Representing the Biblical Judith in Literature and Art: An Intertextual Cultural Critique

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REPRESENTING THE BIBLICAL JUDITH IN LITERATURE AND ART:
AN INTERTEXTUAL CULTURAL CRITIQUE

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Many scholars and artists have contributed to this study of Judith and I am indebted to them. I would like to thank Shelley Reed for inspiring me with her art and giving me permission to use her Judith portrait in my work. I am grateful to Princeton University Press for permission to reproduce the photographs found in Mary Garrard's book, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*. I am also grateful for permissions to reproduce the other works of art found in the *Art Index* by: The Tate Gallery of London, the Scala/Art Resource of New York, Phaidon Press Limited, London; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, the Albertina Graphics Collection, Vienna; the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg; the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Abbeville Press, New York; Monsieur Poumeyrol and M. Philipe Comte of Pau and Robert Lightbown of Kilkenny. I am indebted to John Morytko of Westfield State College for many long hours of work in reproducing the photos for the *Art Index*. To Nicholas Mosley I am grateful for his book and his correspondence with me. Thanks to Charles Kay Smith, whose enthusiasm was essential to sustaining my tenacity; to Peter Elbow for his influence in encouraging my voice, and to Elizabeth Petroff for her outstanding scholarship on medieval women writers. I am also indebted to the excellent staff of the University of Massachusetts library, the Sofia Smith Collection, and the art and music libraries of both the University of Massachusetts and Smith College. To Mary, Patti and John I give my very great affection for understanding my need to lift up the sword.
ABSTRACT

REPRESENTING THE BIBLICAL JUDITH IN LITERATURE AND ART:
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The Biblical Judith was written over 2,000 years ago and has become elemental material for artists and writers who struggle with male and female identity. Questions about how beauty has been defined, and who has defined it, as well as the subject of violence as gender-specific territory arise out of the intertextual study of the many reworkings of Judith and Holofernes' "romance."

A rich array of Judith characters are developed by artists and writers that reveal cultural values about women. Judith as chaste widow is visually presented in the stone archivolt of the Chartres Cathedral and in Alfred Stevens Victorian painting. She is present in the literature by way of the Old English epic; through Christine de Pizan's allusion in The Book of the City of Ladies and Guillaume Salluste du Bartas' epic, La Judit (1574). Christina of Markyate's chaste sexuality is due to her reverence for Mary and Judith articulated in her twelfth century autobiography. In some of Chaucer's Canterbury tales, Judith, like Custance is upheld as the essence of virtue and purity, while in other tales, she appears suspect.
In the tradition of the "woman worthy" or *femme forte* there is Donatello's statue (ca. 1456-60), Giorgione's sixteenth century painting, and a multitude of works by Botticelli, Mantegna and Cranach. But the strength of the artist and her figures are felt in Artemisia Gentileschi's five paintings of Judith and her cohort, Abra. In studying Artemisia I found myself standing with Mary Garrard, Artemisia, Judith and the Handmaid in a newly formed collage of strength. And soon Shelley Reed, a Cambridge artist, joined us with her revision of Hans Baldung's sixteenth century painting in which she again removes the head and leaves the figure of a woman defending her right to bodily integrity.

Judith's sexual provocativeness is a favorite image in art as she becomes stereotyped as the *femme fatale*. Hans Baldung (1525), Saraceni (1615-20), Valentin de Boulogne (ca. 1626), Vouet (1621), Caravaggio (1598-99), Rubens (1630s), Correggio (1512-14), Vernet (1831) and Klimt (1901, 1909) present us with a riveting portfolio on this theme.

Contemporary literature is saturated with the sexual nature of power provoked by Judith and Holofernes. Plays by Hebbel, Giraudoux and Barker provide Judith with a far from heroic finish. But Nicholas Mosley's Judith finds a way to survive with Holofernes: heads do not roll, they connect.

Such deep and moving dialogs are formed between art and literature in the study of Judith that I hope the annotated bibliography of 480 works of literature, art and music included in the Appendix invites further study.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For over 2,000 years the Old Testament Judith has been the subject of epic, drama, poetry, prose, sculpture, architecture, paintings, woodcuts, stained glass, oratorios, operas and puppet plays. It has been referenced in countless works as far back as AD 97 (Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Capozzi 13). Although the story of Judith has an exceptionally rich history, as the already lengthy but still incomplete chronological bibliography of literature, art and music in the appendix of this paper attests, no one, to my knowledge, has attempted to study Judith intertextually in order to offer a historical/cultural critique. This intertextual study reveals the synchronic and diachronic nature of Judith art and literature.

My own inclination towards Judith as subject is personal and cultural. In the Apocryphal tale (ca. 135-104 BCE) and in other re-visions of the tale, she asserts herself and acts. Women writers and artists who have treated the subject have asserted themselves and acted. Scholars treating "Judith" have inevitably brought much needed academic attention to woman as subject and actor. In working with the story of Judith, one works on the history and status of women as doers and knowers.

I see Judith as the first woman administrator; and as a woman administrator myself, I look into her story with awe. She had vision. She discovered right action and followed it at great personal risk. Though undoubtedly given the opportunity to "capitalize" on her heroic status after the victory was won, she did not. She dedicates the riches of Holofernes' tent to God. She returns to her life as humble widow and the writer
intentionally notes that she never marries, though offers are made. Unconventionally, she frees her woman servant! She has no need to control or rule over others, though a natural leader of people.

Issues of control have many echoes in the retellings of Judith. Just as I find overt and covert reactions to my position of "power" and "status" which undermine my effectiveness as leader, so the image of Judith as a powerful woman has stimulated re-tellings of the story that diffuse her effectiveness while simultaneously asserting male superiority.

I think it is along these lines that Edna Purdie, an early twentieth century Judith scholar, connects the story of Judith and Holofernes to the Punch and Judy show.1 Though comic, we know Punch (as his name promises) to be a violent fellow who thinks nothing of throwing the baby out with the bath water (so to speak). His violent nature may well be the connection to Holofernes that puppeteers incorporated. However, an inversion certainly occurs since Punch is the actor (subject); Judy, the victim (object).

Here is a typical plot which Robert Leach derived from a source text by John Payne Collier (and which I have summarized):

1) Punch calls for Judy but Toby the dog comes and snaps at him; he snaps back with his stick and the dog seizes him by the nose.

2) Punch summons Toby's master, Scaramouch, who enters with a stick. Punch strikes Scaramouch on the head, Scaramouch whacks Punch.

---

1 In *The Story of Judith in German and English Literature* (1927), Purdie speculates that the eighteenth century puppet plays on Judith and Holofernes let to the nineteenth and twentieth century puppet comedies of Punch and Judy (76).
Punch gets behind him dancing and "'with a violent blow knocks his head clean off his shoulders'" (11). Punch dances in triumph.

3) Judy appears. He kisses her while she slaps his face and he tells her to fetch the child. She does this and exits. Punch plays with the child until it begins to cry and dirties itself. Punch gets angry and bangs its head against the side of the stage and throws it into the audience.

4) Judy reappears and, despite Punch's lies, figures out what he has done; she goes for a stick and returns to hit him. Punch gets the stick. He beats her until dead and "'tosses the body down with the end of his stick'" laughing: "'He, he he! To lose a wife is to get a fortune.'" (11).

5) Pretty Polly enters. They dance and Punch sings. They dance out together. Punch returns deciding to visit Polly. He fetches Hector, his horse; he is thrown after a lot of "by-play". Punch calls for a doctor and they go through a funny routine concerning "where are you hurt?" ending with Punch hitting the doctor. The doctor gets angry and returns with a stick. Punch gets the stick and kills him tossing his body away at the end of his stick and then dancing and singing.

6) Punch jangles a bell which brings on a black servant whose master does not like the noise. Punch parliies with the servant until a fight breaks out and Punch is again triumphant. Meanwhile a drivelling blind man comes on the scene begging. He knocks on Punch's head thinking it is the door, Punch "despatches him" (13).
7) Punch again sings and dances and the constable comes with a warrant for his arrest for killing Scaramouch. Punch hits him and continues to dance. An officer enters to bring him in for murdering his wife and child. Punch strikes him down. Jack Ketch, the hangman, comes next and with the help of the constable and officer they carry him off.

8) The gallows are brought, Punch pretends it's an apple tree, jokes; when the hangman tells him to put his head in the noose, Punch pretends not to know how and Ketch has to demonstrate, at which moment Punch hangs Ketch, noting that the only one left to get him is the devil.

9) The devil appears. Punch seems afraid but again wins and the show ends (Leach 9-13).

The fact that the second scene recorded by Collier is a beheading followed by the entrance of "Judy" deeply resonates for anyone who happens to have done a close reading of the Apocryphal story of Judith. Here we have the reversal of the Judith plot as Punch (the Holofernes character) decapitates Scaramouch just before Judy enters on stage. Judy takes up very little of the action of the show and is murdered with a vengeance in contrast to the plot of the Apocryphal tale. However, Punch's desire not to be controlled (by family, church or state) and his persistent pleasure-seeking resounds in the dramatization of the pagan Holofernes in the Old English epic, *Judith*. Although, in contemporary dramatizations by Friedrich Hebbel, Jean Giraudoux and Howard Barker, Holofernes clearly enjoys controlling others (it is understood that no one controls him),
he shares with Punch a persistent desire for pleasures of the palate and the bed. Judith in these contemporary dramas becomes a victim.

Although it is true that violence is at the heart of the Judith story, a rich array of Judith characters are developed by artists and writers--all of them giving us particular glimpses at cultural definitions of woman. In the stone archivolt of the Chartre Cathedral (c. 1220, pictured as fig. 245 Garrard, Fig. 4 in the Art Index), Judith is alone without any signs of the decapitation (neither head nor sword). She is chaste and humble, the product of belief in something "higher" and masculine. Thus, she is on her knees, bound by the robe she is wearing, it seems to have trapped her body as the folds of fabric are drawn into tension by the pressure of her knees on the surface beneath her. Her right arm is awkwardly bent upwards to her head and a large hand--that doesn't even appear to be her own--pats her head. The facial expression is a pleading concentration, so apt for the title "Judith praying for Divine Guidance." It bespeaks a servant, unworthy for the task ahead, begging for the strength that she believes absolutely is available to those who approach in the right spirit of humility.

Alfred Stevens paints Judith's upper torso (1848, Reid 384, Fig. 7; Fig. 3, Art Index). Her head tilts upward and her arms and hands hold the sword, which she rests on her right shoulder. The face is noble. The way in which her eyes seem riveted on the unseen God above reiterates Judith's absolute faith and is representative of Victorian staunchness of faith and constricting control of the sexual in woman. The Chartres bas relief and Stevens' painting express very well the literary version of Judith found in the Old English epic, Judith (ca. tenth century) and the Judith who represents confession in
Bishop Poor's *The Ancren Riwle* (ca. 1217-1220)\(^2\). This is the figure of the "unsexed" woman (Wilden 109), the woman whose virtue is consonant with sexual repression.

Goya (1746-1828) painted Judith (Malraux 140; Figures 1 and 2, Art Index) as one of the "Black Paintings" when he was in seclusion in his late sixties (Reid 383). However, his work leaves the matter of woman's sexuality in the dark, choosing rather to illuminate the *emotions* of the widow whose creative works (her sons and daughters) are continually deformed or destroyed. Reid describes the colors and mood:

> In deep blue shadow with lights of greenish yellow a very old handmaid kneels at left, shielding with her hands the candle from which light catches Judith's skirt and arm, shoulder and cap. She is a peasant girl, simple, with coarse features but oddly deep emotion. A glow of blood in her cheek, a look of awkward effort, but also, certainly a real sadness. As for Holofernes, he is out of the picture; Goya leaves us to supply the victim out of the dark lower right corner (383; see Figure 1, Art Index).

Considering Goya's oeuvre of paintings that reveal the immense tragedy of a world at war, it is no wonder that this painting focuses on the bleakness of a world that requires murder of its widows.

The drawing of Judith (Figure 2) from the Black period reveals the transforming force of anger in a despairing world. Judith stands before the huddles masses, the sword raised above her head ready to swing it through the crowd like a sickle through hay. Goya's decision to remove Holofernes so that the viewer is forced to think about the conditions under which Judith is forced to act (and the corresponding emotions of anger and sadness) is effective in gaining our sympathy for her.

\(^2\) "Judith shut up betokeneth an anchoress shut up, who ought to lead a hard life, as did the Lady Judith, as far as she is able, and not like a swine pent up in a sty to fatten and to increase in size for the stroke of the axe" (Morton 91).
Representing quite the other end of the spectrum is Gustave Klimt's 1901 painting of Judith and here she is the epitome of sexual appetite, which translates in many male-dominance texts into Judith wanting too much. Klimt enmeshes the erotic, "Come Hither" head and neck into a complex wallpaper of trees/leaves/fronds so that she appears bed-flattened, erotically ready with her eyes all but closed, her teeth invitingly bared, the huge ornate neck brace pierced by an arrow-straight tree branch in the background, contributing to the pinned down effect of this revealing pin-up (Frodl, Fig. 1, 76; Fig. 5, Art Index). For one becomes very aware of the fullness of the breasts, one covered by the see-through top, and the other seemingly revealed by Judith herself whose right arm crosses her torso above her belly button and whose hand is at a right degree angle to her arm, fingers rising to just below the revealed breast (and directing our attention there). Her fingers grasp the dark hair of Holofernes whose face is more than halved by the border of the painting, his eye closed. In this painting Holofernes is purposely marginalized as is the heroic tale.

This painting and Klimt's 1909 portrait (Frodl, Fig. 2, 77; Fig. 6, Art Index) make Judith the sister of Salome as portrayed by Oscar Wilde. Indeed, many have mistakenly entitled the 1909 painting "Salome" (Frodl 77). Frodl notes that "Judith reveals a spiritual affinity with Oscar Wilde's Salome and Aubrey Beardsley's drawings for this work" (18). I would agree. The curving lines that go from Judith's shoulder to Holofernes' head are similar to the decorative strings hanging from the stringed instrument played by a musician in Beardsley's "The Stomach Dance" (Wilde, Illustrations in appendix; Fig. 7, Art Index). The exposed breasts and curling ornate
figures are common to both as is the high sense of erotic movement in the bulging of Salome's belly and the claw like shapes of Judith's hands.

In the poem, "Judith of Bethulia," (ca. 1924), John Crowe Ransom, develops the same feeling toward Judith as that achieved by Klimt. By focusing on male reactions to Judith's beauty from both sides of Bethulia's walls, he depicts a woman whose erotically blowing veils make men desperate:

Nor by process of veiling she grew less fabulous.
Grey or blue veils, we were desperate to study
The invincible emanations of her white body,
And the winds at her ordered raiment were ominous (30).

It is the "dance of the seven veils" that Salome performs to achieve satisfaction of her appetite for Iokanaan's head. Such a bridge to Wilde's figure (interpreted visually by Beardsley, reinterpreted by Klimt) cannot be ignored. The poet matches the two women again towards the end of the poem when the narrator asks what happens to the chieftain's head: "Is it hung on the sky with a hideous epitaph?" and the response is "No, the woman keeps the trophy" (31). Thus, Judith as femme fatale is vividly portrayed in art and literature.

So from the stoney monastery where women's chastity was enclosed to the artificially lush garden of the erotic imagination where she is sex itself, Judith rides. As early as the tenth and eleventh centuries, Judith's sexuality becomes an issue. She is accused of being a whore in the midrashim versions of the story, which I will discuss later in this paper. Writers of the Middle Ages were highly influenced by the misogynistic icon of the "Rose" and Jean de Meun's ideology in The Romance of the Rose, where rape is the modus operandi of the lover. It is under this influence, I believe,
that Judith takes shape as a tease, a nag and a dangerous woman in various allusions to her in works by Chaucer (who also uses the allusion to represent female valor in the presence of male concupiscence). In reaction to Jean's misogyny, Christine de Pizan creates a Judith who is described as an honest woman in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, even though her deceit is unhesitatingly presented.

Her sexuality is essential to the dramatic tension of both Friedrich Hebbel's play of 1839-40 and Jean Giraudoux's 1930/31 play. Novelist Nicholas Mosley reincarnates Judith into a modern woman whose promiscuity is the art form for her salvation (1986). In Howard Barker's 1990 play, a taste for sex is so much an assumption of her character that her characterization as a mother, whose child is being held as insurance for the State, is mentioned as an aside and is not overtly relevant to her identity, while her desire to "hump" the decapitated torso of Holofernes moments after she has beheaded him, is. The old familiar extremes of virgin-whore represent an either/or double bind in which women today are often caught (see Wilden 108-110). That male writers and artists tend toward one or the other extreme reflects the internalized force of male supremacy, which survives through the oldest battle strategy of all: divide and conquer. But it is important to remember, even in the presence of these conversions of the Judith plot, that it is Judith who divides and conquers Holofernes. This fact of the oldest plot is retained in all the literary versions of the story or is required as a necessary background for even the most contemporary revisions (as in Mosley's novel).

Along with the role of chaste, humble widow; desperate and violent avenger, and erotic, *femme fatale*, Judith is portrayed as the *femme forte*, the representative of
politically correct causes and the ideal of justice. And Donatello's statue (Figure 250, Garrard; Fig. 8, Index) is the most exquisite example of this. The statue is believed to have been commissioned by the Medici family around 1452-55 (Capozzi 27) to represent in Judith the virtues of Sanctimonia and Humilitas with Holofernes representing Luxuriz and Superbia (28), very much in line with the Old English epic writer's idea of the two characters. The Donatello statue later came to represent the Florentine republic as it struggled against the threat of tyranny (Garrard 286).

In the poem, "Florence," Robert Lowell reflects on the artistic scenes available to the present day tourist that reflect Justice triumphing over Tyranny. But he sees with the double edge of a poet's eyes as he hails "Oh Florence, Florence, patroness/of the lovely tyranicides!" (14). That he is examining conflict itself, not the justice or injustice of any particular cause, is evident as the poem continues:

> Where the tower of the Old Palace
> pierces the sky
> like a hypodermic needle,
> Perseus, David and Judith,
> lords and ladies of the Blood,
> Greek demi-gods of the Cross,
> rise sword in hand
> above the unshaven,
> formless decapitation

3 Nancy Davidson Reid ("The True Judith") reviews some of the critical commentary about the statue, which though still praised in the sixteenth century for its "grandeur and simplicity" (379), was disdained in the nineteenth century by Maurice Hewlett (380). Reid believes its effect on contemporary viewers is powerfully positive: "He has shown us not a swift murderess, but a stern Fortitude, a sorrowful Justice" (380). She also observes that "Donatello is rare in choosing to show Holofernes still alive, allowing him the dignity of being in one piece." Horace Vernet (discussed later in conjunction with Hebbel's Judith drama) similarly portrays him alive (see Figures 29-30 in the Art Index).
of the monsters, tubs of guts,  
mortifying chunks for the pack.  
Pity the monsters!  
Pity the monsters!  
Perhaps, one always took the wrong side--  
Ah, to have known, to have loved  
too many Davids and Judiths!...

The association of David and Judith, so poetically conjoined by Lowell, reflects the positive Christian value placed on the Judith story in Renaissance art. David and Judith triumph over powerful foes, anticipating Christ's triumph over his persecutors and over death. An exquisite example is Michelangelo's *Judith*, a corner fresco located in the ceiling of the Sistine chapel across from David and Goliath (discussed in Reid on 380 and pictured as Fig. 4, 379; Fig. 9 in Art Index). The figures still seem to be moving as the handmaid and Judith leave the tent and Judith rushes to cover the head resting on a platter born on the handmaid's head. One of Holofernes' legs is bent upward and the body seems twisted as if it is writhing! The women, however, are in the light and Holofernes lies in deep shadow. Jane Davidson Reid believes the lighting directs our sympathy toward the women noting that "Michelangelo gives us release; we leave behind Holofernes' dead world" (380). Thus, Michelangelo both connects Judith with the triumph of justice over tyranny by associating the painting with the David and Goliath story, while insisting that the viewer be aware that a man, once alive, is in the throws of death while the women "sneak" away. Judith does not look our way but towards the body and we look toward it too despite the lighting of the painting. There is an ambiguity here that is akin to Robert Lowell's own doubled-edged glance at ideas of "justice" in opposition to "tyranny."
Two other notable artists of the Renaissance associate Judith more conventionally with Biblical Christian ideals. Ghiberti locates Judith next to David on his Baptistery door (c. 1410 according to Reid, 378) because "together the two figures prophesy 'Christ's victory over death'" (Reid 378).

