

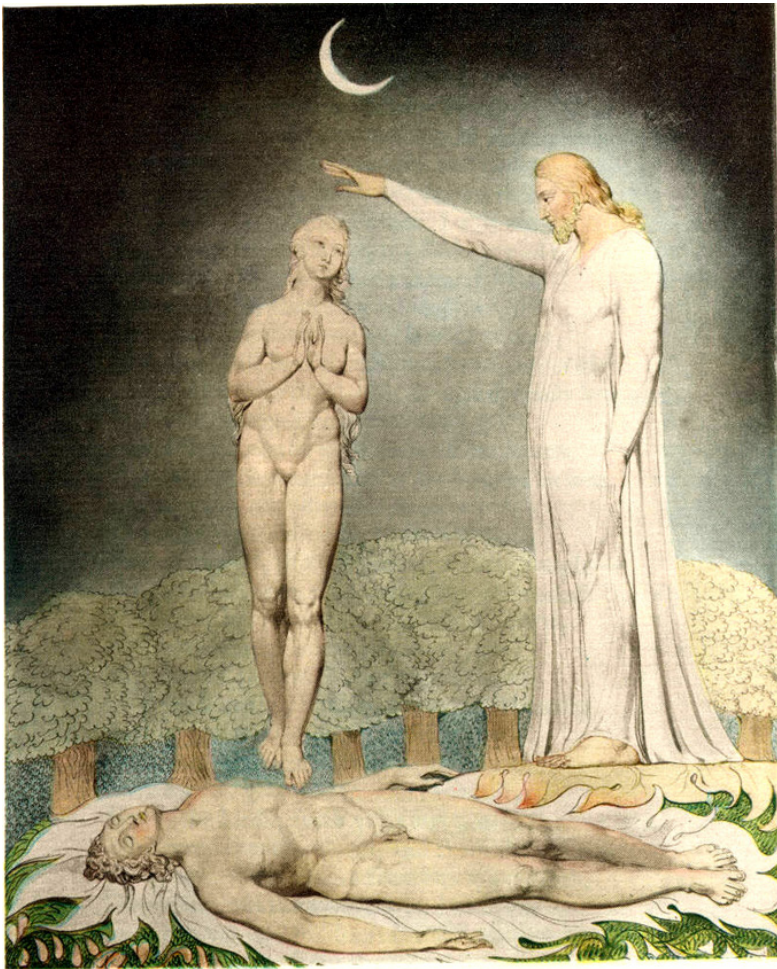
Reclaiming the symbols

Image

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ulin/Paradise/Blake1808.htm>

Image 1 of eve

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ulin/Paradise/images/PL08.jpg>

