

JUDITH: LORENA BOBBIT OF YESTERYEAR? A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE BOOK OF JUDITH ACCORDING TO THE CASTRATION COMPLEX

H Efthimiadis-Keith
UNIN

Abstract

In this essay, the text of Judith is analysed broadly in terms of the psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Hudson and Jacot pertaining to the growth and individuation of the male child. The paper begins by providing a summary of the theories employed and then proceeds to test them against the book of Judith. It is the researcher's contention that the book of Judith functions, in toto, as a symbolic representation of the fear of castration and of the 'other' exhibited by the male psyche. In terms of the book in question, this fear manifests itself primarily as power over / war against the 'other', be that in the form of competition, actual war and / or sexual attitudes towards woman as 'the other.'

1. Castration

According to Eugene Monick, *phallos* is the governing symbol of masculinity. It is sacred to men as the manifestation of inner self so that to remove, insult or damage it 'is to remove, damage or insult a man's deepest sense of himself as a male person.' This then is the psychological state of castration (Monick 1991:9-10). But whence the origin of this state, whom does it affect and what are the results thereof? The current article examines possible answers to these questions (not necessarily in the order in which they are posed), and then applies its findings to the book of Judith in the Old Testament Apocrypha. Of particular interest to the author is the way that male-female power relations, patriarchy and misogyny are constituted in terms of castration both within the book of Judith and in the wider spectrum of society. We begin with the origin of castration.¹

1. Judging from the reactions of certain colleagues, it would be best for me to clarify my position regarding the male psyche and men in general. I have absolutely nothing against men, and it would be very unfortunate for the reader to take me up differently. Being female, Greek, and having experienced first-hand the patriarchy of the Greeks and other people around me, I naturally wish to investigate the reasons for this unfair balance of power in the male's favour. This leads me to my interest in psychology, and to combine my studies with the desire to come to the root of the problem presented by patriarchy and, more specifically, the 'why' of it. Freud, Jung, and others have provided me with a 'why' that suffices me for the time being - the problem lies in the hurt and woundedness of a male psyche. That helps me to understand and to have compassion on both the male-dominated society and the women and men in that society that enforce and perpetuate it. It gives me hope that society can be healed of this evil, just as it was of the evil of slavery. Now, I do not believe that all male psyches are wounded. I have encountered some remarkably bold, whole, and wholesome, men in my lifetime. To them and to God I owe the healing of my erstwhile extremely negative attitude towards men. That is why I speak of the *wounded* male psyche - a whole psyche (male or female) would not even need to subjugate, dominate, and control as the wounded, insecure, one does. (I could not find enough in Freud's writings to look at what kind of female psyche allows and perpetuates such a domination; but it is undoubtedly one that is wounded too. One could approach the problem of patriarchy just as well from the point of view of such a wounded female psyche, and I, as a woman, would have no objection to such an approach. I would, on the contrary, encourage it. We can only learn from such approaches and correct what needs correcting in our own psyche and then in the society that surrounds us).

2. The origin of the psychological state of castration

Each theorist has her / his own concept of what castration is and how it originates. Not surprisingly, the first person to propound the theory of psychological castration was the great psychoanalyst, Freud. We will deal with his thoughts on the subject as well as those of Hudson and Jacot as we believe them to be both the most representative in their field and the most complementary.

According to Freud, castration as a male phenomenon takes place in the oedipal period of the male child's life, specifically in the so-called phallic stage (3-6 years)². The boy (who has already discovered his penis and its pleasures through masturbation and has thus felt propelled to become his mother's lover in the pre-oedipal stages, 1-3 years) experiences a steady increase in libidinal / sexual energy³ and begins to vie with his father for his mother's affections. The fate of the division of sexual energy into two gendered bodies confirms his growing sense of himself as a masculine person, conceivably increasing the tension between himself and his father (cf. Freud 1922:60-61 and Freud 1961a:174-175).⁴ On analogy with the tragic Greek play, *Oedipus Rex*, the threatened father asserts his own phallic power by attempting to 'send the son away' from himself and (primarily) the mother through punishment (actual and / or implied). If the son succeeds in defying his father, i.e., if he remains erotically attached to the mother, he will ever remain 'a factor of her domain' (Monick 1991:45) and face 'the death of his masculinity, a reflection of his father's inability to intrude in the mother-son romance' (Monick 1991:44.). If he is to develop as a man, the boy must accept his father's authority and suffer a temporary erotic defeat at his hand; he must suffer the sacrifice of his erotic object (the mother), i.e., he must experience Father-castration (cf. Freud 1961b:31-32). The latency period (6-12 years) in which sexual instincts are submerged begins as the boy turns away from both parents (Freud 1961a: 274). 'He becomes unruly, an intimation of the rage he will feel throughout his life when castration threat intrudes' (Monick 1991:45).⁵ Castration anxiety has set in.⁶

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2. Freud identified four phases of childhood sexual / libidinal development: oral (ages 0-2), anal (1-1/2 to 3), phallic (3-6), and latency (6-12). The oral and anal phases comprise infancy or the pregenital stage and are known as the pre-oedipal period, whilst the phallic and latency phases comprise childhood or the genital phase [cf. Freud 1961a: 269-284 (especially 273-277) and Brown 1961:19-21].
 3. Libido means in psycho-analysis in the first instance the force (thought of as quantitatively variable and measurable) of the sexual instinct directed towards an object - 'sexual' in the extended sense required by analytic theory' [Freud 1961 b: 203]. Libido is best conceived as *drive* energy, the main components of which are sexual *in the very broad sense of desire* [cf. Brown 1961:22-24 for this and other aspects of the libido as conceived by Freud. Pp. 19-24 correlate the four phases identified in note 1 above with the flow and direction of libidinous energy in each].
 4. This is a very turbulent period in a young boy's life for it is also the period in which his identification with his father begins. (In fact, father-identification prepares the way for the Oedipus complex and fits in very well with it). The boy thus exhibits two psychologically distinctive ties: 'a true *object-cathexis* towards his mother according to the anaclitic type [*Anlehnungstypus*]' (a desire to *have* the mother) and *identification* (a desire to *be* the father). The two exist side by side until the boy's father-identification becomes hostile and identical with a wish to replace his father in regard to his mother too [Freud 1922:59-61, italics mine]. Freud warns that the Oedipus complex may become inverted, however, in which case the father is taken 'as the object of a feminine attitude'. I.e., the father is no longer someone the little boy would like to *be*, someone who acts as a model after whose fashion he can mold his own ego, but someone he would like to *have* in fulfillment of 'the directly sexual instincts' [Freud 1922:62-63].
 5. In the latency period quantitative changes occur in the libido during which a reinforcement of pregenital drives may occur, at which point the child becomes more unruly or rebellious [Brown 1961:21].
 6. For a full description of the Oedipal drama in a boy's life *vide* Freud 1961a: 277-284. Cf. also Freud 1922:60-70. On the origins of castration anxiety and the function of the castration complex cf. Freud 1946:160, 166 as