In Giorgione's Judith, ca. 1500-1504 (Figure 5 in Reid, 380; Fig. 10, Art Index), a placid, modest Judith stands near a tree with her foot resting on the head of Holofernes. With this image, we are pointedly directed to the Genesis curse: "'I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your brood and hers. They shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel'" (Gen. 3:15). It is only by recalling this allusion that Giorgione's painting gains congruity. The figure of Judith is so modest and upright (the verticality of the portrait insists on this feeling) that it is impossible to imagine her capable of touching the head with her foot without horror. There is no horror on her face as she complacently looks downward, her hand delicately supporting the sword ("almost as a cane" Reid notes, 380). It is only as an emblem of divine justice that the painting can succeed.

With Botticelli's diptych (ca. 1470, Capozzi 29) of Judith returning with the head on a platter carried by the handmaid and Judith gracefully walking ahead of her with the sword and olive branch, scholars believe the scene was again encouraged by the Medici for whom Judith had become "'a kind of personal symbol'" (29).

Boticelli completed two other paintings on the story. "The Return of Judith to Bethulia" (see Ronald Lightbown's Sandro Botticelli, Vol. I, plate 4; Fig.11, Art Index) is positioned to the right of another panel entitled "The Discovery of the Dead Holofernes"
(Lightbown, Vol. I, plate 6; Fig. 12, Art Index). In the latter painting the headless body lies prostrate on the bed and it is viewed by his shocked and grieving men. In the former painting, Judith is contrite, not triumphant, as she leaves the scene with her handmaid.

Another interesting twentieth century intertext is John Ruskin's comments on Botticelli's "The Return of Judith to Bethulia" in "Mornings in Florence" (23:334-337). Botticelli's painting is located "just under Leonardo's Medusa" according to Ruskin, rather a different placement than beside David! He directs his reader to be sure to read several verses of the apocryphal tale of Judith (which he lists), to understand how true this painting is to Judith. He notes that there have been "a million of vile pictures" done of Judith (336) and though Botticelli's is "slight" he places it above the rest because it does not attempt to sensationalize the scene by "hinting at previously ignoble sin..." (335).

Clearly, Ruskin prefers the upright Judith, representative of fortitude than the seductress, who will predominate in later discussions.

As Capozzi points out, multitudes of sacred dramas of Judith (see Appendix) were performed to show humility triumphing over pride (53) and certainly Bishop Poor's references to Judith in The Nun's Riwle grinds home that theme, a theme which I do not believe was central in the original biblical tale and was therefore re-invested with social value to contain feminine power. By the same token, the associations of Judith with David can also be interpreted as diminishing Judith's mature inner strength by categorizing her with a young boy. Surely, Renaissance audiences were intended to

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4 "...for Judith in Hebrew is confession in English, wherefore, every anchoress saith to every priest, 'Confiteur,' first of all, and confesseth herself first of all, and often, that she may be Judith and slay Holofernes; that is, the devil's strength..." (Morton 104).
make the connection of the weak overcoming the strong: women and children
overcoming men, with the help of God (male), a marginalizing process.

In the intertexts that follow, you will see how writers and artists have developed
these themes and how in retelling or alluding to the Judith story, men and women show
how gender-politics have shaped them and how their art re-inscribes the culture with the
artists own re-constructed versions of the past, the present and the future.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE BIBLICAL STORY OF JUDITH

Judith appears formally as a Biblical tale. The unknown author of this written document is believed by Carey Moore (The Anchor Bible Judith) to have been a Palestinian Jew writing around 135-104 B.C.E. (67). The tale itself Moore believes is set in the Hasmonean period at the end of the reign of John Hyrcanus or the beginning of the reign of Alexander Janneus (Yannai). But scholars differ on both the date of authorship and the setting (see Bruns 44-45 for a good summary of the divergent views).

Much research has been done by scholars in dating the earliest texts and in estimating which texts are the most authoritative. Moore settles on the Septuagint Translation of Judith (the Greek Bible) as the most reliable rendering from what was once perhaps a Hebrew text, which is now lost. In AD 398 St. Jerome translated the text into Latin using an Aramaic text and this translation became what is known as The Vulgate translation (Moore 96). His method of translation was certainly efficient as Moore points out: "As the Aramaic text was being translated aloud into Hebrew by a Jewish scholar, Jerome was dictating to his secretary a Latin translation of it" (96) and it was done in one evening. This translation was then the source for many of the re-tellings that occurred in the Middle Ages and this must be kept in mind when describing new visions of Judith during the Middle Ages, for even a literal translation allows for re-shaping of meaning within a text and Jerome clearly had a Christian bias.
Yehoshua M. Grintz notes in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* that

At an early stage the Hebrew book was lost, but in one form or another (chiefly through translations and adaptations from the Latin), from the tenth-eleventh centuries, several abridged Hebrew versions of the work found their way back into midrashic literature (459).

J. E. Bruns indicates that the Hebrew versions may well have been translations from the Aramaic text not, as has been supposed, from St. Jerome's Vulgate Latin text (he credits A.M. Dubarle's research for this clarification) (44-45).

The inability of scholars to pin down the tale historically attests to the tale's fluidity. The book has never been accepted as canonical by official Judaism yet it was commonly read at the Hanukkah feast, though when this began is unknown (Bruns 44). Since the book was contained in the Septuagint, it was used by the early Christian church (Bruns mentions that some scholars believe that I. Cor. 2.10-11 alludes to Jth. 8.14 (LXX) and Lk 1.42, 48 to Jth. 15.10-11 (44). But St. Jerome did not accept the book

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5 The feast of Hanukkah is the only major Jewish holiday not based on the Bible (Strassfeld 162) and its story is quite interesting. It combines the military victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks with the miracle of the lamp which burned for eight days, when there was only fuel for one night (celebrated by the lighting of the menorah). The Judith triumph is in a similar vein, in that there is a military victory due to the miraculous act of one woman. The Judith tale has been folded in with the tale of the Maccabees in the celebration of the holiday. But as Michael Strassfield argues there are ancient and unexplained associations of the story that are symbolic: "It is the spirit that must be the ultimate victor; if not, the enemy will have won, for you will become like him...Victory is to be free, not to triumph" (176). This is an important resonance for the discussion of this paper.

6 I. Cor. 2.10-11: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God./For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (King James) compares to Judith 8:14: "You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or understand the way a man's mind works, how then can you
into the Catholic canon. Moore lists the many church authorities who over time accepted or rejected the book (90-91). But at the Council of Trent (16th century), it was deemed "inspired." It is rather ironic that at a point in women's history when male religious authorities, in response (or reaction, in the case of the Catholic church) to Reformation zeal, were constricting marriage laws to retain control over property and insure the perpetuation of patriarchy as well as continuing the absolute enclosure of nuns (Monter 209), that the story of a woman's victory over a militant patriarch could be sanctioned as "inspired" and therefore authoritative. Frank Capozzi believes the Council viewed Judith as a type of Mary and its aim in sanctioning the book was to indirectly attack the Protestant position which limited Mary's role (90).

Protestant authorities did not deem the book inspired but included the book in the "Apocrypha," influenced by Martin Luther "who viewed Judith as a poem and an allegorical passion play" (Moore 46). Although Luis Alonso-Schökel disagrees with this interpretation of Luther's statement (15), I believe Luther's view of Judith is born out in the many paintings done by Lucas Cranach, a friend of Luther's (Friedlander 18). In each of Cranach's paintings, even in the nude Judith, she is frozen in time and space with

fathom man's Maker? How can you know God's mind, and grasp his thought? No, my friends, do not rouse the anger of the Lord our God." (LXX, Sandmel).

Luke 1.42, 48: "And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (v. 48): "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (King James); Judith 15.10-11: "When they arrived they praised her with one voice and said,'You are the glory of Jerusalem, the heroine of Israel, the proud boast of our people! With your own hand you have done all this, you have restored the fortunes of Israel, and God has shown his approval. Blessings on you from the Lord Almighty, for all time to come!' And all the people responded, 'Amen!' (LXX, Sandmel).
chains around her neck as if she has been appropriated momentarily for something very distant from her usual self. In six of the portraits illustrated in Friedlander's book (numbers 230 (included as Figure 13 in the Art Index), 231, 233, 234, 359, 360), the facial expression of each different Judith character is persistently dazed and very distant from the deed though Holofernes' head is always near or in her hands. It appears that she has been entranced and is gradually waking up. The goal appears to be to efface the individuality of a woman in the name of God. It is apparent by the confusion of Judith with Jael in Figure 234 and in the nearly identical expressions on the faces of Lucretia and Judith (Figures 358 and 359). The title "Judith," then, is ironic. The idea that she is the conduit for God's will seems furthered by these images and supports Luther's designation of the Judith story as "allegory," in which Judith represents God-Christ in battle with Satan (Holofernes), wherein individual human heroism is marginalized.

That scholars of two religions of so distinctly differing views about "salvation" of humankind (one that focuses on a future rescue the other on a past rescue and a second coming) could convert the resources of this one story into the fabric of their beliefs signals its extraordinary power. Does not one have to surmise that this power is derived at its most basic from gender struggle for survival? Not the Genesis struggle between God and Man but the post-Edenic struggle between Woman (life, the womb, connectedness to the earth) and Man (violence, death, destruction). 7 Is this the pattern (a

7 Nicholas Mosley has his contemporary Judith character reflect upon God, Adam, Eve and Lilith in a very imaginative garden scene in which God and Lilith argue about the children--God insists that he wants Adam and Eve to defy him and Lilith, his wife, keeps telling God to make up his mind and quit sending double messages. In an almost vendictive way, God proceeds to encourage Adam to have sexual relations with his
binary one of opposites) our writers and artists have left us to sort out? Or is this testimony to the deep cultural embedding of binary (digital) thinking? Or both?

As I retell the Biblical tale of Judith, I intentionally focus on two types of threats to the body. The first, the obvious threat to people's lives, and therefore to the body politic, is apparent from the military situation which opens the story and which results in avenging/offensive action on the part of Judith. The second, the threat of violation of the female body apparent by the unknown author's choice of "Bethulia," which is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "virgin" (Bruns 45) and by Judith's allusion to the rape of her ancestor Dinah, in her long prayer, making Judith's actions in the tent of Holofernes a retributive act.

mother while he watches Eve and the snake communicate (and Eve learns a lot from the snake, which God tries to get out of her). Mosley obviously sees a connection between Judith-Holofernes struggles and Adam and Eve's and ingeniously covers a lot of ground concerning differences in the way in which men and women think and act by including the "ex-patriot," Lilith as God's spouse and our original "Mother."

Alonso-Schökel notes that the Greek word for Bethulia does not support this idea though the Latin comes closer (19). However, Alan Dundes responds to Alonso-Schökel's slighting of the connection by saying that "It is certainly semantically appropriate regardless of the plausibility of the etymology" (28).
CHAPTER III

THE APOCRYPHAL STORY OF JUDITH

The story is believed to be set in the "turmoil" of the Hellenistic period (Sandmel 67) in a "moment of historical disarray." In the first few verses a wall is described in great detail. It is a wall that King Arphaxad built to protect his kingdom from the advances of King Nebuchadnezzar. Possession of land and people define power. Balances of power shift according to the success or failure of every invasion. Even though Nebuchadnezzar has defeated King Arphaxad, he sends for his commander-in-chief, Holofernes, and orders him to conduct another sweep of the western nations, requiring them to surrender or be destroyed. Supported by his massive army, Holofernes will surround territory then lay waste in the formula of rape, burn and pillage if the people do not surrender. Envoys are sent to Holofernes from these outlying lands in an attempt to stem the tide of destruction. Even when accepting the surrender of a village, he takes their best men as soldiers and "demolished all their sanctuaries, and cut down their sacred groves" (3:8).

The Israelites, the worshippers of the "One" God, also fear Holofernes approach, especially since they have only recently returned from captivity and resanctified their altar (4:3,4). The people of Bethulia, under the command of Joakim, the high priest in Jerusalem, must occupy the passageways into the hill country. Once the passageways are lost, all of Israel will be lost. The people prostrate themselves and pray "with one voice" that the God of Israel "not...allow their children to be captured, their wives carried off,
their ancestral cities destroyed, and the temple profaned and dishonored, to the delight of the heathen" (4:12).

"They will not be able to stand up to the weight of our calvary; we shall overwhelm them" assures Holofernes after Achior has described the history of the "One" God people (for if they are not sinning, they will prosper, he tells him). "Their mountains will be drenched with blood, and their plains filled with their dead" (6:4), Holofernes boasts.

Yes, the Israelites agreed, "These men will strip the whole country bare;" (7:4). Then Holofernes further weighs down the scales, seizing the sources of water so that the specter of starvation hangs over them. It is in this sorrowful moment when Ozias, the high priest of Bethulia, under pressure from the suffering people, agrees to surrender in five days, if the Lord God does not send rain.

Judith, a widow, faithful in her worship, upon hearing of this, sends for the three elders. "Who are you to test God at a time like this, and openly set yourselves above him?" she asks. She asserts, "You cannot plumb the depths of a human heart or understand the way a man's mind works: how then can you fathom man's Maker?" (8:12-14). Seeing the circumstances as a test of their discipline, Judith insists that the people must not surrender.

Ozias acknowledges that she is right (and it's not the first time) but concludes by asking her to pray for rain. With growing courage and autonomy, she responds with a plan that "will be remembered among our people for all generations" (8:32).
Prostrating herself, she cries in prayer to the Lord:

'O Lord, the God of my forefather Simeon! Thou didst put in his hand a sword to take vengeance on those foreigners who had stripped off a virgin's veil to defile her, uncovered her thighs to shame her, and polluted her womb to dishonor her. Thou didst say, 'It shall not be done'; yet they did it. So thou didst give up their rulers to be slain, and their bed, which blushed for their treachery, to be stained with blood; beneath thy stroke slaves fell dead upon the bodies of princes, and princes upon their thrones. Thou didst give up their wives as booty, and their daughters as captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy beloved sons, who, aflame with zeal for thy cause and aghast at the pollution of their blood, called on thee to help them. O God, thou art my God, hear now a widow's prayer...Mark their arrogance, pour thy wrath on their heads, and give to me, widow as I am, the strength to achieve my end. Use the deceit upon my lips to strike them dead, the slave with the ruler, the ruler with the servant; shatter their pride by a woman's hand...Grant that my deceitful words may wound and bruise them;...Give the whole nation and every tribe the knowledge that thou alone art God, God of all power and might, and that thou and thou alone art Israel's shield (9:2-5, 9-11, 13, 14).

The impact of this allusion to the rape of Dinah and the fullness of meaning which it invokes has remained for the most part unexplored in the scholarship on the book of Judith. The footnote in The New English Bible (NEB) points out that "Simeon and Levi slaughtered the Shechemites for having violated their sister Dinah (Genesis 34). But see also Gen. 49.5-7 where their violence is condemned" (75). In reading the scriptures, one discovers that Simeon and Levi persuaded the Sechemite males to be circumcised as a condition for intermarriage with Jacob's tribe. When they are in great pain after fulfilling the condition, Simeon and Levi attack and slaughter the males, ransacking the settlement with the usual rape, burn and pillage pattern. Jacob seems justified in his anger at such an extreme response.

Why then does Judith call for the same retaliatory strength which she believes God gave to Simeon, a force which Jacob justifiably condemns? Simeon and Levi are
not upset by "rape" per se, since they themselves allow the raping of Shechemite women after their attack. Rather, it is the theft and devaluation of territory (Dinah) that outrages them. Dinah never speaks in the scriptural story. Once raped, she is kept with Sechem and his father, Hamor, as they discuss marriage possibilities with her people.

Judith retells the story of Dinah with new detail revealing a strong personal interest in the rape of women not just territorial vengeance. First, she describes the "virgin's veil" which has been stripped off, which has the effect of a public shaming; Dinah can no longer be who she once was; in revealing her, she is divided from herself. Second, she says her thighs have been uncovered, which bespeaks the physical repercussions of the act and its complete disgrace of her person. And most intensely, she states that her womb has been polluted "to dishonor her." Not only has she suffered personal degradation, she must now be forever divided from her tribe; isolated from her own group and from the women of the other tribe as well, especially if a child has been conceived.

Judith, fully and beautifully female, is herself the potential victim of rape and captive marriage should the Assyrians succeed. She violently rejects the role of victim. "God" is her way of focusing her energy. She demands the leveling of the hierarchy. She wants slaves to fall upon the bodies of princes; slaves and rulers to die together to "shatter their pride." She wants her "deceitful words" to "wound and bruise them" in order to return to wholeness. This wholeness is concentrated for her in the idea of God "alone" which she repeats "'thou alone art God, God of all power and might...thou and thou alone art Israel's shield.'" This last phrase is contraceptive-like to the modern ear.
The writer has effectively connected Dinah-Judith-Bethulia by drawing in this ancestral allusion. Judith must prevent the rape of her people; the passageways into the hills must be shielded from Holofernes penetrating forces. The Israelites are small in military power and might in comparison to the Assyrian army; other means must be developed in addition to the advantage Bethulia has due to its "position" above the Assyrian army. The creator of the story, in essence, demands a different way of responding to the crisis that is neither a surrender, nor a massacre (Simeon, Levi and Holofernes-style).

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9 In an excellent article entitled "Sacrifice and Salvation: Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith," Amy-Jill Levine makes these connections as well showing how sympathy for the gentile women who are raped by Judith's kin would make Judith far too threatening. She believes Judith is separated from "corporate Israel, from Jewish women, and from gentiles" in order to preserve "the text's patriarchal ethos" (19). Judith's historical roots which "situates her within the historical community and makes her its representative" is jarred by the fact that "it is Judith herself who confers value, meaning, and legitimacy to those whom she represents" (21). Judith is "other" and dangerous, ultimately, to the patriarchy she defends, which explains why she is "made safe," by reintegration into the community as a chaste widow. I emphasize the act of rape itself both because of the allusion to the rape of Dinah (rape has a past) and because of the alignment of Judith with the virgin city of Bethulia which is about to be raped (rape has a present) and because in retellings of Judith into this decade the theme of violence as male perogative resounds in a context in which women remain threatened (rape has a future).

10 Alan Dundes briefly picks up on this idea and then adds further evidence to the notion that the author intended a sexual metaphor: "Once understood as a symbolic struggle between man's lust and woman's honor, some of the landscape details of the book of Judith take on new significance. We can appreciate why the entrance to the city of Bethulia is described as being exceedingly narrow (4:7) . . . Judith penetrates Holofernes' camp rather than Holofernes penetrating her city," (28). He believes the Israelites' allusion in 7:4 to the inability of their hills to bear the weight of the invader is "a thinly veiled sexual metaphor" (28).
It is particularly interesting that Judith's plan, then, is one that takes advantage of the cultural reality for women. This reality bespeaks their positions as "objects" (beauty, booty and barter). After her prayer, she adorns herself in all of her finery, and as anticipated, the men are awed by her beauty (what is beauty?\(^{11}\)).