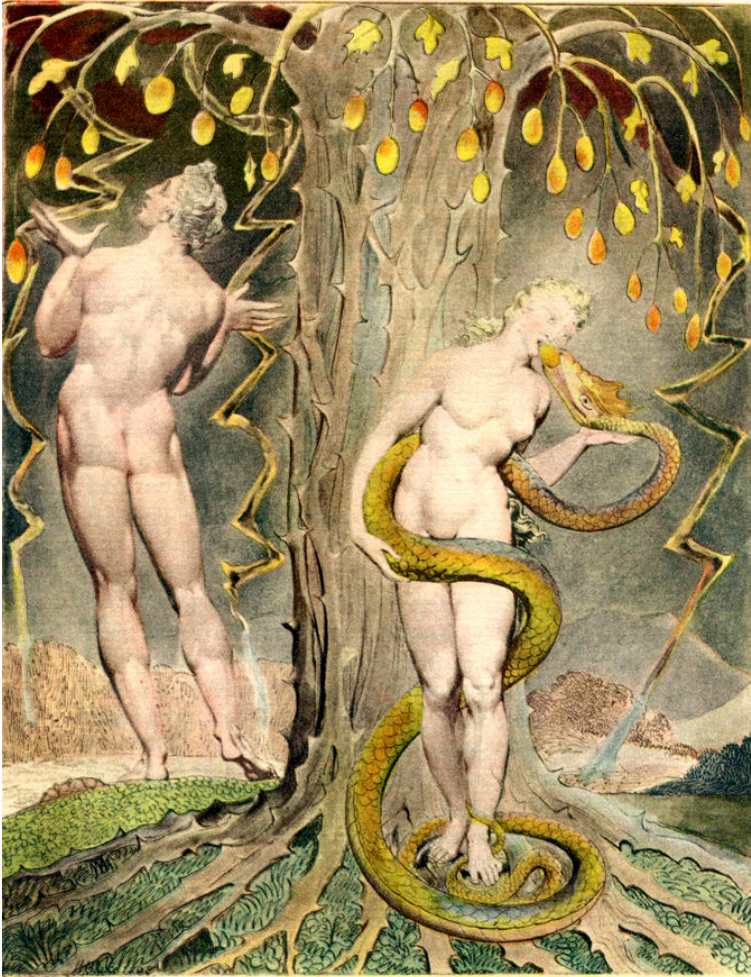


THE CREATION OF EVE

*Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean*

Image 2

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ulin/Paradise/images/PL09.jpg>



THE TEMPTATION OF EVE

*So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat*

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/myth.asp>

The Voice of the Shuttle''

What the Allusion Means

(The cross-weave of interior hyperlinks on this page is designed to provide an interlinear commentary--a commentary with no voice other than the pattern of the links themselves. Note: there is no "Back to Voice of the Shuttle Home Page" link here; instead one of the links in the quotations--the obvious one--serves that function.)

The Myth

She aroused both his fury and his fear. He seized her and [cut out her tongue](#). Then he left her in a strongly [guarded place](#) and went to Procne with a story that Philomela had died on the journey.

Philomela's case looked hopeless. She was [shut up](#); she could not speak; in those days there was no [writing](#). It seemed that Tereus was safe. However, although people then could not write, they could tell a story without [speaking](#) because they were marvelous craftsmen, such as have never been known since. . . . Philomela accordingly turned to her loom. She had a greater motive to make clear the story she wove than any artist ever had. With infinite pains and surpassing skill she produced a wondrous [tapestry](#) on which the whole account of her wrongs was unfolded. She gave it to the old woman who attended her and [signified](#) that it was for the Queen.

Proud of bearing so beautiful a gift the aged creature carried it to Procne, who was still wearing deep mourning for her sister and whose spirit was as mournful as her garments. She unrolled the [web](#). There she saw Philomela, her very face and form, and Tereus equally unmistakable. With horror she read what had happened, all as plain to her as if in print.

Edith Hamilton, Mythology (Signet, 1969), pp. 270-71

The Poetry

And now the voyage ended, and the vessel
Was worn from travel, and they came stepping down
To their own shores, and Tereus dragged her with him
To the deep woods, to some ramshackle building
Dark in that darkness, and he [shut her in there](#),
Pale, trembling, fearing everything, and asking
"Where was her sister?" And he told her then
What he was going to do, and straightway did [it](#),
[Raped her](#), a virgin all alone, and calling
For her father, for her sister, but most often
For the great gods. In vain. . . .

But Tereus did not kill her; he seized her tongue
With pincers, though it [cried](#) against the outrage,
Babbled and made a sound something like "Father,"
Till the sword [cut it off](#). The mangled root
Quivered, the severed tongue along the ground
Lay quivering, making a little [murmur](#),
Jerking and twitching, the way a serpent does
Run over by a wheel, and with [its](#) dying movement

Came to its mistress' feet. . . .

And a year went by
And what of Philomela? [Guarded against flight](#),
Stone blocks around her cottage, no [power of speech](#)
To help her tell her wrongs, her grief has taught her
Sharpness of [wit](#), and cunning comes in trouble.
She had a loom to work with, and with purple
On a white background, wove her story in,
Her story in and out, and when [it](#) was finished,
Gave it to one old woman, with [signs and gestures](#)
To take it to the queen, so [it](#) was taken,
Unrolled and understood. Procne said nothing--
What could she say?--grief choked her [utterance](#),
Passion her sense of outrage. . . .

