if her husband engages in extramarital sex" (241). In other words, while the female in the prehistoric or ancestral environment risked at most being abandoned by her mate (which could have reduced the survival prospects of existing offspring but did not necessary spell its doom), the cuckolded male risked genetic extinction pure and simple. Therefore, male feelings and associated behaviors aimed at increasing the likelihood of raising one's own offspring were selected for in the evolution of the hominid species while the opposite was not. One such feeling is male anxiety stemming from *paternal uncertainty.*

**Jealous Man**

The male's evolutionary reaction to the above-mentioned state of perpetual paternal uncertainty consists of two strategies: a) promiscuity which allows the male to maximize his chances of reproduction by seeking as many partners as possible (cf. Brown and Amatea 200: 293; Riddley, 2003: 179) Mary Versus Eve Vladimir Tumanov Neophilologus (2011) 95: 507-521 4 and b) mate guarding whereby the male seeks to reduce the chances of extrapair mating on the part of the female. Mate guarding expresses itself in "veiling, chaperoning, purdah, and the literal incarceration of women [which] are common social institutions of patrilineal societies [...] The repeated convergent invention of claustration practices around the world and the confining and controlling behavior of men even where it is frowned upon reflect the workings of a sexually proprietary male psychology" (Wilson and Daly 1992: 301). As for the feelings which have evolved to provoke the behavior of mate guarding, jealousy is the key emotional engine. David Buss talks of the *jealousy bias* that is hard-wired into the male psyche by thousands of years of selection pressure: "In the context of jealousy and mate guarding, it is reasonable to hypothesize that it would be more costly for a person to err by failing to detect a partner’s infidelity than to erroneously infer an infidelity that has not occurred. A condition that likely facilitated the evolution of a 'jealousy bias' that functioned to over-infer infidelity is the great uncertainty that surrounds the detection of infidelity" (2002: 27; cf. Buss, 2000: 7). Buss (2002) refers to this propensity as the

*Othello Syndrome* and cites numerous cross-cultural studies which make it clear that this is not merely a culturally-determined phenomenon — contrary to claims made by early twentieth-century anthropologists like Margaret Mead (Riddley, 1996: 256-7). Furthermore, that the jealousy bias associated with paternal uncertainty is not just a figment of the male imagination is corroborated by blood sample studies of various population groups in different parts of the world. The conclusion is that typically up to 10 per cent of children are the result of "paternal discrepancy" in many societies, i.e., they are not the progeny of men who assume to be their fathers (Mollon, 2002: 121; cf. Bellis et al., 2005: 750 and Baker, 2006: 146).

**The Virgin and the Whore: Mary and Eve in Renaissance Art**

By Melissa Huang

Chances are, most of us have encountered the Virgin/Whore dichotomy. It’s the idea that women conform to two archetypes: the pure, nice girl that you take home to your mother as compared to the dangerous, sexually aggressive woman. We see this a lot in popular culture; Taylor Swift as compared to Kesha, Disney stars making the transformation from purity ring holding sweetheart to Hollywood wild child (Most often accomplished by posing in Maxim and taking on a string of roles playing rebellious characters. This example is really perfect because it’s a transformation restricted to young women; Britney Spears, Miley Cyrus, and Demi Lovato’s actions are carefully policed while Zac Efron and the Jonas Brothers’ are not), basically every teen movie known to mankind where the cute band nerd wins the affections of the bitchy cheerleader’s bland yet generically attractive boyfriend, and so on. There are too many examples to list.

But let’s go back in time. Back to the original virgin and the original whore.

Eve and the Virgin Mary are often paired within Renaissance artwork. They represent Christian thoughts on the roles of women in the church; one serving as a warning and one as an ideal. A great example is Carlo da Camerino’s altarpiece, *The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve*, in which the Virgin Mary sits with the Christ child, beautiful, kind, and humble; a role model for all good women of the church. Below Mary, however, lies Eve with the serpent; largely nude and lascivious as the serpent (feminized!) emerges from between her legs. Fur is wrapped around her hips, a symbol of lust.

In the church Eve is seen as dangerous because she disobeyed the word of God and led her husband into sin. She is seen as disobedient, and therefore a danger to the church’s structure in which women are helpmeets to their husbands, mothers to sons, and little else. The Virgin Mary, however, is the church’s ideal woman. A virgin, yet miraculously a mother, Mary is the impossible embodiment of Christianity’s conflicting ideas of what a woman should be. She resides within the church’s preferred realm of a nonsexual woman who does the bidding of her God and of her husband; obedient and therefore safe. Works linking these two women are typological in nature, requiring the viewer to link Eve and Mary together as the vehicle for mankind’s fall and for mankind’s salvation. Camerino’s work, as an altarpiece, is meant to police the behavior of men and women of the church into turning away from the actions of Eve and towards those of Mary.

The focus upon Mary and Eve’s bodies emphasizes the different attitudes towards the two women. Eve’s body is beautiful and sensual and is displayed as an object of lust. She is the embodiment of the era’s physical ideal of beauty with high, firm breasts, small feet and hands, curly blond hair, and delicately colored white and pink skin. She represents temptation at its finest. Mary’s body is clothed and maternal. The little nudity there is in this Madonna lactans is almost absurd in how non-sexual it is, with one bared breast emerging demurely from her collarbone. There is only one, and it serves to feed the young Christ. Eve’s body is for men in that they see her as a sexual object while Mary’s body is for men as a mother.

While one would imagine that depictions of Eve would widely vary throughout Renaissance Christian denominations, particularly between Catholics and Protestants, they largely did not. Although the equation of nakedness with sin was more common amongst Protestants than Catholics, religion was not the main reason for this association. Rather, southern artists were working within a stronger classical tradition while northern artists were not. Therefore, northern artists were more likely to view nudity, specifically female nudity, as taboo, while southern artists viewed nudity as part of their great classical tradition. Following the reformation Europe had a north/south split between Protestants and Catholics, and artists of both denominations drew information from their surroundings. There are examples of artists crossing the line of nudity as a taboo and as a classical tradition, such as the Catholic artists Van Eyck and van der Goes, who both used the “Protestant” technique of emphasizing fleshly sins in their depictions of Eve.

More damning in their depiction of Eve were artists influenced by the cult of the Virgin Mary, venerating Mary while painting Eve as a temptress and sinner. An example would be Jan van Eyck’s *Lucca Madonna*, in which the Virgin Mary nurses Christ upon her lap—once again with an oddly placed, singular, non-sexual breast—with a humble, loving look upon her face. Although Mary is regally dressed and bejeweled upon a throne she is in a domestic setting, which highlights her humility and piety. Eve is not physically represented in this painting, but is clearly referenced by the small fruit Christ holds between his mother’s body and his own. The cult of the Virgin viewed Mary and Eve as opposites; one obedient and one not, one orderly and one disorderly, one a virgin and one a whore.