The Assyrian soldiers spread the word that this beautiful (?) woman is coming to see Holofernes and that she speaks "wisely." The writer loads the text with irony in the interactions between Judith and Holofernes (Moore discusses the irony at great length, see pages 78-85; see also Alonso-Schökel 8-11). Holofernes is resting on his bed, Cleopatra-like "under a mosquito-net of purple interwove with gold, emeralds and precious stones." This is not the anticipated posture of an army general. Judith has come with something for him (news) as though she is the suitor and he the lady to be courted. The roles are reversed. Later when Holofernes is anticipating sex with Judith

\(^{11}\) I had no idea how powerful women's images are to men until reading Beneke's book, *Men on Rape*, where he points out that the very concept of sexual attraction is derived from a metaphor from the natural sciences "where two bodies are attracted to each other through magnetic, gravitational, or some other force" (21). Men, then, are drawn to beauty against their will (as it were) causing them to choose between repression of sexual feelings or inappropriate behavior (22). In the Assyrian camp, the men understand that Holofernes has first rights to this beautiful woman and they therefore escort her safely to him (the supremacy of Holofernes, evident melodramatically, perhaps, in Hebbel, is satirized in Johann Nestroy's play, *Judith*, where the playwright shows Holofernes slaying one of his soldiers for looking at Judith with desire for her). It is clear that Judith understands the attributes that construct beauty for the Assyrian men. It should be added, that Beneke believes that men do have control over their own perceptions and "that human beings actively perceive and make choices, whether conscious or unconscious, about what they perceive" (23). He believes it time to change the belief that "...a woman's appearance is a weapon ...[and that] sexual pleasure makes one helpless" (22-23). The story of *Judith* supports the belief that woman's appearance is a weapon, proven powerfully by Holofernes' defeat. The question of beauty will continue to protrude as we move in and out of the intertexts of the Judith tale.
and has drunk more wine than he has ever had in his life and lies asleep in his bed, each act within the tent is an inverse re-enactment of Dinah's rape as described by Judith in her prayer. He is sprawled on the bed, Judith is on top of him in possession of his sword (Judith is a rapist?). She strips off the veil (the mosquito-net) and divides him from himself. His headless body will be exposed to his men who will be terrified by the disgrace of his death by the hands of a woman. His bloody head, the womb of ideas, is polluted irrevocably.

Two blows are struck--perhaps one is payment for Dinah and all the women of the past who have suffered from habitual male aggression and a second blow for the life of future generations. That the head is placed in the handmaid's food bag is a marvelous reversal of the impregnated raped woman--the nurturing womb is externalized--the criminal pays for the crime, not the victim. There is a profound click as the scales find a new balance. One could argue that "civilization" has been moved up a notch from territorial aggressiveness to intellectual and moral assertiveness that is not based on greed but on a desire for justice. Sounds good but is it? Or is her act good and bad?

The wonderful response of Ozias to Judith's deed supports the highest level of good in her action:

"...The sure hope which inspired you will never fade from men's minds while they commemorate the power of God. May God make your deed redound to your honour for ever, and shower blessings upon you! You risked your life for our country when it was faced with humiliation. You went boldly to meet the disaster that threatened us, and held firmly to God's straight road' (13: 19-20).

Judith does not directly respond to Ozias' praise, rather she immediately tells the soldiers to hang the head on the battlements and assemble their army to march out at dawn. She
instructs them to hold off the attack until enough messengers have passed the word that
the Israelites have assembled in order for the Assyrians to discover Holofernes' headless
body. As she predicts, the discovery of his body results in the disarray of the army. The
success of the attack that follows involves other tribes of Israel and after masses of booty
have been seized, Joakim, a high priest, as well as the senate of Israel come from
Jerusalem to see the results and to meet and praise Judith. Judith receives all the booty
from Holofernes' tent which she dedicates to God. She leads the people in a song and
dance in praise of God while also acknowledging her part in these mighty lines:

The Lord Almighty has thwarted them by a woman's hand.
It was no young man that brought their champion low;
No Titan struck him down,
no tall giant set upon him;
but Judith daughter of Merari
disarmed him by the beauty of her face (16:6-7).

After months of celebration in Jerusalem, Judith returns to Bethulia and we are
told by the author that though receiving many offers of marriage, she "remained
unmarried all her life" (16:22) living to a hundred and five years of age. She gives her
handmaid her liberty. She dies and is buried with her husband, Manasses, and the
Israelites observe seven days of mourning for her. The author closes simply: "No one
dared to threaten the Israelites again in Judith's lifetime, or for a long time after her
death" (16:25).

The only artist I have discovered who treated the triumphant pageant of Judith's
deed is Rembrandt whose drawing of c. 1652-55 (Reid 383), is entitled "Judith Returning
Triumphant with the Head of Holofernes." As Reid points out, there is no head, so the
emphasis is very much on *Judith* and her heroism.
CHAPTER IV

JUDITH RETOLD IN THE MIDRASHIM

Two midrashim dated late tenth or early eleventh century are translated into English in *The Anchor Bible Judith*. Carey Moore includes these two midrashim as examples of some 13 that exist on Judith. He explains that a midrash was an exposition used to "illustrate a religious lesson" (Moore 103) and was probably utilized by church teachers. Boyarin, however, delves into the mystery of what midrash is and discounts theories that simplify midrash as "homiletic fiction" or historiography (3-12). The description he prefers is "dialogical" ("every text is constrained by the literary system of which it is a part and...every text is ultimately dialogical in that it cannot but record the traces of its contentions and doubling of earlier discourses" (14). The Bible and Midrashim, then, are "preeminent examples" of intertextuality. Interestingly, these same two midrashim are associated with the hanukkah festival and are retold in a 1985 text on Jewish holidays (Strassfeld 169) confirming that the "dialog" continues.

The first midrash describes a time when a certain Seleukos was about to besiege Jerusalem (note substitutions for Holofernes and Bethulia). The Israelites are fasting and wearing sack cloth. Judith, a beautiful (?) woman, is inspired by God and leaves the city, saying a miracle will happen through her. She tells the soldiers she has a secret mission to the King. He sees her and she tells him her people are ready to surrender and that she has come seeking favor. Her beauty (?) gains his favor and it is not long before he asks her to sin. She agrees--only she is in her "impurity" and must wash herself in the stream. He declares that no one should disturb her when she goes out. He sits down to a large
banquet and gets very drunk. His men leave. The maiden comes in, takes his falchion and cuts off his head. She leaves with her handmaid through the camp, undisturbed, and returns to Jerusalem. The porters at the gate don't believe in her claim of a miracle. They say, "'Is it not sufficient for you to have defiled yourself, that thou wish to deliver the blood of Israel (to their enemies)?'" She swears the truth, but they will not believe her until she shows them the head (Moore 104-105).

It is likely that the hearers of this midrash would know the longer version of the story of Judith and so their "understanding" of this re-telling is enhanced by knowledge that Judith is pure and upright. This would make them sympathetic to Judith's plight as she defends her actions to the men folks. But "purity" itself seems to be under question with regard to female-ness in that an additional detail is added concerning Judith's menstrual period which is used here to fool Seleukos. This Judith uses both her beauty (?) and cultural assumptions about menstruation to succeed in cutting down the enemy. One needs only to read a portion of Leviticus 15:19-30 to discover how incredibly taboo a woman's person was even to the point that "everything on which she lies or sits during her impurity is unclean." Is there an underlying message here that an unclean task (beheading the enemy) is best done by an unclean servant of God. Is Judith and Holofernes, then, both the enemy in their uncleanness?

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13 Freud's 1918 paper entitled "The Taboo of Virginity" sites the "dread of shedding blood" as a factor in primitive cultures' fear of the loss of virginity, particularly on the wedding night (221). He describes the ritual deflowering of the bride-to-be in various Australian tribes so that the groom avoids the taboo. As we will see later, Freud uses his theory in a brief discussion of Hebbel's Judith drama.
The second midrash develops another gruesome scenario for women in its unique introduction to the well known Judith story. We are told that the people of Israel must comply with a decree by the wicked Javran that "whoever married a wife, she should be wedded to the governor first, and afterwards, go back to her husband" (105). They followed this decree for three years and eight months. It came to a violent halt when the daughter of John, the High Priest, was married: "When they led her to this governor, she uncovered her head, tore her clothes and stood bare in the presence of the people." Her own people were ready to burn her until she persuaded them that the crime of exposing herself was no worse than being led by her own husband to be defiled by an uncircumcised and unclean person. This provocative act, gave them the incentive to resist the decree. John, his men and the freshly adorned "bride" go to the governor and "they cut off his head" (105).

This act provokes the Greeks to besiege Jerusalem. The beautiful (?) Judith proclaims she will work a miracle. She meets the king and tells him the next day he will defeat the Israelites. He is very pleased. He "believed this Judith, and loved her, and said to her, 'Is it your pleasure to be married?'' She claims to be unworthy and asks to have permission to go out and bathe, accompanied by her handmaid. At the banquet, the king gets drunk, "lying on her bosom;...and this Judith went and lifted his sword and cut off his head and stripped off the linen garment upon him" (106).

Once again at the gate of Jerusalem, the porters do not believe Judith saying, "‘Is it not enough for you that you have played the whore and acted corruptly, that you also
The sight of the head reverses their behavior and they praise "Yahweh our God" for the miracle.

In the first part of this story, the woman's dilemma once again demonstrates the cultural hatred of women and their bodies. This nameless daughter of John, the High Priest, smashes the rules of etiquette concerning head gear and clothing in order to provoke action on the part of the religious leadership. I do not deny that the situation in which the leadership finds itself is extremely dangerous and, therefore, requires thoughtful action. But clearly from the emphasis on this woman's heroic act, the author points to its necessity despite terrible odds.

In the second part of the story, Judith uses the King's pride (he too believes she is unworthy, but loves her all the more for it) to provide her with an opportunity to kill him. Like the previous midrash, she (who is called beautiful) manipulates the cultural view of woman's body as perpetually in need of cleaning to furnish her a way home (women are beautiful and unclean?).

The teller here undermines the credibility of male leadership, something already at work in the Apocryphal tale in the person of Ozias. The weakness of men is corrected by the deeds of powerful women characters, inspired by God, who demonstrate courage and fortitude, sending a powerful message to the women hearers of the midrash (and to present readers as well). Recognizing the moral imbalance of the world of this midrash, the writer restores balance by activating women and elevating them even in the context of enduring misogyny, a persistent contributor to the moral weakness of men.
Another consistent pattern in the Apocryphal tale and both midrashim is the drunkeness of Holofernes and in each case the eating and drinking precedes the anticipated intercourse with Judith. Is the unconscious assumption produced by this pattern that women are indeed so powerful that men need fuel in order to manage them? Are these Holofernes worried that they might not succeed in taming (or pleasing) Judith (beast? beauty?) and so furnish themselves with an excuse for potential failure in the forgetfulness of intoxication? Or is there a simple moral lesson concerning overindulgence at work here (as in the Old English epic)? In contemporary re-makes (Giraudoux, Hebbel and Barker), Holofernes sobers up and Judith is defeated.
CHAPTER V

THE OLD ENGLISH JUDITH

The Old English epic, Judith,\textsuperscript{14} is dated around the second half of the tenth century and is therefore, roughly contemporary with the midrashim. However, this writer elevates the tale in form, style and moral tone. Judith becomes more glorious and less full-blooded as the instrument of God in a Christianized land.

Robert Hosmer proposes that there are advantages to the flattening of Judith's character in his dissertation \textit{Beowulf and the Old English Judith: Ethics and Aesthetics in Anglo Saxon Poetry}:

Listeners to and readers of the poem would have been unable to identify with the historical reality of a confrontation between a Jewish woman and an Assyrian war lord eight centuries before Christ, at least in any truly meaningful way. Hence, though the conflict is set in a Jewish/Assyrian context, the cultural trappings are medieval so as to foster rapport between poem and audience (152).

I disagree with Hosmer's proposal, first because there is no confrontation between Judith and Holofernes in the Apocrypha (they get along fine on the surface) and secondly because combat and battle strategy, based on the history described in \textit{The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle}, would most likely appeal to the audience, particularly the cleverness of the hero.

\textsuperscript{14}I am using Bernard F. Huppe's translation of the poem found in \textit{The Web of Words} (pp. 114-134), in my discussion unless otherwise noted.
However, I think Hosmer has something in his explanation of the poet's purpose in using "the techniques of traditional Germanic poetry and heroic values," which he says is
to declare emphatically that in a Christian age the inherited values of kin, loyalty, treasure and wisdom have meaning, but only when transmuted by Christianity and vengeance has been purged away. The remaining heroic values are operative, but subsumed in a faithful relationship, not to a lord, but to a Christian God (183, my emphasis).

Indeed, a lot of the heat generated by Judith's vengeance against injustice in the Apocryphal tale (LXX version) is gone. She is colder; detached from her ancestry. Significantly, there is no illusion to Simeon and the rape of Dinah.

From the first description of Judith, she shimmers with formality--she is in a "spacious realm" but protected by the "great Lord," the highest judge. The Ruler of creation will be defending her and the Glorious Father in heaven has already favored her because "she kept ever steady/\text{her faith in the almighty Lord.}" As Robert Kaske points out in "\text{Sapientia et Fortitudo in the Old English Judith}" (1982), "Judith, the already wise heroine, is in a critical moment granted special courage by God for a task of unwomanly violence thus becoming His instrument for the salvation of her people and a testimony of His continuing providence" (29). This is a different woman than the Judith of the Apocrypha, who uses God as her instrument for acts of vengeance and retribution. But scholars do not debate this point. However, exactly what kind of figure the Old English Judith represents is debated.

Jane Chance, in \textit{Woman as Hero in Old English Literature}, does not cast Judith as a peaceweaver, which she views as the conventional role of aristocratic women. She sees her "tropologically as a `chaste soul;' allegorically as a type of Christ and anagogically as
'ecclesia' or the church militant" (52). According to Chance, Judith, Juliana and Ellene are similar in this way and serve as "models" for Anglo Saxon women "who themselves strove to be chaste, holy and heroic" (52).

What provokes me in all of this is not that it is false--I can't tell really--but that it feels to me in the poem as though the poet has transferred the responsibility for "men's" actions on to women. Since the men are neither responsible individually or as a group, the woman must serve as the example, as God's instrument, to correct events that have gotten out of hand. Chance and others accept this re-working as positive and empowering. It is not unlike the role of the women in the midrashim discussed earlier where women are clearly cleaning up the mess of a culture gone amuck under "male" leadership (while on the surface it is women who are seen as unclean and impure because of menses). But at least the women in the midrashim are striving for a chance to be fully human, to live productive lives on the earth. The Old English Judith has no autonomy nor androgyny. Her dimensionality is gained from God the Father, Son and Holy Mother. She is nothing in and of herself and is perfect as God uses her. I can't help but see the tragedy in this for Medieval women who will try to imitate her (and the tragedy carries forward into the twentieth century as well, since women at some level still grapple with the archetype of Mary). Further, it is absolutely pertinent that she lacks any physicality. She is the unsexed woman.

This brings me to Alexandra Olson's radical proposal that the poem is political. She indicates that the poet's transformation of Holofernes from macho, loyal, army general to diabolical lecher and glutton is a political act with the following result:
The poet makes changes to the Biblical story of the decapitation of Holofernes by depicting Judith's preparations to kill Holofernes as the symbolic rape of a man by a woman, thus making the scene an inversion of the way that Holofernes planned to treat Judith ("The Rape of Holofernes" 29).

I have already proposed that in fact the Apocryphal Judith is an inverse re-enactment of the rape of Dinah, so that Olson's assertion that the Apocryphal version doesn't include such a symbol is off in my view. In any case, I resist her assertion because of the way in which the poet assures us that Judith will be protected and untouched (lines 59-61) and the lack of enmity she possesses when it comes time to kill him. She says her soul is troubled and "greatly oppressed with sorrow" (l.87-88). She prays for courage in a lengthy prayer and the Lord has to inspire her with scorn (l. 100).

Olson defends Judith as heroic warrior at greater length in another article entitled "Inversion and Political Purpose in the Old English Judith." Working with the uses of 'ellenrof' she states:

Because 'ellenrof' is a term used to characterize the heroes of both secular and religious poetry, its use makes Judith resemble an Old English warrior. Her jewelry is described in a way reminiscent of formulaic descriptions of armor... (289).

Moving in on the scene of decapitation, at the point that Judith has been given courage by the Lord, she compares "bysmerlice" which is used to describe the way she pulls his head over to her with Wulfstan's analogous term "to bismore" in Sermo Lupi. This term, she points out, was used to describe "the gang rape of English women by

15 Alessandra Rapetti in "Three Images of Judith" also believes that Judith should be aligned more with secular, heroic queens than with the saintly type of Mary. She argues that the poet "does not use a single epithet that refers to her chastity" (59). However, Jane Chance argues strongly the other way in her book.
Danes" (291). Other words such as "wealdan" (similar to "wield" of Middle English, to possess or enjoy as mistress) and the phrase wel gewelden (line 103a), she says "continues the suggestion of a scene of rape" (292). The "falchion," which is a short broad sword (phallus), she believes, completes the inversion.

Envisioning the audience to include women familiar with the threat of Danish invasions and gang rape and men powerless to protect the women (292), she argues that the poem encouraged "brave physical action to end physical abuse." Undercutting this argument is Judith's entire lack of physicality of being. Her theory stands out nonetheless as an inversion of much of the scholarship on the Old English Judith, including publications by Hosmer, Kaske, Hermann, Chance and Huppe, where the emphasis is essentially on virtue triumphing over vice resulting in a successful battle that insures the continued existence of the holy city.

However, Huppe unknowingly affirms Olson's reading of the beheading in this passage from The Web of Words:

In the beheading scene, Judith, under the wing of God, is the mover. She becomes a 'manly woman,' to use Draconius' phrase, in contrast to Holofernes, because lust, as Ambrose notes, had 'softened that warlike man, terrible to the people, and temperance in food made the woman stronger than the man; nature was not conquered in her sex, but conquered in his gluttony' (167).

He states further, "Holofernes is reduced to an object (both literally and grammatically), so that Judith handles him in his stupor like an animal at slaughter, moving his head till it is convenient to the sword" (167). In recognizing the feminization of Holofernes and the masculinization of Judith, Huppe has reinforced Olson's idea of inversion. Huppe furthers the insight in noting that "Only in the conclusion does he again become the
subject but in final ignominy he becomes a divided subject, his head rolling on the
ground, his soul descending into hell." Again, the idea of the rape victim as a divided
subject has powerful resonances.

But also within Huppé's discussion is the counter argument. Judith's position
"under the wing of God" in Huppé's terms exactly depicts the problematic difference in
the Apocryphal Judith who in her prayer draws God into her being and responds as a total
human being not as a vessel or instrument which is in and of itself "sorrowful" before the
task. Huppé also touches upon the other problem--Holofernes. In quoting from Ambrose
(and what an authority on women he turns out to be), he affirms Holofernes' personal
sinfulness. The Judith poet is quite forceful about the evil of Holofernes. Not only is he
a lecher and glutton, he is a murderer of his own men as well ("he drowned his attendants
all..." line 31). He is "dazed with sins" (line 34). Judith's function as God's hand is to
punish Holofernes for these personal crimes which are the cause of his descent to Hell.
This is not the movement of the Apocryphal tale. Holofernes' drinking is unusual (more
than he has ever drunk before in his entire life) and his desire for Judith is culturally
expected and he acknowledges that he would bring shame to his people if he did not
"entertain" and enjoy her (Jth. 12:12).

The beheading in the Apocryphal Judith is the cause of the Assyrian armies'
disarray, not so in the Old English Judith. John Hermann points out that the Bethulians
are already routing the Assyrians when the headless Holofernes is discovered by his
soldiers (1,2). The accent in the Apocrypha is on injustice and Judith's action is
corrective. The accent in the Old English epic is on sin. Judith's action is punitive.
Further, a woman does not "ask for it" in rape situations; she has not "earned" the violation; she is innocent, her only crime is her existence. To say that Judith is raping Holofernes is to enforce the idea that indeed the victim does ask for it. Instead, he is punished for a life lived wrongfully as all lives wrongfully lived will be punished in this Christian land.

Similarly, Bethulia has also changed. In the Apocrypha, its vulnerability is emphasized as well as the people's minority status as the worshippers of one-God (Jth. 4:3; 5:7,8). As the Achior scene demonstrates, there is a philosophical confrontation between the Israelites reliance on faith to win battles and Holofernes belief in himself, his weapons and men. Yet the Old English poet takes pleasure in the details of the Hebrew triumph:

...With their hands the men
drew from their sheaths their shining swords
with edges tested. They smote terribly
that Assyrian host, filled with hostile
spirit of anger they spared not one
of the invading army whom they might vanquish
no living man mean or mighty (Huppé 115-116, lines 229-235).