In *The Way Men Think: Intellect, Intimacy and the Erotic Imagination*, Liam Hudson and Bernadine Jacot constitute castration (or the phallic wound) as 'a kind of fissure that is specifically male' and from which there flow 'the frames of mind and patterns of action typical of men' (Hudson and Jacot 1991:37). They find the physical source of this fissure in the sexual differentiation or 'parting of the ways' which takes place during the course of gestation in the womb, and its continuance in the subsequent differing physiological changes which occur in the lives of little baby girls and boys. Another parting of the ways is said to occur in the first two or three years of an infant's life. Instead of being anatomical and physical, this 'parting of the ways' is psychological, concerning the infant's self-perception and relation to the people who constitute its intimate world. As with the biological fissure, it too moves the male away from a pattern that it had previously shared with females of its classification (Hudson and Jacot 1991:38).

Theoretically, the psychological fissure may be described as follows: the primary source of comfort and security for infants of both sexes is found in a symbiotic relationship with a caring and supportive maternal figure. As the infants grow they position themselves not only 'vis-à-vis the emotionally charged features of [their] world' (Hudson and Jacot 1991:39), but also in terms of their gender identity, their sense of male- / femaleness. This is where the 'trouble' starts for, whilst a girl remains identified with her mother and perceives herself as being of the same sort with her, the little boy has to identify with his father. To establish his maleness, the little boy must take two giant steps. He must first dissociate himself imaginatively from his primary object of identification, his primary source of security and comfort (i.e., he must dis-identify himself from his mother) and, secondly, he must counter-identify himself with a third person, his father. According to Hudson and Jacot, these two processes in combination constitute what they call 'the male wound,' otherwise known as castration (Hudson and Jacot 1991:40).

We see then, that both Freud and Hudson and Jacot locate the origin of the wound within the psychological development of the male child, with Freud focusing characteristically upon the male child's psychosexual development. In both theories the phallic wound or castration is associated with the son's dissociation from the mother and countersociation with the Father. But what does this have to do with the book of Judith? To answer that question competently we will first have to examine the influence of the wound on the male psyche, particularly in terms of male-female relations, for we believe that this is the primary psychological impetus behind the apocryphal book in question.

3. The wound's influence on male-female relations

The wound's influence on male-female relations has received some veiled attention in the preceding section. In this section we hope to make more explicit the relationship between the wound and patriarchal power-relations between men and women vis-à-vis the effect which the wound has on the male psyche. We return briefly to the works of Freud, Hudson and Jacot.

3.1 Freud

A man's perception of women stems, predictably, from that early symbiotic relationship with his mother. The first hint of friction between the infant boy and his mother occurs in the pre-oedipal oral and phallic stages (1-3 years) in which she disapproves of and prohibits

well as note 6 below. *Vide* also Freud 1946:160-174 and Brown 1961:24-25 for an analysis of the Oedipal drama and the castration complex in women.

his joyful penis play (cf. Freud 1961a:273-274 and Freud 1961b:174-176; 250). This early prohibition, accompanied by his discovery that females have no penis⁷ frustrates the boy's libidinal instinct as well as his up-till-then bisexual identity and his rage at his mother begins (Monick 1991:47).

As our previous discussion shows, what happens in the subsequent oedipal drama is critical in determining and qualifying a boy's sexual identity and establishing the foundation of his later psychological development (cf. Freud 1961b:31-34 in this regard). It is in this drama that the father's castrating prohibition becomes introjected as superego, 'a generalized inner voice of fairness and conscience as well as rigidified law.'⁸ Without the prohibition, of which castration is the implicit correlate, the transformation from bisexuality to rooted masculinity is not effected in the boy's life and there is, instead, 'a weakening of the inner structure - masculine grid - upon which male self-confidence can depend' (Monick 1991:48). If the father does not encourage the son to identify with him through role-modeling during the subsequent latency period, the 'terrifying wounding of castration' will not be repaired and the boy will develop a castration complex. This complex will stay with him throughout his life, resulting in disproportionate emotional outbursts whenever any event or incident threatens his hold upon his masculine identity and whenever '*his ego stability wavers*' (Monick 1991:49, italics mine). In such moments his weakness is exposed, creating in him a sense of shame whilst simultaneously providing the 'proof' that his masculinity is essentially weak as he had suspected. Conversely, for a boy to remain 'male' throughout his adult life, i.e., for his masculine grid to remain intact, he must constantly 'repudiate femininity' (i.e., his weaknesses) and 'struggle against his passive or feminine attitude toward another man' (cf. Freud 1937:250-252). The societal manifestation of this need is the emergence of patriarchal dominance as compensation (Monick 1991:54).⁹

Since the oedipal drama is the fulcrum or turning point upon which hangs all that we have discussed so far, it is easy to see that it is also this drama which establishes the boy's psychosexual relationship both to his mother and to females generally. 'Everything leads up to it, and everything subsequently leads away from it, bearing critical traces of its resolution or irresolution' (Monick 1991:44) in puberty and beyond.

3.2 Hudson and Jacot

In the previous section regarding Hudson and Jacot's work, we ended with the wound being constituted in the male child's dis-identification with his mother and counter-identification with his father. This internal dislocation causes a reversal to take place in the male child's perception of his mother and father. He now experiences as 'same' the one whom he had experienced as 'other' in terms of the symbiotic mother-child relationship (i.e., his father); and experiences as 'other' the mother whom he had then experienced as 'same.' (Hudson and Jacot 1991:40).

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7. According to Freud [1946:160], the boy's castration complex forms after he has noted that females lack the sexual organ which he so highly prizes, i.e., after he has learned that the penis is not a necessary part of every human body. He then remembers the threats which he elicited by playing with his penis and begins to believe in them, thenceforth coming under the influence of castration anxiety, 'which supplies the strongest motive force for his further development' [*ibid.*]
 8. For a thorough treatment of the development and effects of the super-ego *vide* Freud 1961b:28-39, 48-49 and 167-170.
 9. Monick has a very functional definition of patriarchy that is germane to the spirit of this essay. He defines patriarchy as 'the institutionalized diminishment of supposedly inferior persons' [Monick 1991:90].