Ovid, Metamorphosis, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Indiana Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 146-48

T wit wit [twit](#)
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely [forc'd](#).
Tereu

T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land

The Theory

Aristotle, in the *Poetics* (16.4), records a striking phrase from a play by Sophocles, since lost, on the theme of Tereus and Philomela. As you know, Tereus, having raped Philomela, [cut out her tongue](#) to prevent discovery. But she weaves a [tell-tale](#) account of her violation into a tapestry (or robe) which Sophocles calls "the voice of the shuttle." If metaphors as well as plots or myths could be archetypal, I would nominate Sophocles' voice of the shuttle for that distinction. . . .

There is always something that violates us, deprives our [voice](#), and compells art toward an aesthetics of silence. "Les yeux seuls sont encore capable de pousser un cri," writes Char about his experiences in the second World War. And Nelly Sachs, alluding to the suffering of her people: "Wailing Wall Night / Carved in you are the psalms of silence."

Geoffrey H. Hartman, "The Voice of Shuttle: Language From the Point of View of Literature," in his Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays, 1958-1970 (Yale Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 337, 353

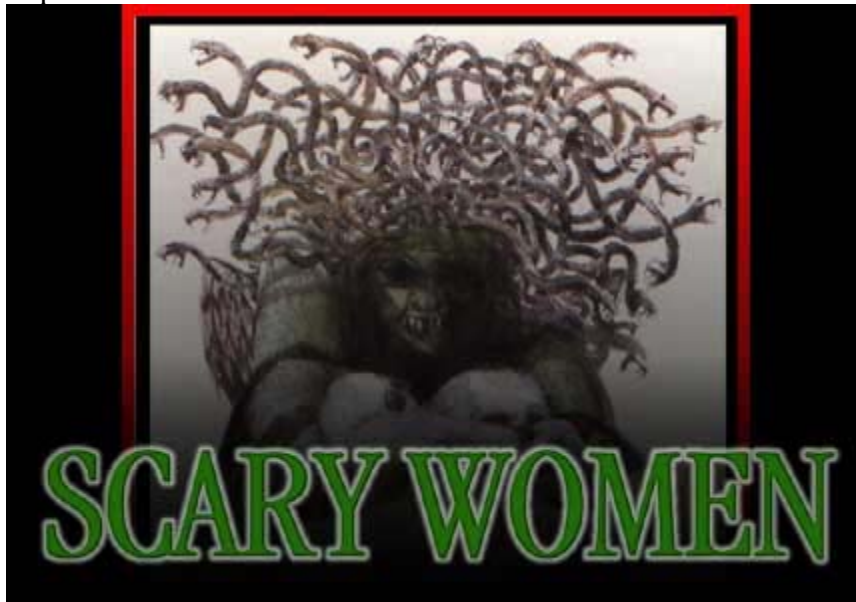
When Philomela imagines herself free to tell her own tale to anyone who will listen, Tereus realizes for the first time what would come to light, should the woman's voice become public. In private, [force](#) is sufficient. In public, however,

Philomela's voice, if heard, would make them equal. [Enforced silence](#) and imprisonment are the means Tereus chooses to protect himself from discovery. But as the mythic tale, Tereus' plot, and Ovid's own text make clear, dominance can only contain, but never successfully destroy, the woman's voice. . . .

When Philomela begins to weave over the long year of her [imprisonment](#), it is not only her suffering but a specific motive that gives rise to her new use of the loom: to [speak](#) to and be heard by her sister. As an instrument that binds and connects, the loom, or its part, the shuttle, re-members or mends [what violence tears apart](#): the bond between the sisters, the woman's power to speak, a form of community and communication. War and weaving are antithetical not because when women are weaving we are in our right place, but because all of the truly generative activities of human life are born of order and give rise to order. But just as Philomela can weave any number of patterns on her loom, culture need not retain [one fixed structure](#)."

Patricia Klindienst, ["The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours,"](#) *Stanford Literature Review* 1 (1984), pp. 31, 51

<http://www.cinema.ucla.edu/women/>





<http://www.christusrex.org/www2/art/images/pontormo02.jpg>

Jacopo Carrucci (detto il Pontormo) 1494-1556

Pontormo

Annunciazione della Vergine - Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Detail)

Church of Santa Felicita, Cappella Capponi Florence