Force meets force equally. If allegorically Judith represents the church militant (Ecclesia) then we witness machismo with a religious purpose. Intolerance is matched with intolerance.

Indeed, though the language and form is elevated, there is a plunge in any sense of hope for human kind on the earth in the poem. Note what happens to Judith in the last verse. She dissolves into the panorama of God's creation--the wind, sky, firmament, wide lands and wild seas. This dissolving reveals this drive for detachment from human
endeavors--evil spins downward to hell, the good are released from the chains of human defect and earthly burdens to that grand hereafter. Oneness has been divided into threeness and no human effort alone can or should make any difference in the scheme of things. Planet earth is temporary and balance for those living on it made increasingly impossible in this Christian re-shaping of Judith.  

The ability of human beings to find a balance for themselves within an imbalanced hierarchy such as the one inscribed by interpretations of Christian philosophy found in the Old English *Judith* and in sermons of the growing church leadership throughout the Middle Ages is well demonstrated by a woman who found her calling with the empowering assistance of the figures of Mary, Mother of God and Judith, savior of her people. This is the story of Christina of Markyate.

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16 Balance is made difficult (if not impossible for many) by this kind of binary construction based on opposites. Anthony Wilden describes Frederick Engel's conclusion (quoting from *The Dialectics of Nature*) that the opposition between "mind and matter, humanity and nature, soul and body obtained its highest elaboration in Christianity" (161). Wilden, with Engel's support, warns us against the continuation of such dialectical thinking.
Christina was a twelfth century visionary whose life was recorded by an anonymous writer using the first person narrative. She makes use of the system at work in the Catholic Church, despite its patriarchal hierarchy, to speak in her own voice.

It may be difficult to comprehend how Christianity in its Catholic form could serve as a milieu for such individuality considering its rigid patriarchy. However, at least one scholar can fathom Christianity's liberating force. Jo Ann McNamara records the history of women in the Roman Empire noting how the Christian religion empowered women because it built a bridge "across class and gender differences" (108) and though it also aided in the strengthening of monogamy by prohibiting divorce (this is first c. AD), women found first "their own selfhood" and then "one another." She adds:

The Apocryphal Gospels and the testimony of martyrs consistently reveal a community of women--widows, virgins, and rebellious matrons--who renounced their marital condition and who turned away from the society of men to cooperate with one another in establishing a new vision of life here and in the world to come (119).

This does seem to be the case with Christina. But Rosemary Reuther's review of early Christianity during Roman times, does not see the denial of sexuality as a change for the better in the status of women:

Thus, the frequent claim that Christianity elevated the position of woman must be denied. It actually lowered the position of woman compared to more enlightened legislation in later Roman society as far as the married woman was concerned, and elevated woman only in her new 'unnatural' and antifemale role as 'virgin' (165).
Reuther's review of Christian exegete's resistance to a bi-sexual God which she believed was part and parcel of Genesis 1:27 ("God created man in His own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them") and particularly Augustine's assimilation of "male-female dualism into soul-body dualism" institutionalized the subordination of women in Christian life (156).

I believe both McNamara and Reuther are right. Despite the denial of sex which the celibate life requires, I think it can be seen as empowering when the other cultural choice is enslavement to male sexual demands. And, as I hope to show, Christina's choice of life style involves sexuality in as far as sexuality reveals one's self-hood. Reuther's work is also valuable, though, in remembering the herstory of the monastic life and its purpose in controlling the female body. For Christina, it is the retention of her virginity that signifies the integrity of her person: "'Grant me, I beseech Thee, purity and inviolable virginity whereby Thou mayest renew in me the image of Thy Son: who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit God forever and ever, Amen'" (Talbot 41). Note the lapping over of identities as the Son and Holy Spirit are folded into Christina creating an androgynous unified figure. Also, these last lines are words spoken by priests during the liturgy and Christina speaks them with her own authority.

There follows a Judith-like test of the strength of her conviction. A bishop isolates her in a room and "solicited her to commit a wicked deed" (Talbot 43). Recognizing his superior strength, she uses deceit to escape, telling him she wants to bolt the door so no one will find them. Reaching the door, she escapes. Enraged, the bishop vows to revenge her "betrayal" by "depriving Christina of her virginity, either by himself
or by someone else" (43). So begins a long persecution on the part of her family, which is influenced by the Bishop. Worn down, she marries Burthred, continuing to vow to remain a virgin within marriage.

How she views herself psychologically is well represented in a dream. In this dream, she sees herself in a field standing on firm ground surrounded by bulls "with threatening horns and glaring eyes" (99). The bulls cannot lift their feet and she is amazed. A voice explains that as long as she stands firm she will have nothing to fear. This reaffirms her resolution.

In an earlier dream, Christina's woman-centeredness reveals itself and draws upon the Virgin Mary and Judith as her cohorts. She is brought by women to a beautiful church. A priestly man beckons her and gives leaves and flowers to her to give to the "Lady." Christina gives the branch to her and she returns a twig to Christina asking her to take care of it for her. As Christina descends, she passes her husband, Burthred, who is prostrate on the ground (he is wearing a black cloak). He tries to seize her, but she passes by untouched. He strikes his head "with repeated blows on the pavement to show his rage" (77). She moves to stairs that lead to an upper chamber. They are steep and difficult but the Lady helps her. Once in the chamber the Lady lays her head in her lap with her face turned away. Christina desires to see her face. The Lady says she may look and "afterwards when I shall bring both you and Judith also in my chamber, you can gaze to your full content" (77).

Christina's joy overflows as she is now certain of gaining her "freedom." The Lady's return of the twig to Christina and her request that she take care of it for her could
well represent Christina's virginity—one thinks of the clitoris as analogous to twig.

Virginity is, of course, the Lady's main characteristic and it is what contributes to her uniqueness. Christina has this quality too and thus is of the same cloth as the Virgin. The prostrate position of Burthred resembles Holofernes position as Judith approaches to end his life. That he is banging his head because he cannot "seize" Christina again echoes elements of the Judith story since it is the head that is struck so that Bethulia will not be seized.

The strongest sexual message follows as the lady lays her head in Christina's lap in a kind of adoration of that "place," a place that is life giving, not death bound or destructive (like Burthred and his banging head). Christina herself does not want to merely be worshipped but to also participate, desiring to see her "face." The eroticism glows as the Lady says she may look and then promises more ambrosia in the gathering together of the lovely trinity of Judith, Mary and Christina.

Since this trinity is unique, it is worthwhile to ask why Judith is selected instead of Ruth or Esther. I think one must conclude that Christina's defense against perpetual physical threats to her virginal state, which represents threats to the integrity of her person, is a reenactment of Judith's defense against the violation of women (Dinah) and all vulnerable people who face annihilation at the hands of male dominance through aggression. Clearly the scene is emblematic and celebratory of female sexuality. Passion, here, does not mean suffering.17

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17 Denis de Rougement in his "entymology of passion," (Love in the Western World) believes "passion means suffering." He bases his analysis on the myth of Tristan and Isolde, believing that they are both in love with being in love and Tristan's desire for
Later in her life story, Christina meets a man for whom she feels passion. His desire for her is great and springs, we are told, from the devil, "the enemy of chastity" (115). In one of their confrontations, Christina upbraids him for it and effectively silences him: "And though she herself was struggling with this wretched passion, she wisely pretended that she was untouched by it. Whence he sometimes said that she, with her more masculine qualities, might more justifiably have called him a woman" (115). One surmises that her masculine qualities are fortitude, courage and self-constraint or discipline and his feminine qualities, then, are weakness, cowardice and self-indulgence.

The passion displayed in Christina's woman-centered dream is changed in a heterosexual situation. She feels passion for him, but it must be resisted implying that it is destructive and self-dividing. The sexes are far apart now. Indeed, the polarity established here anticipates the late twelfth and thirteenth century conceptualization of men and women as opposites (Abelard; man as sun, woman as moon; Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian arguments that place men "right" and women "left", men in light and women in darkness, etc. (Stuard 164-165). The virginity which isolates her from traditional male-female relationships empowers her to live a life of action not submission. She views sexual passion as a desire for death (45). I believe Denis de Rougement accurately constructs the male view of this experience but cannot articulate a female view because he simply does not know about it. He includes Isolde under the umbrella of the male construction. I believe there is an essential difference in the male and female view (and experience) of passion-love (and sex) and that Christina of Markyate is an example of the female experience as fulfilling, empowering, associated with life not death, heaven not hell but this proves to be a lesbian experience (and planted in a dream) not a heterosexual experience, which is often, as I have pointed out, self-dividing and destructive for women.
"intercourse" with men as a dividing force that changes her perfectability irrevocably. It appears in this context that every act of sex with man has become rape, in that it divides instead of making whole; it is death-oriented instead of life-instilling and joyous.

I believe within the story of Christina's life is an undertow of meaning for women. Women are not empowered as physical human beings until they have grown into a recognition and appreciation of the preciousness and pleasure of their own persons. The threatening and aggressive sexual politics of the male dominated culture (of which Christina's mother is the most adamant enforcer) interferes with the blossoming of female sexuality. Indeed the reference to the "deflowering" of Christina (74, 75) names the deed. This coming to knowledge of sexuality (which is deeply associated with self-knowledge) on the part of women seems to be the basis of fear on the part of the dominant male culture because it is empowering (and can be had without men as the erotic menage a trois of Christina, Mary and Judith demonstrates).

Christina of Markyate's response to heteroséxual encounters could also be influenced by the spread of Catharism, the Religion of Love, during the twelfth century, which Denis de Rougement (Love in the Western World) describes as evolving from Manichaeism (which was essentially a philosophy of Dualism) in which God is love and the world is Evil (79). God created the good and spiritual; the Rebel Angel or Satan created Evil and the material world (79). The goal for Cathars (as for Christina) was to reach the pure spiritual state.

In Catharism, Part of the Devil's force is a beautiful woman who lures souls (the pure) into bodies (the impure) (81). Thus, male Cathars were encouraged to shun
women. The sect was wiped out (and went underground) by the Albigensian War but Denis de Rougement believes the beliefs of the Cathars and Gnostics shaped the courtly love literature that emerged in Provence in the twelfth century, which was essentially a spiritual heterosexual relationship that is rooted in homosexuality. But it also obviously contributed to the attraction of the celibate life for both men and women. For women the celibate life, then, was in a sense their only defense against accusations and general cultural implications of being a temptress (involved both in the doctrine of Cathars and in Christian doctrine concerning Eve and the Devil, which was illustrated in much monastic art and architecture (see Kraus 41-62). Woman, another words, had already been drawn and quartered, as matter, not spirit, as evil not good. For both sexes the body was a kind of prison for the spirit. The flesh was weak. The gender difference allowed men to be closer to God by the fact of their male birth while women would constantly fight their association with the Devil, again by their birth as females. The struggle leads us to Christine de Pizan who, with pen (not sword) in hand defends the name of woman in imaginative ways.

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18 Rougement notes that "the courtly knight often gave his Lady the masculine title of mi dons (mi dominus) and in Spain senhor (not senhora)" (FN 2, 98). She was essentially a way of displaying talent to some other "he" and she was also conveniently married to a good provider, who would also support the lover. In its Eastern origins Rougement points out that Andalusian and Arab troubadours were "notoriously homosexual" (99).
CHAPTER VII

CHRISTINE DE PIZAN AND THE QUERELLE DES FEMMES

Because of the open and slanderous attacks against women made by Jean de Meun in the thirteenth century addition to Guillaume de Lorris' *The Romance of the Rose* (which was hugely popular, see Dunn and Patterson), it is no wonder that Christine de Pizan reacts in the extreme in her defense of the real character and nobility of women from all walks of life in her glorious city filled with virtuous women (*The Book of the City of Ladies*). That she could identify with Judith, who takes up the man's sword and uses it against him to balance the scales, is very persuasive, since Christine takes up the "pen" and hacks away at the misogyny of scholars and clerics with words, over which, like battle gear, men have reigned.

A. *The Book of the City of Ladies*

In the opening scene of *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine (as character) is despairing over the ill treatment of women in the books of men, wherein "they all concur in one conclusion: that the behavior of women is inclined to and full of every vice" (4). But as she thinks about her own character and that of other women, she cannot "see or realize how their claims could be true when compared to the natural behavior and character of women" (4).

Three ladies appear to her: Reason, Rectitude and Justice. Reason comforts her, saying "have you forgotten that when fine gold is tested in the furnace, it does not change or vary in strength but becomes purer the more it is hammered and handled in different ways?" (11.1, 6).
Reason carries with her a mirror. In this mirror one looks and gains "clear self-krnowledge." This is an interesting transformation of both the Narcissus myth, mmemorialized in *The Romance of the Rose*, in which the young man looks in the mirror of th the stream and falls in love with his own image, and the presentation of Idleness, the be beautiful woman whose only care was to comb her hair. The nuances of "reflection" rij ripple forth when these two views are compared.

And how different is the Reason of Christine's walled City and Jean's walled g: garden! Reason removes the first bucket of dirt for the start of the City of Ladies by ra rationally undoing the misogynistic arguments of Ovid, Ceco D'Ascoli and the unknown at author of *Secreta mulierum, The Secrets of Women*. In this book, the author argues that it is is impotence and weakness which causes "the formation of a feminine body in the womb o: of the mother" (1.9.2, 23). She counters,

If the Supreme Craftsman was not ashamed to create and form the feminine body, would Nature then have been ashamed? It is the height of folly to say this! Indeed, how was she formed? ...she was created in the image of God...God created the soul and placed wholly similar souls, equally good and noble in the feminine and in the masculine bodies (1.9.2, 23).

A And to Cicero's rule that "a man should never serve any woman and that he who does so debases himself..." (1.9.3,24) she asserts "The man or the woman in whom resides greater virtue is the higher; neither the loftiness nor the lowliness of a person lies in the body according to the sex, but in the perfection of conduct and virtues" (24).
Rectitude (not present in Jean's garden) carries a straight ruler "which separates right from wrong and shows the difference between good and evil..." (I.5.1, p. 13) and Justice gives Christine clear direction:

> Who follows me cannot fail, and my way is sure. I teach men and women of sound mind who want to believe in me to chastise, know, and correct themselves, and to do to others what they wish to have done to themselves, to distribute wealth without favor, to speak the truth, to flee and hate lies, to reject all viciousness (I.6.1, 14).

With such assistance, Christine's City (and her story of the City) will be beyond reproach.

But is it?

Judith is admitted to the City because she is an honest woman: "Then the people of God were delivered from the clutches of Holophernes thanks to Judith, the honest woman, who will forever be praised on this account in the Holy Scriptures" (II.31.1, 145). But in the summary of the tale that precedes this conclusion, Christine reveals Judith's method: "She kept tormenting Holophernes with fair words until her goal was in sight" (144)--hardly a representation of forthrightness. Honesty comes up again when Holophernes has expressed his desire to go to bed with her: "He told her his desire, and she did not refuse him at all but asked that, for the sake of honesty, he have his tent cleared of everyone and that he should go to bed first." Here we see Judith through the eyes of Christine using honesty within her dishonesty to accomplish her goal. Judith has many fine, heroic qualities, but she deliberately deceives Holofernes.

Along the same line, Christine's *Epistre au dieu d'Amours* includes an extraordinary statement concerning women's innocence:
If women, therefore, don't step cautiously.
They'll be deluded time and time again;
For women have no guile, and think but good;
And so it happens often, will or not,
They love the very men deceiving them;
Betrayed before they've even noticed it!
(Fenster 39, ll. 99-104).

Christine wishes to turn the tables and justifiably so.

Now, we turn to Chaucer. Here we will find it harder to see a clear polemic on
the *querelle des femmes*. Indeed, in the four tales in which Chaucer alludes to Judith, *The
Tale of Melibee, The Man of Law's Tale, The Merchant's Tale* and *The Monk's Tale*, I see
the *querelle des femmes* shifting first one way then another.
CHAPTER VIII

CHAUCER'S USES OF JUTIHE

A. The Merchant's Tale

In both The Merchant's Tale and The Tale of Melibee, Judith is used as an example of a woman who gives good council. In both tales, the example of Judith follows that of Rebecca. In The Merchant's Tale, it is clear that the Merchant particularly despises wives. In the prologue, he says "I have a wyf, the worste that may be;/For thogh the feend to hire ycoupled were,/She woulde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere" (Chaucer 115, l. 1218-1220).

The tale itself concerns the marriage of a man of 60 to a young woman; he is appropriately named January, she, May. It is in making his declaration of the good of having a wife to his gathered friends and family, that we hear of Jacob and "Rebekke," Judith and "Olofernus," Abigail and Nabal and "Ester" and Mardochee of Assuere. Of Judith he says, "Lo Judith, as the storie eek telle·kan,/By wys conseil she Goddes peple kepte,/And slow hym Olofernus, while he slepte" (l. 1366-68). Emerson Brown effectively points out that this Judith allusion has been changed from that of the tale of Melibee, in which the beheading is not mentioned. By referring the reader to the beheading, he adds doubt about women which a misogynist, like the merchant, will inevitably betray (Brown 389-391). Judith and Holofernes do make an odd couple in

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19 Brown believes that Chaucer is deliberate in the way in which the Biblical women are treated: "By having the embittered Merchant sarcastically introduce them as tainted examples of feminine virtue, Chaucer forces us to maintain a multileveled viewpoint on them, on their function in his tale, and,
this group that includes couples who are related either familiarily or by law (mother-son, wife-husband, niece-uncle).

I believe Chaucer has been particularly skillful in planting Holofernes' head at January's feet. Beware of a woman doing Godde's werke! Though January claims to be a moral and upright man, we are clear about his lewd intentions as he insists on a young woman who "shal nat passe twenty yeer, certayn" (1417) because if he settled on an "oolde wyf . . . I in hire ne koude han no plesaunce./Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye./And go streight to the devel, whan I dye" (1434-1436).

As I speculated about how Chaucer himself might view Judith (did he think her dangerous? a threat to male power?) and how he might position himself in the querelle des femmes, I was struck with the idea that if he was really serious about ridiculing the behavior of the old lecher, January, the perfect allusion here would be Susannah. Susannah is raped by two elderly men who then attempt to frame her. Appropriate to the Merchant's Tale (and The Romance of the Rose), the rape takes place in a walled garden. I was delighted to find Alfred Kellogg's article "Susannah and the Merchant's Tale" in Speculum (1960) where Kellogg concludes that indeed Chaucer does refer us to Susannah's story when he has January change the "hortus conclusus" of the Song of Songs "into an argument for the undisturbed indulgence of antique lust" which Kellogg believes "effectually paraphrases Daniel, xiii, 20: `Behold, the doors of the garden are

Indeed, perhaps on all ostensibly virtuous women. We may recognize ultimately that the Merchant's view of the women inadequate, but we can neither ignore the force of that view nor totally deny its insidious appeal to all male vanity and some male experience" 410).
closed (January is never without his silver 'clyket'), and no one sees us" (278). He also believes that the presence of the laurel tree in January's garden is deliberately parallel to the laurel tree described in a poem about Susannah under which the young wife struggled (even though it is the pear tree not the laurel under which January stands and discovers May and Damyon making love) (277). I believe this gives points on the side of Chaucer's potential defense of women in the Merchant's Tale.

The influence of The Romance of the Rose is directly felt as Chaucer describes the garden "walled al with stoon" (2029) which January has built and its fairness is so great that "I verraily suppose/That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose/Ne koude of it the beautee wel devyse" (2031-33). The walled garden also has a well as in The Romance, above which is the laurel tree that is always green and where Pluto and his queen Proserpino "an al hire fayerye" entertain themselves. Here in this garden, the husband is allowed to do to his wife "thynges whiche that were nat doon abedde" (2051).