The elements of this reversal reverberate throughout the male's subsequent life carrying with it its powerful emotional charge. The way and extent to which the boy child effects this reversal and the person with whom he finally identifies (not always his father, cf. Hudson and Jacot 1991:42-45) affects everything from his gender identity to his choice of career and sexual orientation in adult life. In this way, the conventional reversal described above yields the 'male' male - the man who sees himself as male and acts as male (i.e., the traditional or patriarchal male). Other patterns of this reversal permit the rise of the effeminate or transsexual male and even the androgynous or genderless male, to name but a few possible outcomes (cf. *ibid.* for more possibilities).

It may be clear from what we have said above that the 'male' male is at a clear disadvantage. In as much as his identity is established at the expense of the comfort and security provided by the primitive mother-child bond, the 'male' male finds it difficult to reciprocate affection. His capacity for empathy will be impaired, and he will view things (especially emotional matters) in strictly black and white terms (there are supposedly no gray areas in the male psyche). He will also be slow to make sense of conflicting emotions (Hudson and Jacot 1991:46). The resultant personal insensitivity disadvantages him particularly in those areas which affect intimate personal relationships: 'His ability to experience a relationship as 'intersubjective' - as a meeting of experiential worlds - will be curtailed' (Hudson and Jacot 1991:46).¹⁰

The 'existential gulf' which dis-identification causes may also leave the small boy with an unresolved sense of loss and resentment; perhaps a fear of punishment or revenge. Oftentimes this will consequently give rise to 'subterranean currents of violently negative sentiments' which will sometimes be vented symbolically, remote from their source, whilst at other times they will be focused directly on the 'other,' primarily the female sex and the female body. Predictably, then, the male will often betray 'misogynous attitudes and fantasies' beneath his attitudes to the opposite sex; and there may persist a vision of women as 'polluters, beheaders and castrators; creatures to be feared,' full of deceptively hidden sinister powers even when women and sexual access to them is idealised (Hudson and Jacot 1991:46, emphasis mine).¹¹

So is misogyny born; so too the analogous desire for war and sexual conquest, i.e., for power over 'others' based on male competitiveness and the desire to prove oneself, both products of the wound, and both essential to the masculine desire for war.¹²

10. Men's fear of intimacy and its results is succinctly dealt with in Hester 1996:84-90. The influence of a man's relationship with his mother in this regard is outlined on pp. 92-93 of the same essay. *Vide* further note 11.

11. Besides the fear of the feminine there is also a fear of being feminine - 'perhaps the most paralyzing complex for men' [Hester 1996:89-90].

12. Gottlieb [1992:279-281] states that 'competitiveness and the need to prove oneself are essential to the masculine desire for war.' He then proceeds to identify three other, infrequently reflected upon, 'principles' of masculine identity which govern (and reflect) the same desire in men: the first, rationalisation, is defined as 'the process of understanding and controlling the social and natural world in technical and bureaucratic terms.' The second is professionalisation essential to the process of which is 'the denial of the Self in the Other,' (in which case empathy and compassion are ruled out as people are objectified). The third, commodification, sees not only public work but also leisure, love and creativity as the 'means to the acquisition of some product (material good or social position) for which they can be exchanged'. From the preceding discussion it is clearly evident that these three 'principles' stem from 'the wound.' Gottlieb affirms this view when he proposes that 'each of the three principles of masculine identity ... involves the repression of 'natural' human needs or desires' including 'the need for totality, for empathetic, emotionally based human interidentification, and for meaningful, nonalienated labor.' He claims that 'the repression of these needs in masculine identity ... makes nuclear war an object of masculine desire.' This, clearly, is an unconscious desire

4. Judith: 'otherness' and the manifestation of male castration anxiety

Having laid down the psychological foundations of castration anxiety we are now better equipped to apply our findings to the book of Judith. The book of Judith is the most manifest biblical expression of the fear and insecurity - the existential crisis - underlying the mother-separated male psyche. Its literary form and content offer the reader a symbolic representation of the male fear of 'the other,' particularly of women and women's sexuality; and provide an excellent analog for the forms and permutations of power stemming from the wound. It is these issues to which we now turn, presenting them against the background of the Judith story. We begin with Judith, Power and the Wound (4.1). Thereafter we will focus our attention on various responses to power in the book of Judith (4.2) and analyse the sexual specifics of power as presented in it (4.3).

4.1 Judith, power and the wound

The story, we are told, begins in the twelfth year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria (*sic!*), in the days of Arfaxad, king of the Medes, who had built high and mighty towered walls around his city, Ecbatana (1:1-2).¹³ Arfaxad's walls are soon torn down and his city destroyed by the mighty power of Nebuchadnezzar in the seventeenth year of the latter's reign. Nebuchadnezzar obliterates Arfaxad's forces, takes command of his towers and puts his people to the sword (1:14). Thereafter he goes home to feast with his troops (1:16) - the end of chapter one.

Arfaxad's fortifications and Nebuchadnezzar's attack are indicative of two different but interrelated responses to the wound: the one is walling or seclusion, and the other self-protection via dominance. In both cases - instances of the insecurity caused by the wound and the lowering (real or imagined) of one's personal grid¹⁴ - everyone other than the self is objectified to enemy status, i.e., to 'otherness.' The enemy thus identified becomes an 'other' to be feared, an 'other' to hide oneself from, or an 'other' to subdue (cf. note 11 above).

The kind of driving passion which emanates from objectifying people and personalising objects is seen very clearly in Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent acts. Chapter two, set in the eighteenth year of his reign, begins with 'talk' that he should avenge himself on those nations who had disparaged him in chapter one. He had sent them word to join him in his forays against Arfaxad but they had refused, 'For they were not frightened of him, but regarded him as one man' (1:11; 2:1). He calls his chieftains together 'and communicated with them his secret counsel, and concluded the affliction of the whole earth out of his mouth. Then they decreed to destroy all flesh, that did not obey the commandment of his mouth' (2:1, 2).

[Gottlieb 1992:283]. Gottlieb's comments indirectly clarify the interrelationship of war and sexual conquest which need not be investigated further here [cf. further Hartsock 1992:250].

