

Mark Twain's *Eve's Diary*: A Neural Perspective of a 'She'

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Abstract: Men and women are wired differently. The study of such differing human behaviour has always been fascinating. With regard to that, looking at Eve and her behaviour – as portrayed by Mark Twain in his *Eve's Diary* – through the lens of science is also interesting. This research seeks to understand the underlying reasons for Eve's actions in Mark Twain's *Eve's Diary*, going beyond simplistic gender stereotypes. Such an analysis of the widely-regarded first woman on Earth is peculiar. This understanding is supported by Allan and Barbara Pease's non-fiction titled *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*. Understanding Eve's behaviour against the backdrop of brain wiring is eye-opening. As the primary focus is on the fictional account of life from the point of view of Eve, this paper is pivoted to the female behaviour and tit-bits of that of males. As a fictional character, Eve's behaviour may not accurately represent the experiences of real women in the past or present. However, her story can offer valuable insights into the complexities of gender roles and human nature.

Key Words: behaviour, brain, hunters, nest-defenders, speech.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Mark Twain's *Eve's Diary* was published as a comic short story with illustrations of Lester Ralph. It is a fictional diary entry of Eve, the widely-believed first woman on earth. The first-person narrative opens up Eve's mind to the readers and one is able to travel through her thoughts. Some of her thoughts lay the road to the ultimate destination of understanding the reason for the existence of such thoughts in the first place. Being not more than a diary entry of Eve herself, this short piece holds many instances that shows that Eve could not help but behave so. Instead of seeing the *Diary* as a humorous account and jumping into conclusions that Eve was doing nothing but whiling away her time in the Garden, one can study the psychological experiences of women, though it's important to acknowledge the limitations of using a fictional character as a representative. The *Extracts from Adam's Diary* included in between facilitates the understanding of that of men, and yet not completely. Only some prominent characteristics of men and women are brought to limelight in the backdrop of science in this paper.

Allan and Barbara Pease's non-fiction book, titled '*Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*,' simplifies the science behind why men and women behave differently. The book is a result of in-depth research carried out for three years on this topic. It illustrates the way in which men and women's brains are wired differently. The various real-life accounts added with fictional instances make this book enlightening.

2. EVE UNVEILED: THE SCIENCE BEHIND HER THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

Eve begins her first account at a time that seems very shocking: "I am almost a whole day old, now" (Twain, 2004). Though this is a next to impossible activity, readers might activate their willing suspension of disbelief as given by Coleridge. However, the way in which the account commences brings one to the phenomenon of girls beginning to speak early than boys. Not only do women speak early, they also speak more. In her initial accounts, Eve had many questions with regard to her existence. After meeting Adam, the first man, her questions were to which species did *it* (Adam) belong to and does *it* not have any heart to harm the fishes in the pond. In that way, she gives her thoughts a voice and speaks out loud even when there is no one to listen to her. But she made it clear when she said: "I love to talk; I talk, all day..." (Twain, 2004). Going through the Pease couple's findings, one can conclude that occurrence is due to the fact that a woman's brain is not "highly compartmentalised" (Pease, 2018, p.80) as that of a man. Hence, she clears off her mind through the act of speaking up, most of the time with no intention of getting a solution as a reply.

The reason behind women being good speakers is the ability of speech being present on both hemispheres of their brains. A woman speaks when she is in the midst of a problem or in a dilemma or is stressed or when she is happy or when she is sad. When she had her “first sorrow” (Twain, 2004) after being avoided by Adam, Eve retired from his presence and went to the pond, whom she considers as her sister. For a woman, to talk is to build relationships. So, when she is feeling depressed, she yearns for a company, and it is no wonder that Eve also chose the same. She felt that presence as “comfort and my refuge” (Twain, 2004).

Women feel rewarded when people talk to them. In order to know one another, they tend to talk with each other and wish others to talk as well. That is why Eve keeps on talking aloud and she even thinks that her sister, the pond, responds to her in times of distress, saying: “Do not be downhearted, you poor friendless girl; I will be your friend” (Twain, 2004). This inner voice in Eve is the straightforward expectation of most of the women. Unfortunately, the other sex is not designed in this way. Male brains are equipped to find a solution right away to a problem, while the female brains tend to vent the frustration first. A more serious problem arises when men try to find a solution to a situation a woman is in. Men see the practical side of things while women see the emotional side. This is so because emotion is spread in both hemispheres for a woman and “can thus operate at the same time as other brain functions” (Pease, 2018, p. 146). But for men, it is less likely to happen. As far as this context is concerned, the distinction between man and woman is as good as the distinction between brain and mind.

Eve, in order to show her anger on Adam, she decides to stay away from him deliberately and waits for him to come; yet, it was all in vain. Adam did not come searching for her. Perhaps he had thought that she is like him, solving her problem, if any, by herself and detesting any interference in that process. Research shows that when a man finds himself in a problem, he might more likely go and play golf or do any activity that stimulates his logic area of the brain so as to find a solution. He does all this without talking as both cannot be done simultaneously by a male brain. On the other hand, which is a world unknown to men, a woman in problem searches for a company to voice the thoughts running in her mind.

Moreover, Eve was sensitive to the slightest changes in her surroundings, like the disappearance of moon which she thought was a theft. When she finds it back in the sky, she is relieved as she notes: “They returned the moon last night...” (Twain, 2004). She does a keen observation of the environment and is alert to its changes. This skill is apparent in women, who have been nest-defenders when men were lunch-chasers. In the initial days, men were hunters who did not stay behind at their homes and it was the women who stayed and looked after the kids and the house. Hunters had their spatial skills and hand-eye coordination intact, while the nest-defenders had to be keen to recognise any slight change in the surrounding and even why the child was crying. This knowledge of deciphering non-verbal communication thus has become innate in women. As they have evolved in this way for thousands of years, it is typical of women to be disturbed by slightest changes in the surroundings.

The Pease couple claim that when a couple enters a room of people, the woman reads the relationship among the people present there with her “superior sensory abilities” (Pease, 2018, p. 28) and the man looks for the exits and entrances of the room, which is no wonder an escape mechanism of a hunter. Not only that, it is an act of looking out for possible attacks in any way. One instance from *Eve's Diary* that best illustrates this is the episode of coming across the Brontosaurus. Eve thinks of taming it “with kind treatment” (Twain, 2004) and Adam realises that the creature will do harm without actually intending to do because of its huge size.

Through the chronicles of the diary, one could grasp the idea that everything was beauty to Eve's eyes. She saw the world around her with an aesthetic sense. She directly addresses even the fire as: “...you are BEAUTIFUL—and that is enough” (Twain, 2004). In *Extract from Adam's Diary*, Adam notes: “...I recognised that she was beautiful” (Twain, 2004). To the woman, the world was beauty; to the man, the woman was. He too was to her, but the only difference lies in the expression. The woman expressed it directly – be it to the man or to a non-living thing – while the man did not. Nevertheless, it is neither *her* luck nor *his* lack. It is *just* evolution.

3. CONCLUSION :

One's awareness of the other is fundamental in fostering societal harmony. And that awareness arises when one understands that things are not in their hands but in their brain-wirings.



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