We already have a sense of the repulsiveness of the old man in the first love scene which is described in detail. The bride moves through these scenes woodenly, as one would expect in a forced marriage. So Chaucer develops a sympathy for poor May which then is turned into another direction, albeit humourously, by her encouragement of Damyan (who Venus has enslaved, l. 1776, again echoing The Romance) and her ultimate cuckoldry of January (the love-making occurs in the limbs of a pear tree above

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20 Again Emerson Brown's insights on the presence of Pluto (the virulent ruler of Hell who conquered Proserpino) and Proserpino (the ravished prize of Pluto who now conquers Pluto) demonstrate how much Chaucer was his own man in the creation of this tale.
the head of the presumably blind January, whose sight Pluto restores). The ending establishes the tale as fabliaux, since May quickly makes up an excuse that she was in the tree with Damyan because she had been told this would work to restore his sight and the old man, wanting to continue to enjoy his May, easily accepts her explanation.

The Epilogue is 22 lines of invective concerning the Hooste's wife and so we have two bookends of misogyny enclosing a fabliaux that reveals both the foolishness of men and the inconstancy of "wives." Ultimately, I agree with Emerson Brown that we are suppose to experience both views.

B. The Tale of Melibee

Prudence, an excellent polemicist in her own right, counters the heavy misogyny of Melibee with many examples of good women, including once again, Judith who "delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernes, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it" (171). Once again, Chaucer selects Judith because it has complicated implications which help reveal character and the relationship between the central characters. And it does center on the differences between men and women.

Prudence's aim is to dissuade Melibee from avenging the attack on his house, which has caused serious injury to his daughter and less dangerous injury to Prudence, as well. Should Melibee know the story of Judith, he would remember that Judith's act is a justified act of vengeance. Indeed it is Judith's action not her "council" that saves Bethulia. However, Judith is a very apt heroic figure from the point of view of Prudence, who is very much like her in knowing clearly what is right and stating plainly that the
men are wrong and then following her beliefs consistently. Melibee is very much a Holofernes figure. His name means "a man that drynketh hony" and Prudence believes "Thou has ydronke so muchel honey of sweete temporeel richesses, and delices and honors of this world, that thou art drunken, and hast forgotten Jhesus Crist thy creatour" (178). She seems worried that Melibee has "lost his head" since from the start his grief was so powerful and was so rapidly replaced with the desire to do battle against his enemies, regardless of consequences. In essence, then, Prudence glosses over the deeper impact the allusion to Judith might otherwise have had, especially the justification of vengeance, but also the potentially insulting comparison of Melibee to Holofernes in order to overpower Melibee with good examples of good women giving council and saving their men. The resonances of her choice of Judith for the hearers/readers of the tale enrich the meaning of Prudence and Melibee's conflicting attitudes. For indeed, Prudence, like the Jewish people, trusts not in the sword but in God for deliverance while Melibee like Holofernes and the Assyrians relies on physical might. Like Judith, Prudence is successful in preventing a disastrous war.

C. The Monk's Tale

The purpose of the Monk's Tale is to give examples of the fall from greatness by many famous characters (including Cenobia). Here included is "De Oloferno." Chaucer first describes the might of Holofernes and in the closing verse, as with the other examples, he warns the reader or listener to take heed: "And yet, for al his pompe and al his myght,/Judith, a womman, as he lay upright/Slepynge, his heed of smoot, and from his tente/Ful pryvely she stal from every wight,/And with his heed unto hir toun she
wente" (l. 2570-2574). It is clear that the emphasis is on Holofernes excesses but there is not even the smallest description of Judith's uprightness, fortitude, religious fervor, or her beauty. It is Holofernes who is "upright." She is "a womman." So again, it is impossible to get a reading on Chaucer's view of Judith. However, I read the passage as more negative towards Judith than positive due to the sentence construction and the intonation of the line "Ful pryvely she stal from every wight" which implies sneakiness.

D. The Man of Law's Tale

In The Man of Law's Tale, sexual politics surge beneath Custance's ship and here Chaucer, in the voice of the Man of Law, compares the extraordinary strength Custance found to push the thief off the ship to Judith's strength in beheading Holofernes:

Who yaf Judith corage or hardynesse  
To sleen hym Olofernus in his tente,  
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse  
The peple of God? I seye, for this entent,  
That right as god spirit of vigour sente  
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,  
So sente he myght and vigour to Custance (939-945).

Here Judith clearly lands on the virtuous side and there is no doubting the compliment to Custance in making the comparison. Custance too has courage and hardiness to put up with the many miseries found in this tale.

The thief that has come on board to attack Custance intends to steal her "and seyde he sholde/Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde" (916-917). According to the advice in Jean de Meun's The Romance of the Rose, this is appropriate behavior since women who say "No" mean "Yes" (35.112-120). However, in this tale, sympathy for Custance is assured:
O foule lust of luxurie, lo, thy ende!
Nat oonly that thou feyntest mannes mynde,
But verraily thou wolt his body shende.
Th'ende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blynde,
Is compleynyng. Hou many oon may men fynde
That noght for werk somtyme, but for th'entente
To doon this synne, been outhere slayn or shente!

(925-931).

Counterbalancing this positive view of the virtuous Judith and Custance, is the presence of the two female villains. These two mothers-in-law are exceptionally evil. However, an investigation of Chaucer's sources reveals that at one time the villain was Custance's father who was pressuring her to marry him (Schlauch 157). Interestingly, in Chaucer's version, we are never completely convinced that Custance's relationship with her father is so very good since he sends her away when she clearly does not wish to go. By story's end, she is left with him, making Chaucer's revision of the story a reversal of the action of the other versions and an important denial of incest as practice.

Chaucer's uses of the Judith allusion can be seen as a sign of his adeptness in expanding the view of the reader to the situations in which his characters find themselves. The very overtness of the misogyny of the main male characters in The Tale of Melibee, The Man of Law's Tale and The Merchant's Tale allows the reader to see that misogyny leads to no good. It is a negative passion that causes men to stumble and fall. It is probably not overleaping to say that Chaucer hints that misogyny is based on pride and insatiable lust which is what destroyed Holofernes in the Old English epic. This is born out in the Monk's poem to Holofernes. And, I'd like to believe that in exposing misogyny, Chaucer defends women. But I can't quite get there from here since he ultimately leaves polemics to others and entertains.
The presence of Judith and Holofernes in the work of Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer reflects the medieval tension between men and women. Judith and Holofernes continued to represent "difference" as opposition in the late Middle Ages. People sought safety in a dangerous world by placing virtue and vice far apart on a line. But already it was becoming impossible to delineate good and evil so easily when survival was so hard. Judith is virtuous but dangerous. Holofernes is evil but also rendered harmless and helpless by story's end (a victim of Fortune's wheel in medieval terms). The story of Judith allows a woman to be masculine (Judith with sword) and men to be feminized (Holofernes without sword) and there is a great fear of such role reversal in the medieval world. I believe the fear is mixed with homophobia. Men could and did love other men (e.g. the Lover and the God of Love in The Romance of the Rose). Women could and did love other women (Christina of Markyate and the Lady). Yet, it was thought to be against God's laws of nature. Christianity, nevertheless, built whole communes of same sexed groups while condemning sexual pleasure for its own sake and sanctioning procreation only between husband and wife. The genders were separated by the vast inequality that was perpetuated between them, yet they were suppose to join happily together in the most intimate of ways, for the survival of the species.

Women were depicted openly as evil because of Mother Eve's association with Satan. This was found everywhere: in literature, art and architecture. Women were considered dangerous to men, as The Nun's Riwe, so powerfully reflects by the constant vigilance required to keep down their "natural" waywardness. Thus, the church incorporated into its daily rituals a perpetual and tortured double bind: men should not
have sex with other men, they should procreate with women, who they must never trust. Women must diligently control a fleshly lust that they had rarely, if ever, experienced, while being expected to tolerate sex on demand (rape) within marriage for procreation's sake.

Certainly, the ancient view of women as territory, was not erased by Mary, Mother of God, who became the habitation of God's son. Rather, women became almost completely associated with habitation, the home. Perfection and beauty were clearly attached to virginity and purity, and only Mary, Mother of God, was able to retain her virginity and still have a child.

I strongly believe that the idea of beauty in women was constructed by the eyes of men and since they wanted the beauty they had created, it became a mirror to which they were perpetually drawn. What was a woman's idea of beauty? There is silence. But as Judith's story indicates, it did not matter when it came to survival for women--they either put on the male projection of beauty (by donning bracelets, dyes, bells, gold, scents) to attract men or avoided it to protect themselves from men. It's use was indeed weapon-like for either defensive or offensive purposes (as it still too often is).

Tracing retellings of Judith from ca. tenth century to the fifteenth century, we discover the influence of Christianity upon the writers' texts. Increased dramatization of God's omniscience and humanity's sinfulness weakened the power of Judith as a woman leader, particularly in the Old English epic. Although in Christina of Markyate's life story, Judith is recalled in conjunction with the Virgin Mary, she is nonetheless a figure of strength. Christina aligns herself with Judith in defending her right to virginal purity
against aggressive forces. Christina does not use violence, replacing violence with strength of will and unfaltering faith, another particularly Christian ideal.

In Chaucer's tales, Judith references tend to be used as testimonies of moral strength, fortitude and forthright action, as in the *Man of Law's Tale* and the *Tale of Melibee*. While in *The Merchant's Tale*, the Judith reference cuts first one way, then another (Judith saves her people, but slays a man in his sleep). Chaucer presents us with the two sides that, according to folk history, is a part of every story. On one side he shows how outrageous a misogynist can be towards a woman, while on the other he shows some justification for man's action by elaborating on and dramatizing the faithlessness of wives. In *The Monk's Tale*, Judith is an example of Nemesis. Her beauty is used to entrap a once strong warrior. She is his worse fate. In viewing the variety of ways Chaucer applies allusions to Judith, one sees the virtuosity of this immensely talented story teller who manages to portray both the religious and secular flux of his time.

The presence of Judith in Christine de Pizan's City of Ladies returns her to the status of the virtuous and courageous woman. Although Judith is not a trembling virgin in Christine's description, she does emphasize her morality. The result is to flatten Judith's role somewhat, while promoting Christine's goal to populate her City with many virtuous and flawless women.

And what of the Renaissance? Does Shakespeare make Judith a subject of his vast talents? No such work has been discovered. And yet Shakespeare presents us with strong-willed women in several plays, including Lady MacBeth, Portia in *The Merchant*
of Venice, Rosalind in As You Like It, Cordelia, Regan and Goneril in King Lear. Some are virtuous, others are not (a reality of our own times). But there are resonances to be found between Shakespeare and the unknown writer of the Apocryphal Judith. Portia uses disguise to save Antonio by dressing as a doctor at the trial. Rosalind disguises herself as the boy, Ganymede, to save her life. In The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It, both female characters must leave "home" in order to resolve conflict. In King Lear, Cordelia must leave her father's kingdom and go to a foreign land in order to save him and the kingdom. Judith disguises herself as a beautiful temptress and must also leave Bethulia and enter the land of the pagan Assyrians in order to save her people. These dramatic strategies of character disguises and journeys away from home are common to both writers. And just as Portia was not a doctor, nor Rosalind a boy, Judith was not a temptress in the Apocryphal tale.

Although we have no Shakespearean work of Judith, there can be found some ten dramas written by German writers in the sixteenth century. In addition, the following works were written on the story: a German poem and ballad; an English drama and two poems, an Italian tragedy and a French epic written in French and then translated in English by a Scottish scholar (see Appendix B). It is this last work that we turn to next. In it we find many classical allusions so typical of Renaissance writing. There are pastoral metaphors and there is Reformation zeal as well. However, we are not that far from the medieval rendition of Judith, since Guillaume Du Bartas' epic, translated by Thomas Hudson, emphasizes the same predominance of God over sinful man that characterizes the Old English Judith.
André Baïche, the commentator in the 1971 edition of *La Judit*, notes that time has not been kind to Guillaume Salluste du Bartas. His works were published in France in 1611 but by 1614 publication ceased and by 1623 they were no longer in France (Baïche xii). He notes that in the eighteenth century his name is unknown except on bibliographic lists of his works. Nineteenth century critics speak of him as a tasteless writer who wrote without pleasure (xii). He is seen as affectatious even to this day, according to Baïche.

But Baïche believes that affectation is rare in *La Judit* (xiii), which was first published in France in 1574, the year Charles IX died of consumption and a time of civil war between the Huguenots and the Catholic crown, which was guided in large part by Catherine de Médici, Charles' mother. The poem was commissioned by Jeanne d'Albret, princess of Navarre, in 1564, when Guillaume was only twenty-years-old. Jeanne was to become the "Queen" of the Huguenot revolt, remaining a steadfast Calvinist despite her husband, Antoine of Navarre, who accepted a deal from Spain in which he would receive the kingdom of Tunis if he banished all Hugenots and became a Catholic. Her importance was also increased by the fact that their son would be in line for the throne should anything happen to Catherine's sons (and indeed, her son becomes Henry IV).
Why did Jeanne commission Guillaume to do this particular work? Although it is true that he fought against Matignon (Baîche LVI) on the Protestant side, he converted to Catholicism in 1564, the very year he began working on La Judit. Perhaps this was a political necessity, but perhaps not. Baîche believes that Guillaume, above all else, was opposed to war (LV). He casts him as a political conservative who was an enemy to change particularly the kind that leads to death. He states that "toute reforme porte on elle un germe de mort" (LIV).

The four civil wars that occurred in France between 1562 and 1576 were deeply blurred in terms of religion and politics and the two were inextricably linked. This span is close to that which marks the beginning writing and final publication of La Judit. Significantly, the dedication was changed to Marguerite of France (a Catholic), who married Henry of Navarre (Henry IV, Jeanne's son) because Jeanne had died. Undoubtedly any hopes of distribution of the work depended on the support of the royal house, regardless of religion, and so the change is understandable.

However, the change did not affect the piety and zeal with which Guillaume imbues Judith. Baîche notes that Jeanne d'Albret may have felt the miraculous defeat of Françoise de Lorraine at the Battle of Orleans resembled the story of Bethulia's rescue. Françoise suddenly dropped dead on the battlefield just as he was about to overwhelm the outnumbered Huguenots. Baîche presents the opinion of other scholars that believe the work was intended to represent the Reformist cause oppressed by the tyranny of the Catholic royalty in the person of Charles IX and Catherine de Médici, but Baîche does not feel the case is proven. Another words, although Calvinism was Jeanne d'Albret's
chief issue, it was not Guillaume's issue, though the religious struggle in France deeply affected everyone's daily life.

Judith Sproxton sees the work as reflective of the spirit of the Reformist pamphleteers, especially in the condemning of Joachim's advice for the Israelites to humbly surrender to Holofernes. But she believes the references to Calvin's theology stimulated his readers' responses and his intentions were not doctrinal but "aesthetic" (16-18).

Thus, Guillaume makes changes to the biblical tale that emphasize a Christian stand very much like that of the Old English epic. For instance, he makes it clear that Holofernes wishes to attack the people of Bethulia because of their religion (which was not Christian but the "chosen people", nevertheless, from whom the Son of God would come), unlike the Holofernes of the Apocrypha, who intends mainly to follow the orders of his King. He also emphasizes Holofernes crime to be not only idolatry but blasphemy as Holofernes attempts to deal with "God" on an equal footing. Holofernes' gluttony is also hailed as part and parcel of his defeat.

Repeatedly we are made aware of the all-powerfulness (toute puissance) of God and the sinfulness of humanity. Thus, it is clear that Judith's actions are such that "la fin justifie leur emploi" (Baïche XLI). Guillaume reduces the character of Judith in his efforts to demonstrate that "Dieu maître de la nature, maître du cours de l'histoire humaine" (LXIII), consistent again with the Old English epic. In using a woman to defeat the enemy, God allows the humble to be exalted. Baïche sees this as one of the points of weakness in the epic--his construction goes too far, Judith becomes too
incredibly good to be loved (LXV). It seems to me that his ultimate goal is--in the spirit of Renaissance glorification of "man" and the influential Reformation movement--to "show off" his learning and teach the gospel. Let's look at exactly how he accomplishes this feat.

I am using Thomas Hudson's translation which was published in 1584. Hudson was a friend to James VI of Scotland who assigned Hudson the translation after Hudson had claimed (at dinner) that Guillaume's epic could easily be translated into Scots. What we will see happening here is the cross-structuring of the theme of Judith's helplessness (feebleness) and Holofernes' gluttony from the Old English epic (polished up with a dose of Protestant hell-fire-ism) with both romantic allusions to Cupid (à la Jean de Meun), pastoral figures and Classical allusions, the combination of which, makes this work representative of the late Renaissance period.

The book begins with the typical dedication, followed by an introduction in which the author notes that God sends the army as a test of his people because they had gotten rather unreliable as people do when they are at their ease. Quite straightforwardly, he notes that "the Lord used her as an instrument for the deliverance of his people" (lines 45-46) which is exactly the case in the Old English epic, Judith. He describes the children of Israel scattering in a panic at the arrival of the huge army comparing them to a pack of sheep that has a wolf among them (I. 53-54). Following this pastoral image, comes a classical one as the Holy Judith is compared to Phoebus "that above the starres doth shine" (I. 143).
Ioachim introduces confession into the prayer for God's help and note the masochism so typical of Reformation rhetoric: "But rather we confesse (as true it is)/ Our sinnes, have iustly merite more then this" (I.159-160).

Guillaume has a "subtill worlding" suggest surrendering much earlier in his text than when this occurs in the Apocryphal tale (Jth. 7:24-29 just before Judith's entrance). This allows for a zealous man (the narrator) to give many examples of God's power which encourages the people to go back to the towns and prepare enthusiastically for "this furious storme of Mars for to abide" (I.358). An extended metaphor about bees building cells, drawing honey, defending their food describes the work of the "sonnes of Jacob" (I.367, 373, 374).

In Book II, Holofernes becomes aware that the Israelites are planning to advance against him and he ridicules them as "a packe of country clownes" (II.7). Achior describes the Jews history in far greater detail than in the Apocrypha (which as Baïche has already noted helped to establish the work as an epic). Of course, Achior is reproved for his stories because Holofernes and the others believe he is attempting to save the Jews. Achior, as in the Apocrypha, is left tied outside Bethulia's walls. The overall theme of this book is that God will relent if they "truely will repent" (II. 505-506).

Book III opens with another pastoral metaphor describing the great variety of people gathered within the massive army outside Bethulia's walls:

The meeds in May with flowers are not so dect,
of sundrie savours; hewes and sure effect,
As in this campe were people different farre
In torings and maners, habits, tents, and warre (III.7-10).
Things heat up with the presentation of Achior outside the gates. The Hebrew people engage in a skirmish against the Assyrians but are soon surrounded and forced to retreat. The narrator attempts to stimulate the audience's understanding by sharing his own fear of the Hebrew plight: "My hand for horrore shakes, and now no more/can lead my sacred pen as erst before:" (III. 243-244). He then describes the terrible thirst that the people experience when the water supplies are cut off. People are dying and mothers are feeding spit to their babies. And yet once again the poet-narrator interjects his own feelings into the matter:

Yea I myself must weepe, who cannot speake
the woes, that makes my heavie hart to breake.
And so wil silent rest and not reherse,
But conterfait the painter (in my verse)
Who thought his coulours paile could not declare,
the special woe, King Agamemnon bore,
When sacrificed was his onely race:
with bend of black, he bound the father's face.
(III.313-319).

It is undoubtedly such insertions as this that give modern readers the most trouble.

However, not helping the matter much is the description of Judith "whose eyes (like fountains two) were never dry..." (III.413-414).

Judith, who is righteously reading the scriptures and trying to think what she can do to help her people against this Tyrant, decides that it is not seemly for "a wife to handle sword or speare" (III.436). The wind suddenly blows the pages to the story of

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21 Sproxton notes that the narrator must necessarily present himself as fallen (as in this quote) because God is the center of the narrative, not man (9-10).
Jael and Siceras. Now this is the ticket and she determines to "devorse the Heathen soule from such a sinfull corse" (III.448).