13. As is well known, Nebuchadnezzar was a Babylonian, not an Assyrian, king! The book of Judith is replete with such wonderful historical and geographical errors, anachronisms and the like. They are an important part of the delightful irony which inspires the entire book (so also Lacoque [1990:31-32]: 'All these inaccuracies, ... are too patent and gross to be unintentional, ... They ... stress its [the book's] highly ironic character, a deliberate choice of the author, ...'). This view is not necessarily shared by all, especially those who are more concerned with strict historicity than narrative ingenuity (cf. also Alonso-Schökel who believes that the 'irony begins in 10:16' [Alonso-Schökel 1975:4, italics mine]). For a thorough discussion of these 'historical contradictions' and the role they have placed in the dating and acceptance of the book of Judith cf. Moore 1985:37-49 and 52-56. On the use of irony in Judith cf. further Alonso-Schökel 1975:8-11 and Moore 1985:78-85, *inter alii*].

14. Attack and withdrawal (walling) are common reactions to insecurity and personal threat experienced at any level of one's being.

The opening verses of chapter two alert us to the fact that the *wounded* male psyche finds insufferable any act of disobedience, or any lack of fear / respect in the 'other.' Lack of fear in the 'other' signifies potential castration and demands retribution effected through further acts of violence and / or domination.^{15, 16} Such retributive acts often portray the oppressor's assumed right to decree the fates of others, a right which is strengthened and ratified in the company of equally wounded male peers (cf. 'secret counsel,' 2:1).

Having received the counsel of his chieftains, Nebuchadnezzar calls Holofernes, his chief general, and gives him the mandate to obliterate all those who will not yield themselves to him and to keep captive for their day of judgment those who do (2:5-11). Holofernes' deeds of obedience to his king and lord are recorded from the time that he leaves Nebuchadnezzar's presence to prepare for war (2:14) to the point where the Judeans hear of the carnage that follows in his wake (4:1). The section is permeated with violent subject-object acts and the reactions that they engender. In near-graphic detail the text reflects how the (wounded) powerful subjugate and control the oppressed through constant surveillance,¹⁷ brute force, and the destruction of their local knowledges, protective mechanisms and support systems¹⁸ (Holofernes makes camp in their sight, and destroys the high border cities, crops, sheepfolds, temples and sacred groves of various nations). It also shows how the dominant take over the best that the oppressed have to offer and put it to their own use (Holofernes incorporates the 'choice men' of certain nations into his army). That these acts are intended to entrench in the oppressed a fear of the powerful and to secure the total allegiance of the former to the latter is made evident by Holofernes' seemingly self-proclaimed mandate 'to destroy all the gods of the earth, so that all the nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as god' (3:8).¹⁹ In fact, fear is the key word throughout the first seven chapters of Judith, signifying the close interrelationship between fear and domination, both in terms of the practice of domination and the responses it engenders.

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15. The connection between masculinity, violence and domination has been well-documented. Hartsock [1992:249-276], for example, deals directly with their interrelationship in terms of gender and sexuality [cf. also Goldner 1991: 86-106], whilst others prefer to speak only of 'power,' its relationship with gender [Grey 1996:141-151; Hampson 1996: 125-140; Miller 1992:240-248] and the role it plays *inter alia* within the family [Kaslow and Carter 1991: 166-182], in therapy [Avis 1991: 183-200; Doherty 1991: 151-165; Goodrich 1991b:3-35] and in society in general [Webb-Watson 1991:48-69]. Cf. also Cook and Bessant (eds.) 1997 for a disturbing series of essays on the effects of violence on women of different status, origin, and race in Australia.
 16. Domination refers to 'conditions under which the subordinated have relatively little room for manoeuvre' [Hindess 1996:97]. For Foucault, domination is a particular modality of power - unbalanced power - which is however never entirely one-sided, for the one over whom power is exercised still has the possibility of committing suicide, or of killing the agent of domination [cf. Hindess 1996:102-103].
 17. For the role of surveillance in the creation and maintenance of power in Foucault's work cf. Pasewark 1993:20-23.
 18. For the pivotal relation of knowledge and power *vide* Pasewark 1993:14-15, 25-29, 29-33. Cf. also note 21, below.
 19. Holofernes' actions and demeanour are clear examples of the exercise of exploitative power the purpose of which is 'to drain the other of whatever power the exploited might lay claim to in order to advance the purposes of the rulers themselves. ... Exploitative power assumes that some people are destined to be in charge, that some people are born to rule, that some people are divinely designated to stand in the place of God with the fullness of God for the sake of God' [Chittister 1990:12, 13]. In the case of our narrative, Holofernes believes himself to be divinely mandated - by Nebuchadnezzar - to subdue and oppress those who would not comply with the 'divine' one's wishes; or so the narrator intimates (Judith 3:8).

4.2 Judith and her response to power

The text henceforth presents us with four basic responses to *wounded* power and their concomitant outcomes. These are destruction through ignorance, destruction through acquiescence, near-destruction through impatient resistance, and life through wise resistance.

The fate of the sons of Phud, Lud, Rassas and Ismael (2:23) illustrates the first response. They are the fearless ones who are seemingly unaware of the destructive power of their would-be oppressor and hence make no provisions against his imminent attack. They are like women and men who have no awareness whatever of the toll that the wound takes on their lives through patriarchal control. Turning a blind eye to the deeds of the oppressor they fall prey to his discourse (*vide* note 21 below) and are destroyed by it. Their lack of response allows his power to remain uncontested and becomes a vehicle for the destruction of other nations as well as their own. Similarly, women and men who are not even aware of patriarchal ideology and have fallen prey to its discourse, become the vehicle for their own consummation (and debilitation) and that of others.

The second response, that of the coastal dwellers and others mentioned in 2:28, bears similar fruit, though from a different vine. Having noted Holofernes' destruction of the other nations, they cower before him in fear and try to avert their own destruction by bowing down to him. They declare themselves his servants and call upon him to do just as he pleases with their cities. They even receive him as though he were one of their own heroes (cf. 3: 2-4 and 7)! Alas for them, their acquiescence does nothing to distract him from his course. Their lives are saved (there is no record that Holofernes destroyed any of those who appealed to him in this passage) but their choice of action only binds their freedom as agents and causes the destruction of all that they hold dear and meaningful (3:6-8). Furthermore, their fearful response threatens to become a vehicle for the potential subjugation of others as was the case with the first pattern of response (cf. 3:9-10). Their demeanour is sadly reminiscent of those women and men who question - and even campaign against) - racism and other forms of social evil, but dare not question the dictates of patriarchal discourse. They welcome its doctrines and propounders (both women and men) as heroes, defenders of what is 'right,' 'natural,' and 'godly.' Fearing the destruction of 'the world' as they know (experience) it, they acquiesce to this foreign power (in my opinion, patriarchy is foreign, alien to the way that God created us - cf. Genesis 1:27-28) and put themselves and their resources at its disposal.²⁰

The first sign of resistance to Holofernes' totalitarian power comes from the Judeans. Their response is recorded in chapters 4-7 of the book of Judith:

Having heard of what Holofernes had done among the gentiles and how he had destroyed all their holy places, the Judeans become greatly afeared for Jerusalem and its temple for, the narrator tells us, they had just returned from captivity and consecrated those items which had been defiled (4:1-3). Their first course of action is fourfold, they *alert* the other key cities in their province; *take possession* of the high mountains; *fortify* the towns in them and *gather provisions* for war (4:4-8). (Their response thus mirrors that of Arfaxad in some respects). Secondly, the whole community cries out to God for protection and salvation: they cover themselves (and the altar) in sackcloth and ashes; and the priests offer

20. Women have been acquiescing to male power for too long. Chittister [1990:8] writes: 'Those who occupy society's positions and interpret its ideologies and write its laws have power. Those who do not, do not. Women have been taught to believe that things as they are, are things that are good for them so that they will endorse their own oppression and maintain the powerful in power unimpeded'.

the appropriate sacrifices to God (4:9-15). As the story progresses and Holofernes closes in on them more and more they continue to cry out to God with increasing despair (cf. 6:14-21; 7:19-29). Their despair reaches its zenith when Holofernes cuts off the fountain from which they draw water (7:16-17) and his allies encamp right around them, blocking every way of escape (7:18-19). Seized by fear they yet again cry out to God, this time without faith, for they believe that they have sinned against God and that God has delivered them into the Assyrians' hands (7:25, 28). They blame Ozias, their governor, for having encouraged rebellion against the Assyrians and they command him to hand them over to the Assyrians so that they may live (as Holofernes' slaves!) and not die (7:24-29). Ozias persuades the people to wait five more days. Should God not deliver them within these five days, he will do as the people say (7:30-32).

The Judeans' abortive response is similar to that of the coastal nations in that it is indicative of a society, sub-society or psyche (person) that has bought into the destructive rhetoric of the powerful.²¹ They are like women and men who have become conscientised as to the destructive power of patriarchy and who try to conscientise others too. They reclaim the history (*herstory*) and positions in society which are rightfully theirs and attempt to protect themselves - veer the effects of patriarchy - by closing off every port of attack through fortification, i.e. by building walls (academia, rejection of tradition, etc.) around their most sensitive points, and alerting others to do the same. Some of these even resort to God, when the battle gets tough - as the Judean society did. They bear some form of recognition of the sovereignty of God; they cry out to God continually (albeit with decreasing faith) and then, when God's answer is not speedily forthcoming, they wish to give in to the enemy (go back to traditional values and stereotypes) 'so that they may live!'

As the text indicates, God hears the cry of these oppressed (4:13) even before the priests offer the necessary sacrifices to God (4:14-15). His answer to their problems is not someone who depends on her own strength, but someone who knows her frailty vis-à-vis the situation and relies on God's power instead. This person, whose name is given as the title of the book, is introduced to us at the beginning of chapter eight, once the Judeans had all but given up any hope of survival. Her introduction represents two things in terms of the current analysis: the power of the outsider and the dreaded power of female sexuality.

4.3 Judith as other: on being an outsider and a patriotic sex warrior

4.3.1 Judith challenges the elders and prepares to go down to the Assyrian camp

Judith is presented as a deeply religious, god-fearing, beautiful, wise and chaste widow who has lived in a tent above her house since her husband's rather ignominious demise three years previously (8:1-8).²² Upon hearing 'the evil words of the people against the governor'

21. The 'rhetoric' or discourse of the powerful is not only dangerous but destructive in that it sets itself up as 'truth' over and against the 'discourse(s)' or local knowledge(s) of those it dominates. 'For Foucault, truth is a historical production. It is created by discourses that, on the one hand, claim the status of truth for themselves and, on the other, disqualify the claim to truth in other knowledges, particularly local knowledges. These discourses of truth are, moreover, both effects and producers of power. Power creates knowledge, and the assertion of the truth of knowledge is an exercise in and a condition of increasing power ... Whether discourse of truth are true or not, they produce and condition power, ...' [Pasewark 1993:29, 30].

'The destructive rhetoric of the powerful' is a good example of manipulative power which presents its subjects with half-truths in order to sway their behaviour to desired effect. Propaganda is but another form of manipulation. It is 'the archpiece in the manipulative treatment of women' [Chittister 1990:23-29, 30].

22. Judith's chastity and unmarried status, emphasised both here and throughout the narrative - she even remains unmarried, i.e. chaste, to the very end despite having many suitors - has at times been interpreted as a representation of the patriarchal bias of the text (cf. e.g. Levine 1992:20). I prefer to see it as an expression of

and what Ozias had purposed, she calls together the elders of her people (she summons them) and chastises them for the way in which they are testing God through their five-day ultimatum (8:9-12). She teaches that God is sovereign even as His will is sovereign (8:13-16), and then encourages them to 'wait for salvation of Him' for none in their age had worshipped foreign gods (8:17-20). She also encourages them to stand firm for their brethren's sake and to realise that if their city, Bethulia,²³ is taken then the whole country will be destroyed including the temple (8:21-23). Instead of merely praying for rain on the peoples' behalf, as Ozias requests (8:28-31), Judith embarks on a secretive course of action by which she declares the Lord will deliver the enemy into her hand within the five day-period that Ozias had promised (8:32-34).²⁴ Not knowing what she will do, Ozias and the princes bid her to go with their blessing and return to their wards (8:35-36).²⁵

After extensive prayer for empowerment (9:1-14) Judith bathes, perfumes herself and discards her widow's attire (10:1-4). Dressed to kill (the text says she 'decked herself bravely, to allure the eyes of all men that should see her,' 10:4), she goes down to the enemy camp with her trusted housekeeper as the people of Bethulia look on in amazement (cf. 10:5-10).^{26, 27}

Judith's response to the situation establishes her otherness vis-à-vis the Judeans themselves as well as the other nations encountered so far. Contrary to them she is prepared to take on the challenge presented by Holofernes' advance: instead of walling herself in, praying helplessly and making provisions for survival, this widow woman is willing to become an answer to her own prayers and those of her community. Contrary to the elders and the other nations she looks beyond the self and the immediate danger, recognising that her failure to act would affect others besides herself; that it would bring about the enslavement of her people as well as the destruction of all that they held dear. Hers is the

her free choice (so also Lacocque [1990:38] who 'cannot help but think that chastity is also a sign of independence.')