When Judith hears that in five days the people will determine the fate of the village, Judith goes to town to reprove the "princes indiscreete". In the Apocrypha, Judith sends her handmaid to bring the elders to her home. The result is much the same, however, as the "captaine" admits they have done wrong but knows no way out of the commitment to the people. He instructs her to go "weep" instead of pray: "so that thy weepings may appease the yre of that hie Judge" (III.494-495). Unlike the Judith of the Apocrypha who tells the elders that she has a plan, this Judith agrees to weep and if God gives her grace she will "Repell the siege of this afflictid place" (III.498).

In Book IV, the author only gives a cursory glance at the allusion to Dinah's rape indicating that Holofernes is worse then Sechem's ill because he "entend[s] thy holie name for to confound" (IV.11). It is here that we get the infusion of Romance as Judith prays that Holofernes be enthralled by her beauty (IV. 25-26). In the Apocrypha, Judith asks first that Holofernes be deceived by her words. Achior then asks about Judith as he spots her leaving the camp. A new character called "Carmis" is invented to describe Judith's entire life and to moralize about her upbringing. There is much emphasis on her reading of the scriptures which clearly reflects respect for the written word in the Renaissance. Emphasis is placed on her restraint; she serves and nourishes like a nurse (IV.143-144) and honors her parents. Even her sewing involves the depiction of biblical scenes (including the stories of Lot's wife, of Susannah, and of Joseph's temptation by the governor's wife). She plays her lute and "loves firie dart, could never unfriese the frost of
her chast hart" (IV.195-196). She accepts the arranged marriage and honors Manases as Lord (IV.200-210, 228).

When she is seen by the Assyrians, the beauty of her eyes are described as the place "where Cupid chastly hydes/His subtill shafts that from his quiver glydes" (IV.345-346). When Holofernes speaks to her, he refers to her as "My love" and she immediately pleads the weakness of her Sex (IV.385-386).

In the fifth book, Holofernes' mad love of Judith is described. It makes him neglect his duties. His enthrallment is captured in these lines as he becomes like Jean de Meun's heroic lover:

I wretch am like the wretched man indeed:
the more he hath the greater is his need.
Although he deeply plonge in water cleare,
To quenche his thirst: Yet is he not the neare.
For so do I respect the heavnly grace,
that largely is bestowde upon his face,
that with mine eyes I dare not her behold,
My toung doth stay and in the pallet fold (V.75-86).

Bagos is portrayed as a court lackey who never means well for his master, only gain for himself. He tells his master that there is no need to extend himself since the fish is already in his net. This gives Guillaume a chance to complain about the shallowness of court servants who are camelion like (V.168). Judith meanwhile gets busy with her makeup and then goes to his tent and observes various tapestries that portray various stories from antiquity, detailed by the author.

Holofernes shows up and can barely contain himself. She stalls by asking him why he wants to kill her people. Good question--which takes him several pages to relay but which boils down to these lines: "Now as the heavne two Sunnes cannot containe,/So
in this earth two kings cannot remaine of equall state...(V.251-253). He includes the history of his king along with the gorey details of battle and his own great prowess in rescuing Nebuchadnezzar from defeat. This ends book five.

Book VI is the concluding book and includes the banquet at which the gluttony of Holofernes and his men is described. The excess drinking is described as a plague and a poison to the warrior state which "Makes the noble harts effeminate" (VI.17-18) another fine echo of the Old English epic. Once he has dismissed the others, he attempts to embrace Judith who urges him to go to bed where she will join him without her clothes. He undresses, lays down and falls asleep. He dreams of devils attacking him.

Judith then battles with her own feebleness:

Then sayd she Iudith now is tyme, go to it,  
And save thy people: Nay, I will not do it.  
I will, I will not, Go, feare not againe (VI.105-107).

She worries that by committing murder she will be forsaken by heaven and also fears for herself once the deed is done ("what if they pollute thee like a slave?" VI.129). She prays and then picks up the sword but drops it and falls down. Then, getting up and raising the sword, with one stroke she beheads him and his soul goes to hell (as in the Old English epic). She returns to Bethulia with her handmaid who carries the sack. They are immediately allowed into the gates of the City. When Achior sees Holofernes' head, he is converted. A soldier mounts the head on the walls and people come and spit in the face, pull the beard, poke out his eyes (as in the Old English epic). Aurora breaks and the Hebrews attack the army. The army is surprised and when Bagos enters Holofernes' tent
he panics as he realizes that a woman has beheaded the Chief. The epic closes with Judith leading the Dames and virgins in a song of praise to God.

It is not surprising that this Renaissance treatment of Judith returns her to trembling feebleness. The Renaissance involved the uplifting of Man as "the Kernel of the Universe" (Hay 9). Guillaume's self-conscious writing demonstrates his awareness of a certain grandeur in wielding the pen, shaping Nature (using natural imagery to enlarge human situations--he especially liked the pilot-ship-sea comparison and uses it three or four times). In focusing on God rather than Judith, he attempts to demonstrate his own comprehension of God, something Hay's believes was very much a goal of Humanists of the time (9).

Now, to again approach the Judith story from a female view with the art of Artemisia Gentileschi (seventeenth century) and the scholarship of Mary Garrard (twentieth century). Perhaps, here we can discover a female idea of beauty and virtue that is not associated with the war game of love or the toute-puissance of God. Indeed, neither the artist nor her subject seem to have trembled before her task.
CHAPTER X

JUDITH IN THE ART OF ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI

AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF MARY GARRARD

Judith was an important subject of the great painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-ca. 1652) who devoted her time and talent to five (known) major works on the Judith story. In Mary Garrard's important "monogram" on Artemisia, she devotes a full chapter to the Judith work and I am very much in her debt.

Garrard approaches the life and work of Artemisia with the premise that "women's art is inescapably, if unconsciously, different from men's because the sexes have been socialized to different experiences of the world" (5). She sees Gentileschi as a maverick who adopts the female perspective yet is different from the other women artists of her era (6):

[She] aggressively modelled her style upon the most contemporary trends around her, modifying it freely to accommodate personal or local tastes, moving from Roman Caravaggism to exaggerated fiorentinita, to Caravaggism again and to Neapolitan classicism, with a dazzling virtuosity equalled by few male contemporaries (6).

Bearing much influence on her oeuvre was Michelangelo, whose great-nephew was her patron, and Caravaggio (7). Pertinent to the study of Judith art is Garrard's belief that "Artemisia's inspired transformation of formal prototypes produced a special mixture of masculine and feminine elements, and the creation of what might be called an androgynous ideal" (7). Before discussing her Uffizi Judith, which is one of the best examples of this effect, I want to reflect on the one event in her young life that
undoubtedly shaped her view of men and women: Agostino Tassi's attack and rape of Artemisia in her own home.

Orazio Gentileschi, Artemisia's father, was a well-known artist in his own right (his painting titled *Judith and Her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes* is located at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, see Fig. 15, Art Index). Since Artemisia proved the most talented of his children (she was the eldest and the only girl), he trained her to paint and was very proud of her ability (Garrard 13). From a young age she was surrounded by artists who were her father's friends. One such friend was Agostino Tassi, known for his skill in architectural perspective (20).

Obviously, Orazio did not know that Tassi had been married and it was rumored had had his wife murdered (Garrard 404, 412). He also had a record of imprisonment and a reputation for licentiousness (412-413). The rape trial testimony reveals that Tassi had set his sights on Artemisia to deflower her. With the collusion of his friend, Cosimo Quorli and Artemisia's female companion, Tuzia, he was able to arrange circumstances so that he could have his way by force and without interruption in her own room. It is important to understand the ramifications of the rape beyond the terrible physical and emotional pain that remained unspoken. She was a virgin and in seventeenth century society, virginity paid off. The suit filed in March 1612 was based on injury and damage done to Orazio Gentileschi not to Artemisia.

After the rape, Artemisia insisted that Tassi marry her, knowing that her reputation and value would otherwise be ruined. He stalled and continued to have sex with her. She permitted these actions because she hoped that marriage would follow (Garrard 21-
22). He actively worked to insure that no one else would marry Artemisia (22) while escaping the "responsibility" himself. Because Tassi attempted to blame Artemisia for his actions in the trial, she was tortured with thumb screws to insure that she was telling the truth. Garrard includes the entire text of the trial in the appendix of her book.

One month after the trial ended (Nov. 29, 1612), Artemisia was married to Pietro Antonio di Vincenzo Stiattesi, a Florentine artist (34). She had a daughter during her married life. But neither marriage nor motherhood changed her dedication to her work or her productivity. She was painting for the Médici court by 1618 if not sooner (36) and was on her way to surpassing her father. Garrard believably surmises that Artemisia was so hurt by the exposure of the trial that the relationship with her father was strained at best (36). She was signing portraits with the family name of "Lomi" instead of Gentileschi signaling her determination to be separate from her father (36).

Mary Garrard has a very thoroughly landscaped history of "Historical Feminism and Female Iconography" (141-179) which helps a reader to understand the environment within which Artemisia worked. Because there is so little material "only some 34 paintings and 28 of her letters remain to speak the truth" (138), there is no way to present Artemisia's position on these issues as a polemic. But the art of the time reflected feminist ideals as well as misogyny. As Garrard points out there were "several editions of Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus (which) were accompanied by woodcut illustrations" (145). Paintings of women worthies were often seen in print (145). But Garrard notes that "nearly all the female types adduced in the tradition of women worthies effectively conveyed the message that woman's worth depended upon her sexual virtue"
We've already seen this at work in the literature I've surveyed--Christina of Markyate seizes upon virginity as her emblem of freedom from men, saving her erotic self for other women. Bishop Poor insists that women confess (Judith means confession!) in order to externally control sexual expression. The Judiths of the Old English Epic and Guillaume du Bartas' Renaissance epic are virtuous to the extreme.

Garrard again rightly describes Judith as a virile heroine: "She became, for many, the strong woman who is too manly, the virago" (149). Marie de Médici, who reigned from 1610-1616, "imposed an especially strong image of heroic queenship upon her rule" (156) and was compared to Judith by the author of the coronation ceremonies (157).

Garrard believes that Marie de Médici accomplished a subtle but significant alteration of the woman worthy tradition. She shifted its emphasis from an acknowledgment of the heroic woman as an exception to her gender to a celebration of the generic capability of the female sex (157).

Artemisia "unquestionably" knew of this legendary figure since "her own father was in the queen's service from 1624 to 1626" (159) and Garrard thinks it very probable that the queen knew about Artemisia (160). In fact, Garrard speculates that Minerva could well have been commissioned by the Queen (164).

Garrard dates a change in attitude toward women at 1630 during the reign of Anne of Austria (165). This new image was the femme forte. But men like Pierre LeMoyne saw these extraordinary women as exceptions. Garrard quotes from his text The Gallery of Heroick Women regarding Judith:

Women have not every day Holofernes's to vanquish; but every day they have occasion to fight against excess vanity, delights, and all pleasing and
troublesome passions...let them learn from this illustrious and glorious Mistresse to discipline their graces...' (166-167).

Garrard aptly adds that

With such a lesson drawn, the mighty Judith was cut down to domestic size and offered as a model to women to help them resist weaknesses in themselves that one would have thought were properly those of Holofernes (167).

Another drawback to the femme forte iconography was its association of beautiful women with the destruction of male heroic virtue. These women became recognized as "agents of the power of love" (170):

In both drama and art, we find characters who appear to be 'feminist' in that they argue on behalf of women or exercise power over men ... yet whose power is ultimately compromised by the misogynous stereotype of woman's dangerous association with love--dangerous in different ways to both male and female heroes (170-171).

And even more pointedly she notes that

the very women worthies who were the controversial subjects of the querelle des femmes and the inspirational icons of the feminist writers--Susanna, Lucretia, Judith, and others--were typically distorted in art into fantasized objects of male sexual gratification, and they sometimes became vehicles of a more overt misogyny (171).

Garrard believes that Artemisia Gentileschi's work differed from the female stereotypes of woman worthies and femme fortes: "Artemisia's Judiths are armed with swords that cut, weapons they do not hesitate to use ... [her] nude heroines convincingly experience pain and emotional anguish" (171). Thanks to the Caravaggesque "vocabulary" that emphasized the "real", she illustrated women who were not "would-be men" but "simply as women who partook equally of the human condition" (171).

Garrard believes the effect of her efforts had far-reaching effects in that "she forged a
fusion of ordinary woman and heroic archetype that bridged in art a gap that would continue to plague feminist theory" (171).

One of the most shocking depictions of the slaying of Holofernes is Artemisia Gentileschi's Uffizi painting, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, dated ca. 1620 (color plates of the painting can be found in Garrard's text as plate eight and as plate 16 in *Women Artists, An Illustrated History* (Heller 30; Fig. 14, Art Index). As viewers we are some distance from the head of the bed which seems to be made of three stacked mattresses each covered in white sheets. We are uncomfortably close to the action—and there is intense action—the sword which is "dead" center in the picture and angled only a few degrees west of 90 degrees North, has made "head-way" and blood is spraying towards Judith (positioned right) whose arms are heavy and are straight out from her body. One of her hands is holding Holofernes' hair in her fist, the other wields the heavy blade. Holofernes' eyes are beginning to roll upwards; his head is upside down to us—but the eyes fix us with their anguish—his forehead wrinkled with shock or a painful thought. A cloak or covering falls off the bed near his head. Judith is in a voluminous gold dress, the sleeves pushed up above the elbows, the low cut of the neck line shows the right breast pressed up like a tensed muscle. Her head is angled against the action of her arms, another perpendicular shape. Her brows are furrowed above the nose with a kind of expected unpleasant tension and concentration—she is working—you feel that she is working at this business. And though the arms are strong, the bracelet of her left arm reminds us of her gender. It is a lovely bracelet with three linked golden cameo-like shapes visible to us.
The handmaid assists Judith like a nurse holding down a wounded man about to be amputated. Her hair is wrapped up, a few perspiring strands leak onto her forehead; beneath her chin is the huge fist of Holofernes, whose arm is pushing upward in struggle. But his arm is lapped by her arm in a tangle of arms. Her other arm is angled into his chest as if she is holding his other hand down against him. Her arms are also strong and her stooped pose is tense with effort. The cross bar of the handle of the sword—a mighty sword—presses into his upwardly bent and held down left arm as the blade does its work beneath his beard. Draping his torso is a bright red cloth: the kind of cloth that represents luxury, elegance, wealth, beauty, passion. It is pushed up by his bent right leg, angled like his body on the bed at about 35 degrees west. The background is very dark. Shadows prove the light to be from where we stand—we are the light projected on the painting—and oh, what we reveal!

Forget all the other versions of Judith. None seems as real as this one. No other scene of the actual decapitation (that I have seen) forces such intimacy on the viewer with the work of murder by decapitation. There is nothing prim about the grip of Judith's hand on the handle of this sword. It's messy work. To me this is what distinguishes the Uffizi Judith from all other similar scenes.

As Garrard notes many writers and scholars have speculated that the scene depicts revenge against Tassi "in an equation that is both biblical and Freudian, between decapitation and castration: the just punishment for rape in an eye-for-an-eye tradition..." (278). Garrard, having read Artemisia's account of the rape in the transcripts of the trial, believes "The very imagery of the bloody bedroom scene invokes Artemisia's own
description of Tassi's bedroom assault upon her with its tangle of knees, thighs, blood, and knives" (278). But Garrard believes this oversimplifies the work and detracts from a wider consideration of the image. As she points out, many artists project "their own literal self-image with the characters of their art" (278). More importantly, says Garrard, Artemisia identifies with Judith as a woman acting not retreating...For it is not so much the male character who is acted upon, but the female character who acts, that is of interest to Artemisia, and who offers her an avenue for psychic self-expansion" (279).

The effect of the painting on viewers has been to offend many, according to Garrard, not because of the violence ("violence is a staple of art" (279) but because Holofernes is not merely an evil Oriental despot who deserves his death, he is Everyman; and Judith and her servant are, together, the most dangerous and frightening force on earth for man: women in control of his fate (279).

Again I feel that refrain which is produced by Jean de Meun's exploitation and conquest of text and "lady" as property: the fear of female power and autonomy. The same refrain is sounded in the descriptions of why men rape women in Rape Victimology and again in rape laws that protect the rights of men rather than the rights of women over their own bodies (Griffin 32-33).

As Garrard hinted earlier, Artemisia does something very unique and feminist in her paintings of the Judith theme. It becomes apparent in the Uffizi painting where she has located Abra above the handle of the sword which is in the shape of a cross. Garrard believes that Abra becomes the representative of divine justice because the cross points to her and she is centered in the painting. Judith who is at an angle in the portrait represents human vengeance (325). As she puts it,
The idealistic part of herself, the humble agent of the Lord who carried out God's will, Artemisia assigned to Abra the maidservant, whose dramatic function in the painting is to balance and justify—quite literally to rectify—Judith's devious and slanted behavior (320).

I find this a very persuasive analysis.

In Orazio Gentileschi's painting *Judith and Her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes* (ca. 1610-12, Wadsworth, Hartford; Fig. 15, Art Index), Abra also plays a nearly more dominating role. They stand side by side but Abra's head is over Judith's and her body seems to almost push Judith's towards the left. They both hold the basket with the head resting in it while each of them look in opposite directions. I believe this detail undermines their unity.

It is not possible to say whether Artemisia took her inspiration from her father's work or not. It is certainly apparent that she unites the two women, taking women's value to greater heights than did Orazio and many other artists as well.

It helps to see exactly what a strikingly new approach and radical ideology is invoked by Artemisia's efforts in uplifting Abra by looking at her other works. She painted three portraits of Judith and Abra moments after the deed has been accomplished and they are about to "head" home.

In the Detroit *Judith* (ca. 1625) (Garrard, Color Plate 12; Fig. 16, Art Index), they are still in the tent and Abra squats and is in the process of wrapping the head. Judith stands and holds the sword in her right hand, her arm going across the front of her body so that the sword points (at about a 35 degree angle) toward the bed. Her other arm is angled out towards the exit with her hand lifted upward as if to stop something. They both look out of the tent (to the left) as though they've heard someone coming. A candle
burns and a large shadow is cast on Judith's face and neck. Judith's hair is crowned with a diadem and she wears long ear rings. The handmaid's head is covered with a white cloth that drapes down her back. Since the servant wears a cloth on her head in all the paintings, this seems to be what differentiates her class. But it is clear, just as in the Uffizi *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, that they are both working and engaged in their joint mission.

In the ca. 1613-14 painting (Florence, Palazzo Pitti) entitled *Judith and Her Maidservant* (Garrard, Color Plate 5; Fig. 17, Art Index), Abra is in the foreground and her profile consumes most of the space. She carries a basket in which the head seems to be sleeping. The basket seems to be balanced by her left hip. Judith is next to her; her body faces the viewer and the sword rests upward on her right shoulder. She has on an expensive looking gown with a low scooped neck. Her hair falls loosely down the side of her face in front of her ear. She has an ornate clasp holding down a circled braid and wears a long pearl ear ring. Her face is rosy, her mouth slightly open and her teeth are visible. They both look East at something we cannot see. It is as if they have once again heard something—but they don't appear to be in the tent any longer—the background is completely black. Garrard believes that the figure of Judith holding the sword upon her shoulder recalls Donatello's sculpture of Judith and gives her more heroic status (316). She thinks that Abra is intended to serve as something of a contrast to Judith to support her heroic status. Abra's arm is more relaxed "to set off Judith as the bolder and more

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22 Garrard does marvelous work with the appearance of a crescent moon shape on the part of the face that is lighted (the crescent moon is associated with Artemis). See pp. 334-335 where she also describes the possible influence of her friend Galileo.
forceful of the two" (320). But Garrard sees the overall effect to be one in which the two women are collaborators: "the tensely gathered knots embracing Abra's head remind us that the maidservant, too, is psychically engaged in the dangerous adventure, and that her own acute alertness, though expressed obliquely, closely parallels Judith's own" (320).

In the late 1640's Artemisia did another painting that closely resembled the Detroit Judith. The tent drapery is missing, but little else has changed.