23. The significance of the town's name will be discussed below.
24. Judith's secretive course of action, her 'secret counsel' with the Lord, aptly parallels (and counter-parallels) Nebuchadnezzar's 'secret counsel' in Judith 2:1.
25. The earliest mention of the book of Judith is by Clement of Rome who hails Judith as one of 'many women' who have been empowered by 'the grace of God' to perform 'many deeds of manly valor.' He erroneously claims, however, that 'The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked the elders to suffer her to go into the camp of the strangers. So she gave herself up to danger, and went forth from love of her country and her people in their siege, and the Lord delivered over Holofernes by the hand of a woman' (I Clement 55:3-5, italics mine. Cf. also Enslin 1972:46). The city elders did not 'suffer her to go' as Clement claims. They merely ratified her chosen (but undisclosed) course of action through their blessing.
26. This, of course, is the familiar facade or persona (i.e., 'mask') of the true *femme fatale*, lurer and destroyer of men. Cf. further notes 33, 34 and 34 below. Bade 1979 provides a fascinating guide to the nature and artistic representations of the *femme fatale*. Cf. particularly chapter 1 which shows how Judith has progressed from the pious female warrior of early representations to the *femme fatale* of more recent times. For a similar treatment of artistic renditions of Judith with a specific focus on the Freudian concept of castration cf. Bal 1995: 253-285 (especially p 265). [Bade 1979 was regrettably unobtainable at the time of the final composition of this article, which is why exact page references have been omitted].
27. Lacocque [1990: 47-48] interprets Judith's going down to the Assyrian camp in terms of her sacrificing herself on the 'altar' of Holofernes' tent for the sake of her beloved Jerusalem: 'She invites the inhabitants of Bethulia to offer themselves in oblation for the sake of Jerusalem (8:21-24; 13:20). Moreover, it is what she personally does immediately after her exhortation to the leaders. She adorns herself as the sacrificial victim. From now on the enemy's attention will be forced upon her instead of on the whole of Bethulia. She makes of herself a substitutive offering.' For a thorough development of the theme of sacrifice in the book of Judith cf. Levine 1992:17-30.

kind of clear thinking and unswerving faith that is necessary to overcome situations of oppression - patriarchal dominance included.

Moreover, Judith's words in chapter 8 establish her 'otherness' in terms of her critical function as an 'outsider.' An outsider is someone who opens our eyes in a particular situation and enables us to respond to it in ways other than our own imagination of reality would have permitted (cf. Walsh 1987:8-10).²⁸ The people had imagined their present reality as one of sure destruction based on a misunderstanding of God and His dealings with them. They had tried to manipulate God into saving them because they thought that the oppression they faced was a sure sign of their sinfulness and that this supposed sinfulness signified their immediate destruction (7:23-29). Judith as outsider challenges their culturally entrenched (Deuteronomic, see note 29, below) imagination by challenging their understanding of God and their standing with Him in light of their present situation: they were not idolatrous sinners deserving destruction (one may say, in the language of the current article: they were not male-dominated because of Eve's sinfulness!). Far from it, none in their age had worshipped any other God. Furthermore, this situation was not one of God's punishment for their sins, but was indeed one of testing to strengthen their faith (8:25-27).²⁹ It is this altered perception that gives the Judeans hope while she is away and the courage to destroy the oppressor once she has returned in victory. Without it the Judeans would have been powerless to see themselves differently and so to act differently, no matter what the outcome of her secret mission in Holofernes' camp had been.³⁰

4.3.2 Judith in the Assyrian camp

Chapters 10:11-13:8 detail her deeds in the Assyrian camp and allow us to penetrate the world of the male psyche in the pre-oedipal stages and beyond. Particularly, they afford us insight into the fears surrounding the castrating potential of women and their sexuality.³¹ The key concept in these chapters changes from one of fear to one of beauty and wisdom as

28. Walsh describes the influence (power!) and limitation of our reality-perception as follows: 'Some people see the world as a dangerous place full of unknown perils [e.g. the Judean elders]. ... Some see the world 'charged with the power of God' [e.g. Judith]. Whatever it may be, the way we imagine reality determines our perceptions and choices - ... Yet this fundamentally shaping vision is mostly opaque to us, ... What other people say and do gives away how *they* imagine reality, ... but it is difficult for us to become aware of how *we* imagine it' [Walsh 1987:8, my parentheses]. The 'outsider's' role is therefore vital in that s/he is the 'other' who can see our reality and our imagining of it more clearly than ourselves, and is thereby able to point us in the direction of solving our problems and crises [Walsh 1987:10]. This Judith clearly does, establishing herself as an outsider vis-à-vis the frightened, demoralised Judean elders / Judean society.

29. This was certainly a 'new' perspective on suffering, contradicting the view which the people themselves had embraced, i.e., that they were suffering because they had sinned (Judith 7:25-28). I have termed 'Deuteronomic' their mode of imagining reality because it rests upon a 'reversed' form of the doctrine of retribution (obedience leads to blessing, disobedience to curse) as propagated by the book of Deuteronomy (cf., e.g., Deut. 28:1-68, 30:19-20) and reflected in Achior's speech to Holofernes (Judith 5:17-21), i.e., 'we are suffering therefore we must have sinned and are doomed as a result.'

30. I firmly believe that one act of empowerment inspires another: Judith empowers the Judeans mentally and spiritually by helping them to 'imagine' things differently. She then empowers their actions (positively inspires their morale) by physically showing them what an altered mindset ('imagining') can do. I.e., her slaying of Holofernes opens their eyes to another 'imagining' of reality and empowers them to vanquish an erstwhile dreaded foe. This in turn inspires and empowers women and men in similar situations of unbalanced power to meet the foe head-on and do the same.

31. Monick investigates possible reasons for men's fears regarding women in terms of, *inter alia*, the mother's prohibition of the boy's penis-play [1991:12-13]; women's 'closeness to the irrational and chthonic unconscious' and their lack of phallos [1991:14, 42]; men's fear that castration will lead to a regression to 'primal femininity' [1991:24]; and even men's desire to be mothers and their fear of castration - of the phallos being swallowed up in the vagina - during sexual intercourse [1991:50-52].

the Assyrian army and its general fall prey to Judith's (deceptively) good looks and 'wise' (= ambiguous) diction.^{32, 33} Essentially, it is this section, above any other in Judith, that most clearly illustrates the male fear of castration at the hand of a woman. It combines - from Holofernes' point of view - the traditional patriarchal perception of woman's deceptive looks and diction³⁴ with the beheading of an enemy male, thus coupling castration and fear of the 'other' with patriarchy.

When Judith arrives at the Assyrian camp and declares her allegiance to Holofernes, all marvel at her beauty and counsel her not to fear but to speak plainly to their lord, who would entreat her kindly (10:14-16). No less than 100 adulating soldiers escort her to the general's tent (cf. 10:17-20). There she falls before him in mock subservience and tells him that she has fled the Judeans who have sinned against YHWH and would most certainly be destroyed. She has therefore come to the aid of her 'lord' who will surely succeed if he follows her words (10:23-11:19). Holofernes is overjoyed. He grants her request to eat her own 'kosher' food and to exit the camp each evening for prayer, little knowing that this is part of her plan for his demise (cf. 11:20-12:9).

The crucial scene takes place a few days later when the dumbfounded Holofernes is overcome with lust and 'vows' to bed her, fearing that she would mock him should he fail to do so (12:11-12, 16) - fear of failure in sexual matters (particularly sexual contest) being a common symptom of the *wounded* psyche. In order to seduce her, he organises a private banquet (12:10) with the intent of taking advantage of her once all the servants leave. When the servants leave, however, the tables are turned. Judith takes advantage of his drunken stupor, prays to God for assistance and severs his head by striking it twice with his own sword (cf. 12:20; 13:1-10).³⁵ She escapes - undetected - under the pretext of her prayer habit and returns to Bethulia where she is valorised by all (13:10-20). There she commands that the head of the dreaded Holofernes be mounted on a pole so that it is clearly visible to his soldiers in the camp below (cf. 14:1-11).

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32. If alluring beauty constitutes the fateful persona of the *femme fatale*, then ambiguous / deceptive diction is her language.
33. Fuchs states that the characterisation of women in the Hebrew Bible which presents 'deceptiveness as an almost inescapable feature of femininity' in 'most narratives involving women, both condemnatory and laudatory ones ... reveals not only the Bible's androcentric bias but also the manner in which the biblical narrative suppresses the truth about women's subjugation within the patriarchal framework' in that it fails to underline the close interrelationship between their acts of deception and 'woman's inferior social position and political powerlessness in patriarchal society' [Fuchs 1985:137]. While Judith is certainly presented as a very deceptive woman - the text calls her 'wise' - one wonders if the last part of this statement applies to Judith in light of her obviously esteemed position in the Bethulian society (e.g. she *summons* the elders and they come, Judith 8:9-12). I would suggest that whilst she herself was not bound to or by the patriarchal limitations of woman, she nevertheless worked within them to achieve her aims.
34. For an analysis of the extreme irony and ambiguity of her diction *vide, inter alii*, Alonso-Schökel 1975:9-11. Judith's deceptiveness in both diction and deed has elicited much censure from certain critics [Enslin 1972:14-15, Lacoque 1990:42] in stark contradiction to the perspective of the text which offers no censure whatever but rather calls Judith wise and extols her and her actions in highest praise (cf. e.g. Judith 13:10-20, 15:8-12).
35. Motifs of sexual exchange, drunkenness and feasting are often found in Ancient Near Eastern myths of 'the deceptive goddess' of which Judith is a human type. For the direct connection between these myths and the Judith story, in particular Judith 12-13, *vide* Fontaine 1988:93. (The entire volume of *Semeia* 42 [Exum and Bos (eds.) 1988] in which Fontaine's essay is located deals with the motifs of the male and female trickster in biblical and other literature including that of the Ancient Near East and West-Africa. It is well-worth examining in its entirety).

4.3.3 Judith's praise to God and her last days

When Holofernes' men discover what has happened, they flee (14:12-15:3). Judith commands her country-men to pursue, which they do, routing many and taking much bounty (cf. 14:2-5; 15:4-11). After receiving much praise from the high priest and all the people (especially the women, cf. 15:8-12) Judith sings an extensive praise / victory song to YHWH (16:1-17). She falls down before her real Lord in worship (cf. 16:18 and 10:23) and dedicates her share of the spoils to YHWH (16:19). She then returns to her tent, where she presumably resumes her widow's attire (16:21). The text tells us that she lived to the ripe old age of 105, that she refused all suitors, set her handmaid free, and distributed her goods among the poor (16:22-23). It even tells us that the Judeans lived in peace thereafter, for no-one dared attack them while she was still alive (16:25). So the story of a powerful woman ends.

4.3.4 A psychological interpretation of Judith's arrival at the Assyrian camp and subsequent actions according to the developmental stages of the male psyche

The sequence of events at the Assyrian tent continues the depiction of Judith as other, this time vis-à-vis the Assyrian enemy: she is beauty, company and intelligence in the place of the ugliness, emptiness and foolishness of war. She is female over and against male; 'other' over and against 'same.' Her allegiance to and appropriation by Holofernes causes these dynamics to combine in a heady, blinding, mixture: Judith represents both the 'other' whom the Assyrian soldiers have come to destroy and the 'other' whom they would like to possess. Simultaneously, from the point of view of the soldiers, she is the 'other' whom they may not and cannot possess; for the male pecking order determines that she is the property of the dominant male among them. In this sense, her arrival in the Assyrian camp focuses the hierarchy of the existing pecking order more sharply into one of difference and reversal: those who were same by virtue of their common goal are now differentiated into 'Holofernes and the others.' She who was 'other' by virtue of belonging to 'the enemy' becomes 'same' to Holofernes because of her supposed allegiance, and in so doing remains the distant, incomprehensible 'other' to the Assyrian soldiers. Furthermore, in her choice for their leader, Judith prohibits the expression of their desire and delays its satisfaction.