Other artists have depicted Abra in the inferior position to which she is assigned by the Biblical tale and in each case, her hair is covered. Another way in which she is identified as inferior is in the decrease in her stature in comparison to Judith. Still other artists, as you will soon see, choose to portray her as evil.

Andréa Mantegna's tempera on wood, dated ca. 1495, (Fig. 246 in Garrard, Fig. 18, Art Index) entitled Judith and Holofernes (National Gallery, Washington, D.C.) decreases the size of the handmaid to that of a child.\(^{23}\) She is on Judith's right (viewer's left), facing forward in front of the doorway of the tent. Her eyes are cast down as she accepts the head into the food bag that Judith is handing her. All of her hair is completely covered by cloth, whereas Judith's curls are uncovered. However, the handmaid seems lively in comparison to the statuesque pose of Judith. Her knee is bent,\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) Mantegna completed several works of Judith including a drawing which Reid describes as a masterpiece (see Reid, Fig. 2, 377). She does not like the Washington tempera as well as the Uffizi drawing, feeling that "the whole effect is tight, very depressing" (377). She is right that Judith is definitely more actively involved in the task at hand, in the drawing. The handmaid glances upward at Judith in awe and, it would seem, for guidance. More of Holofernes' head is visible as it is about to go into the sack. However, I still prefer the tempera because of the way it relegates Holofernes in relation to Judith. I think the foot is particularly evocative of his newly allotted insignificance.
her foot turned as if just arriving to hold open the food bag (or ready to hasten onward towards Bethulia with the prize); her sleeve opening is rippled as if it too has been moving. It is true that she is looking down but it seems as though she is intent on the massive head that is in front of her breast (not surprisingly!). One could speculate that Mantegna has given the only vigor and life of the painting to the slave! An additional, and I think important, detail about Mantegna's painting is the de-emphasis on Holofeme's head which does not face us. What we see is his hair and a tiny bit of profile of eye, cheek and nose. Far more prominent is the bare foot sticking out of the bed covers on the inside of the darkened tent (which his head is turned towards!) Mantegna de-emphasizes Holofernes and, at least in size, diminishes the handmaid so that the noble and melancholic Judith is the centerpiece of the painting. The drapings of the tent also help with the centralizing of Judith since they form a triangle in the top half of the painting and Judith's head is near the apex of the triangle. It is indeed her head (not his head) that matters and the subtle view of his foot is an exquisite reminder of his status in relation to Judith (both his head and foot are beneath her).

Carlo Saraceni's Judith (ca. 1615-20, Vienna, Fig. 56 in Garrard, Fig. 19, Art Index) depicts Abra holding the food bag in her mouth (like a dog) with her eyes cast upward at Judith. She is only up to Judith's shoulder in height. Her head is completely covered as is her neck. This Judith is an incredibly cold and chiseled beauty, the arch femme fatale. She glances sideways into space, her head tilted to the left. Her fingers are spread out into Holofernes' hair (as if she likes the feeling of his hair). Saraceni has used shadows very effectively to depict the sinister nature of this Judith (it is hard to tell, for
example, the shape of her breasts or where they end and the dress begins, we stare at dark intrusions on her human (?) form). The decapitated head has an open mouth that seems to be screaming; the eyes are open and the forehead is tensed as if he is still alive. Abra looks up in abject obedience and fear at her Master who looks the viewer straight in the eye in a boldly conscienceless way. Ironic that Saraceni centralizes the figure of Judith (though she is slanted) and embues her with power and control that she certainly did not have even in the early 1600's in Italy (never mind several hundred years b.c. in the Middle East). He has carefully provided his audience with a portrait of woman as threat to man and society by surrounding this cold, calculating Judith with a terror-filled woman-child-servant and a man screaming in pain.

Valentin de Boulogne's *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (ca. 1626, La Valletta, Malta, Fig. 61 Garrard; Fig. 20, Art Index) shows the handmaid to the far right side--she is old and ugly--her eyes appear to be without pupils or they are closed--She is about up to Judith's neck in height and the back of her head is covered, she stands in darkness so that only her face and neck are visible. Judith is extraordinarily young, well-dressed, beautiful (?) and distant. Her eyelids cover her eyes so that she too appears not to be looking at what is happening. Holofernes is upside down in front of Judith. He is laying on the bed but it is as if he is falling backwards. His hand reaches up and the fingers spread out to the left hand corner of the painting as if he is reaching for the frame to steady him. Judith has his hair held in her left hand and is holding the sword well under his bearded chin with her right. She looks too far away to really do the job and her uprightness seems extraordinarily awkward for the task at hand--unlike Artemisia's
Judiths, this woman is not working. Abra's apparent blindness in the painting lends even more to the feeling that it's not happening or that the women of the scene are psychologically blocking the event while being present in it. Is it possible that Abra is a projection of what Judith will be when her deed is done? Diminished, old, ugly, withdrawn? This would be the opposite of the Apocryphal Judith's future after the deed. But because their heads are facing the same direction and the hair line of Judith and the line of Abra's head covering are almost parallel, it is as if this could be intended. Abra's head is tilted downward in comparison to Judith's uprightness and indeed what other purpose does Abra serve in the painting except as a foreshadowing (and she is in deep shadow) of Judith's future? Holofernes' appearance of falling also leads the viewer to focus on falling as it's strongest motion (and emotion), especially since his figure takes up nearly as much space as the two women. Is Valentin de Boulogne's theme, then, that when Holofernes' falls, Judith falls with him?

In a painting ascribed to Simon Vouet (1621, Paris, Louvre, Fig. 59 Garrard; Fig. 21, Art Index), entitled Judith, the handmaid is slightly shorter than Judith, her head is wrapped and she gathers a large cloth under her left hand. She is sideways looking up at Judith as if for direction. She appears to be several years older than Judith. Her position serves to direct us to also look at Judith. Judith is young, her hair is uncovered, some strands seem to be sticking to her forehead as if her hair has become somewhat disheveled and she has been perspiring. Her eyes look to the left towards Abra but they don't see Abra they seem to be looking upward at nothing as if she is emersed in inner contemplation. She wears rather bulky wrappings--wrappings seem to dominate the
picture—Abra's head is tightly wrapped, she gathers a sheet beneath her hand as if it is to be used to wrap the head and Judith seems to be embraced and wrapped by her clothing. Judith's left arm is at an angle in front of her, elevated slightly above the huge dark head of Holofernes whose eyes are closed but whose brow is wrinkled. The fingers of her left hand are emersed in his hair and her other hand can be seen beneath this hand holding the sword. The head itself is positioned exactly in front of and therefore replacing (in a way) her abdomen (the womb beneath). The woman who carries the child, waits! Abra waits. Judith seems riveted in place by the head at her womb. It is as if this cannot be "wrapped up." It is abnormal. There is no child, though the head is perhaps the size of a child, the weight of a child. It must be wrapped and carried. Abra's sideward pose is almost in the shape of a questionmark with the sheet the final dot and certainly her face is angled and questioning Judith persuasively. If Abra is our cue, then we too must question Judith: Where are you? What are we to do? As viewers we too enter "No Man's Land" (or land with no man?) and the feeling is somewhat disconcerting. Unlike Saraceni's painting this painting evokes inaction not action; doubt not assurance. Both were done in the same decade revealing extraordinarily different visions of the moment after the beheading.

In both Caravaggio's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (ca. 1598-99, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Fig. 255 Garrard; Fig. 22, Art Index) and Rubens' *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (early 1630's, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig, Fig. 260 Garrard, Fig. 23, Art Index), Abra is to the right of Judith and very old and very ugly. Caravaggio's handmaid is actively looking at the fragile Judith bringing the sword through the neck of the screaming Holofernes. Her hands are raised up to her waist
holding the shining cloth which will be used to wrap the head. Though balding, she wears a cloth over the back of her head. She looks to be totally unmoved and highly efficient in her role.

Rubens' Abra leans close to Judith's shoulder and grabs the bearded chin of Holofernes decapitated head as if to have a closer look. She bears a candle in her other hand which is positioned like a torch. The same feeling is conveyed in Rubens' depiction of the handmaid as that of Caravaggio's: a woman not afraid of doing as ordered and doing it efficiently. However, in Rubens' painting, the viewer pays much less attention to Abra or the head of Holofernes because of the incredibly evil yet voluptuous looks of Judith who seems to be looking the viewer in the eye with a threat of violence and whose breasts are swollen up and out of her dress. The lighting in this portrait is very specific to the message that Judith is an evil and sexually dangerous woman. As in Artemisia's Uffizi Judith, Rubens' Judith has strong arms that appear capable of the deed. But that the artist directs her gaze not at the work but at the viewer leaves us with a sense of perversion not stamina. Abra's active involvement as she holds the head and points the torch makes her a cohort of Judith's and indeed their arms are parallel.

In the very dark portrait of Judith by Correggio (ca. 1512-14, Fig. 261 Garrard, Fig. 24, Art Index), Abra is black. She is shorter than Judith but takes up full half of the width of the painting. Because of the darkness, Judith is only partially lit. We see her face and bosom and part of her arm. Abra's head is completely covered and she holds a

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24 Interestingly, Reid sees Caravaggio's painting as melodramatic and a failure (381) while describing the Rubens painting as "masterly," due to the portrayal of strength of the heroine, who is "unmistakenly Jewish . . . mature, also immensely fit" (382).
huge candle in the foreground along with a piece of the food bag in which the head is being dropped (we see Holoferne's nose and forehead, but there is no facial expression to be distinguished). Abra's face is extraordinary and Garrard makes these comments about the depiction:

... the grotesquely distorted face of Abra vividly connotes an atmosphere of evil and wrong doing, even as Judith herself, a pure-profile, beautiful maiden, sustains the sense of virtue. In such an image, the erstwhile 'good' character of Abra, who loyally aided and abetted her mistress's brave deed, is made to personify the evil and negative aspects of Judith's character, a transference that ingeniously makes possible the inclusion of both the good and evil Judith's within the same painting (290).

That Gentileschi views and depicts Abra and Judith as equally determined, hard-working women is to her credit and our benefit. Think back to the original tale and how nearly impossible and lonely a task it would have been for Judith to leave her home town and journey through the wilderness to the enemy camp without her faithful servant. Undoubtedly she was a strengthening element to Judith. That Judith gives Abra her freedom reflects the great respect she felt for Abra. In Artemisia's century, the class system was still very much in place—you can hear it from her letters of solicitation concerning payment for paintings and advances for her work—she had to grovel to stay in the good graces of the elite who could afford art. Artemisia's leveling, as it were, of the hierarchy between Judith and Abra was very much in the spirit of Judith's prayer when she cried out to God to strike dead both slave and ruler together and "shatter their pride by a woman's hand." Both by this equalizing action and the very dramatic accomplishment of her art, which was appreciated in her own day, she made a difference in the world.
March 23, 1990 I attended the opening reception of an art show called "Fears and Scruples" in the Arno Maris Gallery at Westfield State College, Westfield, Mass. The exhibit, "of abstract and figurative paintings and drawings focusing on environmental, social, political and personal fears and questions of morality," had been organized by curator Carol McMahon.

As I entered the gallery, I was astonished to find a life-size nude of Judith by Cambridge artist, Shelley Reed (Fig. 25, Art Index). The panel of Judith was accompanied by two other panels of the same dimensions. The panel to the immediate right of Judith and at right angles with her (since it was on the joining wall) appeared to be a courtier from the Elizabethan era. He was regally costumed with a large, stiff ruffled collar. The next panel featured a skeleton. All three paintings were done in black and white shades. How would the nude Judith, the tightly clothed courtier and the skeleton contribute to the theme of the show? Surely it was due to questions of sexuality, of power, of knowledge--and, of course, life and death--preponderantly, threats to life and fear of death. Scruples concerning clothing seemed at work between the nudity of Judith and the elaborate dress of the courtier with the answering message of death:

"What does it matter?"

The Judith figure was striking because of the peculiar way in which she stood with her left leg crossing her straight right leg so that the foot was behind the foot of the
left leg and she rested this foot on her toes. Essentially she is balanced on one leg. There is a casualness in this pose at first glance. But as you look upward to her arm positions it becomes increasingly awkward. As your eyes move from the legs you see the large drooping abdomen and fleshy hips. The navel is prominent. In her right hand she holds a falchion, a short sword; her arm is bent so that the sword crosses her right breast and points towards the right shoulder. She is not large breasted. Her other arm is down and held away from her body so that it doesn't seem relaxed. She has a thick neck and a very oval face. Her eyes are cast downward. Her hair is pulled back from the face but flows lushly behind her. There is a jeweled band that lays on top of her head and borders her forehead. The background is black.

In the panel of the courtier, the lighting within the painting focuses on his head. He is a handsome bearded man and the crowding collar re-emphasizes the special importance of the head. I wondered if he was meant to represent "Reason" and "civility." Was the fleshy nude Judith with her awkward pose and the dangerous phallic weapon to represent the irrational, dangerous, sexual and untrustworthy?

I spoke with Shelley Reed by telephone the following week and was excited to learn that though she was not familiar with the details of the Judith story, she had reclaimed the image from the sixteenth century painter, Hans Baldung. Upon finding Baldung's "Judith" (1525, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Marrow, Fig. 23; Fig. 26, Art Index), I was impressed with the closeness of Reed's image to his work. More fascinating—and representative of a feminist approach to the image—was the fact that Reed had removed Holoferne's head from Judith's left hand. In Baldung's painting
Judith's fingers are sunk deeply into the General's thick curls and the head is tilted downward; he is bearded and the shadow under his eyes render him pathetic and tragic. The painting is dramatically altered with the absence of Holofernes. Judith becomes defense-able, not someone on the offense. She is not a killer but a defender of her own flesh.

I was even more fascinated when I read about Baldung and his obsession with the female body, especially in conjunction with death and the supernatural. Particularly shocking is "The Three Stages of Life and Death" (Fig. 27, Art Index) in which the bony figure of Death stands behind the nude young maiden who appears to be admiring her long hair in a mirror. He holds an hour glass in his hand above her head while pulling a transparent scarf from around her lower abdomen with his other hand. It is a shocking painting because of the contrast between the beauty of the maiden with her graceful curves and her luxurious hair and the sharp lines and starving look of the wirey death figure who appears to me to be very lewd (this is Fig. 5 in Marrow: it was done ca. 1510-11 and is located at the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna).

A second drawing appears as "Death and the Maiden" in 1515 and this time a fleshier nude stares in the mirror examining her long flowing hair while death, clearly a skeleton now, stands close behind her with one boney hand on her side and the other coming around to her left breast (Marrow, Fig. 6). How can one not see the formula that female flesh is touched by corruption and doomed--despite its healthy curving shape with the potential for productivity and nourishment. Surely this very idea was being reflected in the series of compositions I had seen at the Arno Maris Gallery. Baldung must have
had a deep fear of female sexuality and its effect on "man" because he exposes so many female bodies to the public eye.

This worry about the feminine seems to get out of control with his depiction of witches at work. "Three Witches" (Marrow, Fig. 30, 1515, Albertine, Vienna; Fig. 28, Art Index) features three nude women. One is bent over on the floor peering at the viewer upside down from beneath her leg. An older woman looks like she is attempting to ride the woman on the floor. She is very muscular and flabby at the same time. Her hair is flying back and her face is sunk in as if she has no teeth; her right hand touches the back of the woman on the floor. Another younger woman looks to have just jumped into the picture from the right with her foot on the back of the woman on the floor and her buttock resting on the hip of the older woman. In her upraised hand she has a pot whose contents are spraying upwards. Her hair is flaired wildly out from her head. You cannot help but see the wickedness implied in the contorted and highly electric shapes. This was a man who feared and hated women.

Charles Talbot's chapter entitled "Baldung and the Female Nude" reviews his work and talks about his obsession with female "power":

For more than three decades he presided over a coven of haunting images: temptresses, witches and maidens caught in the arms of death. What these images have in common, besides the central presence of the female nude, is the expression of forces that defy man's understanding, and even more his control. In each case there is a feeling of anxiety, a threat either by or to the women involved. Like Eve, these women may wield a power over men, but ultimately they cannot escape their own vulnerability (19).

It is not easy for me to see the "Three Witches" as suffering from any vulnerability at all. Talbot admits that Baldung's witches illicit abhorrence not lust (20). He acknowledges
that "his nude witches do remind us of the misogyny that burned in the hearts of inquisitors" (20).

In addition, Talbot describes the way in which Baldung shifts the blame for the temptation from Satan to Eve. In Baldung's 1511 woodcut of Eve, Adam has one hand around her breast and the other reaches into the Tree of Knowledge. His "Eve" of ca. 1540 has Eve holding an apple in place of her left breast (22).

What of Baldung's view of "Judith" then? Garrard points out that the crossed legs signified "female allurement" and deception (296). Talbot sees the crossed legs in the same way and they are found in Baldung's paintings of Venus and Eve. As he puts it "The awkward position of her body reminds us of those figures whose crossed legs also probably signified doubtful steadiness in behavior as well as in appearance" (28). She is a "Nemesis of proven ability" and on this Talbot elaborates:

The Nemesis type entered Baldung's pictorial repertory as a figure inherently expressive of the positive and negative forces perceived in women. The frequent appearance of the type attests to the artist's and his male public's deep ambivalence on a matter that affected them constantly. The distinct element of satire in these figures indicates that Baldung was consciously unveiling this ambivalence" (30).

It does not seem to me that Baldung or "his male public" were feeling ambivalence--it seems much more straightforwardly fear and disgust.

Judith's large thighs, hips and swelling abdomen also fit the ideal of the earthy, fertile woman used in depictions of both the witches and the Nemesis figures. This additionally aligned Judith with instinct rather than reason (33) which lends another resonance to the exhibition at Westfield which raises more questions than it answers (does Judith then lack Reason and the heavily clothed man lack instinct? and are they
then whole by being together?). Judith's hair which flows in waves behind her head could also have been Baldung's way of associating Judith with witch-power. It was believed that there was special magic in witches' hair and their heads were shaved prior to trial (Talbot 31). Many of his witches have hair that flies out like flames that are fanned.

Judith, then, in Baldung's hands is a *femme fatale*, whose glance (and notice she doesn't look you in the eye) can betray or mislead; whose body was made for the temptation and fall of man (as, it would seem, all female bodies are made) and whose entwined legs associate her with the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Talbot 28). She is beautifully fatal. That this is far removed from the Biblical description of Judith is clear.

The marvel for twentieth century viewers lies in the new Judith which Shelley Reed has rendered: a woman who is once again ready to defend right causes. The cause, however, has shifted--as well it should, after a thousand and more years of misogyny--to the woman's body. She will defend it against attack--and it is fertile, shapely, lovely, powerful--because it is her own property and no one else can claim it. Shelley Reed confirms these intentions in correspondence:

I chose this image not with the idea of her representing vengeance and retribution. That is in fact why I removed Holofernes' presence. What struck me about the image was Judith's inherent strength and containment. I wanted to remove her from the specific narrative she was stuck in and free her to represent something bigger, something away from a certain moment in time and suggestive rather of a more constant state -- power, sensuality, calm. So the specific elements of the narrative -- her struggle with and victory over Holofernes -- takes back seat to the broader question of ongoing/imminent struggle (that women face) and the certainty of victory that Judith suggests (11-22-92).
The transformation of a visual idea from one century to another several centuries removed is testimony, I believe, to the non-linear reality of thought. Although there is only the possibility for the living to select from the past, the process effects the future. Certainly, Reed's feminist conversion of Judith resounds in this work as a forward ripple. As we will see now, Friedrich Hebbel looks at the image of Horace Vernet's *Judith* and it triggers the development of his own ideas about the story, which once developed, unleash a plethora of compositions (see the music bibliography, particularly the numerous operas). The common "generator" is Judith and Holofernes, woman and man, opposed.
CHAPTER XII
HORACE VERNET'S JUDITH AND HIS INFLUENCE
ON FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

Horace Vernet (1789-1863) was noted for the portrayal of military scenes in which he captures "les émotions de la vie militaire, les scènes tumultueuses des camps, les convulsions de la nature, en un mot tout ce qui élève l'âme et tout ce qui l'agite" (Blanc quoting MM. Jouy et Jay, a member of l'Académie Français, 117). His 1831 portrait, titled Judith et Holopherne (located in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Pau, Fig. 1 in Comte, p. 138; Fig. 29, Art Index) was the inspiration for Friedrich Hebbel's drama. As Philippe Comte points out Hebbel first saw the scene as a lithograph (evidently also viewed and perhaps owned by his intimate friend Elise Lensing) and it was four years after the play was written that he saw Vernet's full-length portrait. Comte includes Hebbel's remarks to Elise from a surviving letter in which he describes his reaction to the painting: "Je restai longtemps devant le tableau . . . Il a exprimé dans son tableau ses mêmes motifs, que Je mettais en action dans la tragédie" (139). It is important than to analyze even speculatively what it is about the painting that is so provocative that it enabled Hebbel to produce his extraordinarily influential play.