The imagery found in 10:11-13:10 clearly correlates with both the phallic and oedipal stages of a boy's psychological (psychosexual) development. In this section, Judith as object of desire takes on the role of the mother who prohibits the son's penis-play and rejects his advances. In so doing, she aligns herself with his father, thwarting the growing boy's desire (i.e., the desire of the Assyrian soldiers). Similarly, Holofernes, the castrating father, 'sends away' the son (the Assyrian soldiers) by claiming Judith as his own (he takes Judith into his own tent and grants her special privileges) and punishes the son by organising a banquet to which only Judith (and not the son) is invited (10:11-12:10).

If chapters 10:11-12:10 represent the pre-oedipal and oedipal stages of life then chapters 12:11-13:10 represent the stages of puberty and beyond in which the effects of the wound manifest themselves in a desire for dominance, a difficulty to handle conflicting emotions and relationships, resentment and violence. In this section, Holofernes and Judith are exactly what they would be in real life: two people, one male, one female, who are brought together by a specific set of circumstances. The 'relationship' which develops between them is no doubt a patriarchal one. In fact, Judith goes out of her way to make it (seem) so: she dresses herself alluringly and falls down at his feet, seeking asylum, as it were, from the 'sure destruction' of the Judeans. As a woman, she subjects herself to a man for protection -

traditional role-play! By virtue of their respective positions and gender, Holofernes is subject, whilst Judith is object (or so Holofernes would like to think).

The personal insensitivity brought on by the wound is evident in the way that Holofernes objectifies her as 'other,' i.e. as a sexual object to be desired and had despite the vulnerable position she is in as 'enemy' female in his camp (cf. 12:11-16). To him, conquering her sexually signifies, on a psychological level, the conquering of the Judean nation. The fear inherent to the wound is evident in his choice of approach, one of cowardice rather than valor: he does not directly approach her as human being, but rather lays a trap for her as one would lay a trap for an animal. Whether this is out of a fear of rejection, or a frenzied desire to heighten the excitement of the conquest, we cannot tell. Whatever the case, he plans a banquet at which he hopes to seduce her. He tries to circumvent her wall of protection - her religious commitment and supposed allegiance to himself - and take her by force when her defenses are down. It is here that the 'subterranean currents of violently negative sentiments' and the sexual analogies found in the war chapters, chapters 1-7,³⁶ are combined and focused specifically on her female body. It is here where the analogous, the symbolic, and the actual meet that Judith, through her faith, turns the tables around and disables her would-be seducer. It is here that she as a Lorena Bobbit³⁷ of yesteryear says 'enough is enough,' cuts off the offender's head (alias, penis?)³⁸ and displays it for all to see. No greater shame has any man than this, to be defeated by his object of desire before his peers; no greater fear than to lose his head, and thus his manhood, at the hand of a woman.³⁹

5. Conclusion and reality check

Many insights are afforded us when the story of Judith is analysed according to the effects of the wound on the male psyche. We see in symbolic literary representation the practical permutations of the wound as well as some of its effects in real life: fear, resentment, anger, rage, the inability to form intimate relationships, the desire to objectify, dominate and reduce to the mundane level - particularly through sex - that which it both fears and exults, i.e., woman. In this sense, the text presents us with the full range of sexual dynamics engendered by the wound. The close interrelation of its two major sections, 1-7, the 'war chapters' in which Judith does not appear, and 8-16 in which she does,⁴⁰ alerts us to the close interrelationship between war, patriarchy and violence on 'others,' particularly

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36. For example, one notes that the passage leading up to Bethulia - in Hebrew, a young unmarried woman, or virgin - is narrow (like a woman's vagina), and that those sent into it bear swords or phallic objects with which to rip (rape) the city up.
37. Mrs. Bobbit captured the imagination of the world a number of years ago by cutting off her husband's penis with a knife because of his abusive behaviour towards her. She has become a legend and her surname has become a verb since then, so that 'to bobbit' someone means to cut off his penis.
38. If the narrow passage-way and the swords are genital allusions, then surely the head of a male body can allude to the (head of the) penis? Holofernes' head mounted on a pole continues this allusion and justifies, I believe, my interpretation.
39. It is a well-known fact that being killed by a woman bore the utmost shame for a man in Ancient Near Eastern times. That it has remained so to our present times shows how deeply rooted are the concomitant fear and shame, and the patriarchal notions of gender.
40. Some scholars do not share this view, regarding the book as 'unbalanced' and the late introduction of Judith as 'unjustified' (cf. Alonso-Schökel 1975:3-7 and Moore 1985:56-59 for more details). In her Doctoral Dissertation on the book of Judith, however, Craven too insists on and proves the interdependence of chapters 1-7 and 8-16 *inter alia* on the basis of 'shared correspondences' and 'inner [structural] organisation [*vide* Craven 1983: 47-64, 65-112, especially pp. 53-59 as well as Craven 1977: 75-101 for an earlier statement of her position].

women. It alerts us to the painful relation between sex, gender, war and violence that is lived out in many homes, clubhouses and alleys even now, as well as the pitiful fear which underlies all actions of dominance through sex or any other medium.

The text warns us of the grim reality that uncontested dominance kills all that which is precious to the one being dominated, and in the process kills the one who enforced the domination and death of that 'other.' In this sense, it alerts would-be offenders, wounded psyches, to the negative effect of the wound, and forms the springboard for devising alternative outlets than those presented in the text (i.e., alternatives to domination, subjugation, and conquest). It also presents us with a number of alternative responses to power-as-dominance as well as their respective results. The first three, ignorance (ignor(e) - ance), outright compliance with the dominant power/acquiescence, and impersistent resistance, only fall prey to the rhetoric of the dominant, perpetuate the violence of the oppressor among the oppressed and facilitate its spread to others. The last, wise and resilient resistance, Judith's response, is the only one that succeeds, effectively squashing the power of the oppressor and liberating the oppressed.

Finally, the text asks us which response we would choose, and intimates that in order to eradicate violence performed upon us we must eradicate the problem, i.e. cut it off at its roots. It shows us the kind of resistance needed to fight the effects of any dominant, oppressive ideology (including patriarchy and / or any other form of oppression) in our lives. It shows us that our job is not done if we only alert others to its subtle dangers, and become 'outsiders' in that way; it shows us that we need to take up the spiritual weapons at our disposal, no matter how weak the oppressor or even our own community think we are, and depotentiate the enemy with his / her own sword - play his / her game, but turn it against him / her - for his / her sake as well as ours.

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