We are looking into the tent. There are sheets of cloth hanging in the background. The room is lit by a candle on a very long and ornate candle-stand to the left and at the end of the bed. Judith is standing, almost leaning with her back against the bed. She faces us but is angled to the left and her head is turned to the right towards the sleeping Holofemes. Her right arm holds the sword and her left is rolling up her right
sleeve as if in preparation for the murder. Her expression is deeply serious. Holofernes is on his left side--his head sideways on the pillow which is propped rather high. He is dark and bearded. His face is shadowed. His shoulder, chest and right arm are bare and he is very lean and muscular. His left arm hangs out in front of the bed, coming out from beneath the cushions. He wears a wide bracelet and his hand is touching a shield that has been propped against the end of the bed. In front of the shield sits his battle helmet, a rather elaborate work of art itself. His face is very peaceful and a smile seems to be on his face. It is as if he is dreaming sweet dreams. Their faces are both set in the same direction looking to the viewer's right and so there is I think encouragement to compare the two--the profoundly serious look of Judith and the relaxed un-pained expression of Holofernes. The arms too are similarly paralleled. That Judith holds the sword with her right hand and he touches the shield with his left, positions them as enemies (opposites) about to do battle. But that they both touch soft things, she a sleeve, he a cushion, speaks of love not hate, of attraction, not opposition. Although Judith's abundant skirt tends to obscure the actual position of her legs, it appears that possibly her left knee is touching Holofernes' arm--there is an intimacy to her proximity that does make one question (ever so slightly) her relationship with this powerful reclining athlete. At the moment of the painting, the sword is far away from Holofernes (far left) while her legs are close to his body. Does this mean there is a mix of emotions portrayed here: love and hate? Certainly Hebbel reveals a Judith astonished and attracted by the strength of the warrior. Are they both "framed" by history?
The painting may well illicit these contradictions, the paradox of the scene—were they lovers and now enemies? (are lovers inevitably enemies?) Don't we feel both anxiety for the sleeping man while being tantalized by the thought of so extraordinary an action as a woman wielding the giant sword.

Comte pictures a sketch of Judith and Holophernes done by Vernet in which Holophernes is reclining but he is on his back and his left arm embraces Judith's hip (Comte, Fig. 2, 139; Fig. 30, Art Index). She is sitting beside him looking very seriously into his face while he sleeps. The sword in her right hand rests on the floor. As Comte says: "On sent mieux dans cette esquisse le lien fatidique entre la volupté et la mort: ici Judith est encore une amante, là elle n'est plus qu'une justicière farouche" ("One better senses in this sketch the fatal bond between sensual delight and death: here Judith is still a lover, there she is nothing more than a fierce dispenser of justice," (my translation) (137). That Vernet did both of these scenes reflects his feeling that they were indeed lovers and enemies, something which is very much a part of Hebbel's tragedy.

Delecluze writing in L'Artiste (1831) and Henri Heine writing in the Gazette d'Augsbourg (1831) describe the painting as very powerful (Comte 137). Delecluze:

`car cette composition, d'accord ou non avec la donnée biblique, a reçu de l'auteur une apparence si vive, un caractère si prononcé, et un intérêt dramatique si puissant, qu'il n'est guère possible l'échapper à la triple séduction que cette composition présente' (137).

Heine describes the contradictions he sees in Judith's face: "Le visage est en partie dans l'ombre et une douce sauvagerie, une sombre suavité et un fureur sentimentale murmurent dans les nobles traits de la belle meurtrière" (137).
Yet Charles Blanc perceives of Holofernes as a street actor and the whole scene as melodrama (Comte 138, Blanc 139-140). As we will see later, as I discuss the drama, Hebbel was accused of over-doing the characterization of Holofernes and so Blanc's view may be quite apt. Perhaps it was indeed the melodrama of the painting that influenced the melodrama of the play.

Vernet, the great painter of horses and fighting men, appears, much to his credit, to have given a good deal of thought to the portrayal of the Judith story and as with his military scenes attempted to do more than portray a dramatic scene realistically, but also to capture something of "l'esprit, c'est l'essence" (Blanc 163). That spirit, that essence is what colors the following plays--it is the spirit of sexual and moral uprising which leaves us with a dejected and defeated Judith.
FEMALE TRESPASS INTO MALE TERRITORY:

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, JEAN GIRAUDOUX AND HOWARD BARKER

REWRITE JUDITH

A. Introduction

Friedrich Hebbel wrote his version of Judith between 1839-1840 subverting the tradition of the Apocryphal tale (that Judith is the saviour of her people and a hero) by making her a woman concerned about her desirability as a female body. Jean Giraudoux's Judith was written in 1930/31 and Judith is in early twentieth century clothes as she discovers her sensual self in the gaze of Holofernes but loses the possibility of fulfillment because of her predetermined role as hero. In Howard Barker's 1990 play, Judith, A Parting of the Body, Judith loses her humanity (her body becomes their body) to save the state of Israel and she is transformed into a tyrant-hero. In all three plays, the reader is clearly made aware of Judith's sexuality in contrast with one's awareness of Judith's sanctity and great beauty(?) in the Apocryphal tale. In addition, the Judith in the opening scenes of these three plays, is not the Judith of the closing scenes.

All three playwrights retain the basic and well known plot of the original tale: Judith must go out to face the enemy general hoping to attract him with her beauty(?). She must find the right moment to behead him and then return with the trophy to her people so that they might be victorious against the pagan hoard. I hope to demonstrate what I believe to be behind these contemporary re-makes of Judith: each playwright's
belief that violation of the body is male prerogative and women who trespass will pay with their lives.

Judith of the Apocrypha is significant and magnificent because she is the same virtuous woman at the end of the tale as she is at the beginning. The murder does not effect a change in her character. She acts out of necessity supported by faith and unmatched courage. As her prayer illustrates, she is well aware of the threat of annihilation of her people and particularly of the method of rape, burn and pillage. She is particularly fierce in desiring the avenging power of her ancestors Simeon and Levi, who defended the honor of Dinah, who was raped by a Sechemite.

B. Hebbel's Judith

Hebbel's Judith also prays at the beginning of the play by putting on rags and pouring ashes on her head. However, she prays for guidance not avenging strength: "I anxiously await a signal from You which will command me to rise and act" (Hebbel 53). The message she hears from God is that "The path to my deed crosses sin" (54). Freud interprets this to mean that Judith's real aim is sexual not patriotic (4:233). She suffers from the experience of having her desire and her body shunned by her husband on their wedding night and every night thereafter. Freud sees this as a classic representation of the taboo of virginity (4:233). She is deliberately deprived (seemingly by God and certainly by the playwright) of knowing why.

This Judith fits in with her time in that she has a vivid idea about masculine courage and finds her would be suitor, Ephraim, lacking it. Thus, when she arrives at Holofernes camp, she is swept away momentarily by his strength. It is this attraction that
Vernet was able to capture in his portrait of Judith that Hebbel has transferred into his tragedy. We also admire Holofernes' power until it becomes clear that it is so all-consuming that he has been blinded by it and soon merely behaves like a bad-boy tyrant. Judith decides to counter his tremendous confidence by telling him directly that she plans to kill him. Here is the exchange:

**J.** Learn to respect womankind! A woman stands before you to kill you! And she tells you so!

**H.** And she tells me so in order to make it impossible for herself to do the deed! Oh cowardice which considers itself greatness! But you probably want to do this only because I'm not going to bed with you! To protect myself from you, I need only make you a child!

**J.** You don't know Hebrew women! You only know creatures who feel happiest while suffering the deepest humiliation.

**H.** Come Judith. *(He leads Judith off by force).*

**J.** *(in leaving)* I have to--I want to--curses on me now and forever if I can't" *(Hebbel 83-84).*

When Holofernes says "I need only make you a child!" does he mean belittle or impregnate or both? I believe the playwright insinuates both. And, when Judith says "I have to--I want to--curses on me now and forever if I can't" does she mean she has to and wants to be raped? or does she mean she has to and wants to kill him? or both? I believe killing and raping get mixed together in this deliberately ambiguous phrasing.

Judith describes the rape to Mirza and as the monologue shows, the rape led to the killing:

I threw myself on my knees before the monster and moaned: 'Spare me!' If he had responded to the cry of terror from my soul, I'd never, never--but his answer was to tear my clothes and praise my breasts. I bit into his lips when he kissed me. 'Moderate your passion! You're going too far!' he...
jeered, laughing, and--oh my consciousness was about to desert me, my whole body felt like a spasm, when something shiny struck my eye. It was his sword (86).

That men who rape particularly enjoy women who fight the attack is apparent from personal testimony of rape victims in *Rape Victimology*. Today's rapist is no different than the rapist of the mid-1800's. A middle-aged black woman describes an attack in the laundry room of her apartment building in which a young man threatens her with a pair of scissors and attempts to have sex with her. He does not have an erection and when she would not respond to his request to "'Get it up, you slut'" (Schultz 15), he is angry at her passivity. When she begins to "kick and curse and go for his eyes 'he got an erection immediately'" (15). When he is "finished" he asks her, "'Did you come?'" (15).

It is no wonder that Holofernes interprets the bite on his lip as passion! But part of the playwright's aim is to show that both Judith and Holofernes "go too far" so that his line about Judith going too far has resonance for the rest of the play. She feels she has failed by (what else?) thinking of herself: "Nothing drove me but the thought of myself...My people is saved, but if a stone had shattered Holofernes--they'd owe that stone more gratitude than they owe me now!" (88). Her belief in the illegitimacy of her person is so deeply embedded (by the earlier action of the play, particularly, since her marriage was "illegitimate" because sexual fulfillment was denied) that she can only define her actions according to a heroic formula constructed by men and for men, and which her next actions will help perpetuate.
Like heavy sewage struggling down a clogged drain, Judith's self-hatred winds down to the point at which she is glorying in the priests' promise that they will refuse her nothing:

_J: You are to kill me if I should desire it!

_All (horrified): Kill you?

_J: Yes, and I have your promise.

_All (shuddering): You have our promise! (94)

In the play, it is obvious that Holofernes is another example of an encounter with Nemesis. His flaw is in overreaching; it is hubris. Power and physical strength and aggression over the weaker is still his perogative as a male. This has been ended by Judith's action but the playwright constructs the remainder of the play around Judith's mis-step in motivation for the action so that Holofernes never really loses his strength. His action and death will end Judith's life because she has been constructed as over-reaching her place by defending her body! Sure he let his ego get out of hand; but she showed ego and that is a crime against femininity. And this is born out by Mirza's protest, "A woman is meant to give birth to men, but never is she to kill them!" (84, Purdie 101).

Hebbel admits that his transformation of Judith is essentially to teach her her place in this diary entry recorded in translator Marion Sonnefeld's introduction to the play. The entry is dated November 24, 1839:

'I can't use the Judith of the Bible. That Judith is a widow who lures Holofernes into the net with her trickery and cunning; she is happy to have his head in her sack and sings and expresses her jubilation with all of Israel for three months. That is mean. Such a character is not worthy of
success...My Judith is paralyzed by her deed; she is petrified at the possibility that she might bear the son of Holofernes; it becomes clear to her that she has exceeded beyond her limits, that, at the very least, she has done what is right for the wrong reasons' (35).

Freud's analysis of Hebbel's motivation reveals the danger that men view as the feminine: "after the poet has duly established his heroine's virginity, his phantasy probes into and dwells upon the resentful reaction let loose after maidenhood has been violated" (4:234). I believe Freud could understand the male psyche better than the female and his analysis may be right on target here. What is dangerous to women in this is Freud's conclusion that

The strange taboo of virginity--this fear which among primitive peoples induces the husband to avoid the performance of defloration--finds its full justification in this hostile turn of feeling (234).

Behind this, in terms of Judith, is Freud's insistence that decapitation is a "symbolic substitute for castration" (4:233) and so we return to the fear of castration established in The Romance of the Rose (de Meun 93.2-3, 16-17) which is used by other men to justify rape (see Beneke 17, 20, 23). The reasoning from my womanly perspective reads like this: men avoid deflowering a woman to avoid her violent retribution. Men deflower women in order to subjugate them so that women do not have castrating power. Both activities involve viewing women as forceful (!) objects, not co-participants in life.

Edna Purdie believes the drama reveals some of the main ideas that came to characterize Hebbel's later work. One of the central motifs is described as a battle of Wills:

The world as Hebbel perceives it, is a world of tragic contradiction; the individual will conflicts inevitably with the world-will--represented in Judith, by the Will of God (95).
Are we to believe, then, that it is against the Will of God for a woman to defend herself when she is being attacked by a man larger and stronger than herself?

Purdie obviously admires the work of Hebbel's career but she admits that Holofernes is ultimately "a mighty exaggeration" (99) and that critics have not overlooked the weaknesses of this first play, seeing it as strong in technique and weak in idea (103).

Johann Nestroy did a parody of the play in 1847 (titled Judith und Holofernes) and most of the humour is spent on the caricature of Holofernes (103-104). However, when critics focus on the exaggerated nature of Holofernes, Judith is shadowed out of the picture. Is this because she is No Exaggeration?

It is perhaps this melodramatic element in Hebbel's Judith that has made it an alluring subject of musical compositions. In 1851 Julius Rietz had published an "ouverture and entr'actes" to Hebbel's drama (EJ 10:461). In 1903 August Reuss composed Judith "for orchestra after Hebbel" (EJ 10:461). In 1923, Emil von Resnicek composed the opera and libretto entitled Holofernes based on Hebbel (EJ 10:461). And there is Siegfried Matthus' opera, Judith, performed in 1985 in East Berlin and in 1990 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Such attention I believe demonstrates an attraction to Hebbel's own action in producing a tragedy in which a woman trespasses into male territory and is punished.

Regardless of how ridiculous the exaggeration of Holofernes' ego, male artists have been interested enough in the dramatic tension between Holofernes and Judith to continue to dramatize it. Matthus' opera, the New Mexico performance of which was
trashed soundly by critic Donal Henahan (who describes the biblical tale as a "dubious story"), includes Judith's rape by Holofernes followed by Ephraim calling her a whore and goading her into suicide (Henahan). Henahan notes that the performance in New Mexico excluded the rape (perhaps because Ephraim's accusation implies willingness). It is easy to surmise that in this twentieth century rendition, Judith is abused, and, tragic because of the abuse. Henahan's response to this "abuse" was to feel abused himself:

There is an overwhelming sense of déjà vu in this production by the Santa Fe Opera, and an invitation to sit back and tote up the score's influential antecedents. "Salome," "Elektra," "Wozzeck" and "Lulu" certainly come to mind, not to overlook the hundreds of pale imitations of the Expressionist vision that have hung around the fringes of the European opera scene since World War II. Such staging clichés as blood-smeared walls, a throng of Jews huddled together as if awaiting transportation to a death camp, and the squad of bayonet-wielding soldiers aside, it is a little disorienting in 1990 to find such an old-fashioned score wearing the mask of the avant-garde. Perhaps only on the state-subsidized stages of Germany is that mask still taken seriously (Henahan).

It would be refreshing to believe that in these United States, we have advanced our taste, at least, away from brutality on stage (we always have the television back at home) and that Henahan's intolerance of the bad music that results from a bad scene is an example of intolerance for any kind of brutality against women. But the alarming statistics quoted in Susan Brownmiller's 1975 book, Against Our Will, showing a 62% increase in the volume of rapes "over a five year period as compared with a 45% rise for the other criminal acts" (175) reflect Holofernes-Ephraim action in the streets. Add this more recent comment found in a 1991 U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee study on rape: "For women there is no longer any place they can call secure" (qtd. in Now Times 17.11: 8).

The William Kennedy Smith rape-trial and the Judge Thompson hearings are two other
loud reminders that relations between the sexes have hardly achieved a maturity much beyond Hebbel's conception and Matthus' re-conception.

C. Jean Giraudoux's *Judith*

In Jean Giraudoux 1930/31 play, the will of the individual towards self-actualization is pitted against the Will of God, who alone knows his creatures and is not afraid to use them. Giraudoux's play has that fatal existential quality that makes any human action hopeless. In Jean Giraudoux's hands, we have a Judith who cannot win in a world where no one can win.

However, the transformation of Judith in this play, to Giraudoux's credit, shows the strengthening of her character. The play is vivid in its portrayal of a woman becoming aware of the part sexuality plays in self-knowing. As a result of Judith's sexual awakening, she matures, and in a Job-like way recognizes herself in relation to God. Giraudoux leaves the audience with a Judith whose life is over, but it is as much a comment on an ideology that paralyzes the life out of the human soul as it is on the plight of woman.

It is the dead who open the first scene by calling "Judith, Judith." Then the living call her name, expecting her to save them. Her name is doubled in every call and the coupling of death and life as callers adds to the tone. The town is a fallen place and nameless. The prophets are disdained by Judith's uncle, Joseph, who says "A sick nation gets prophets like a dying dog gets fleas" (6). The high priest is on his way to persuade Judith to go to Holofernes as it is the belief of the whole town that "The fairest and purest of our daughters has to present herself to Holofernes" (6). The cynical Joseph says "Her
name is like opium to them. This extraordinary worship they have for her is just an excuse for interfering with another person's life" (7). How liberated and left wing! He preaches a doctrine that sounds like a belief in the rights of a woman to have an independent life. Yet John's response reassures us that Joseph is thinking of his own life with Judith not of Judith: "Judith! Judith! The name which has always meant for us the flower, the ultimate secret, a silence held in the heart". So we know that Judith's appeal is virginal like Christina of Markyate or Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's Rose, a territory unpossessed and therefore desirable. Who shall have her? The people, Joseph and John, or Holofernes and company? For surely she cannot have herself for long.

Indeed Joachim sums it up

...this city, which was blind and deaf, can suddenly see and hear again, at the sound of your niece's name. The idea has come to make her its leader. Well and good. When the meshing gears seem to want to bite on themselves forever, only the finger of a child or a girl can slip between them and stop the machine, the finger of a David, the finger of Jael, the finger of Judith (9).

Giraudoux drags in more of legend than in Joachim's speech in using names for the characters like Joseph, John, Jacob, Paul, Sarah, and Susannah. The audience is bombarded by allusions which are askew in this fallen context.

Judith enters and immediately jokes about what she might do to Holofernes: "Will she cut off his head? Will she dance with him?" She doesn't believe in the "call" but is aware in a serious way of the misery of the people and the danger "when a young girl and a giant are shut up alone in a narrow room" (12). Her recognition of what men are suppose to be is superbly dramatized in her ridicule of the defeated army. She lambasts John, "What difference is there between the look of defeat in a soldier's eyes
and the look of cowardice?" (14). Her admiration of machismo is also striking as she asks "Is it a crime to have dreamt that the name of Jew should stand for a race of conquerors?" (16). It is this pride of group that fuels Judith as well as the momentousness of the "call" by the people (not God) to "save" them: "I am not the first woman who has borne her beauty and purity as though it were not for another man she was holding them ready, but for a particular moment of history" (17).

Turning from the idealism of this position, she melts into tears as she explains "No one has yet seen me without clothes. But you stand as surety before God and the people that all is well with my body: feet and thighs and breasts--the breasts are a serious factor in history--" (17, 18).

We like the Judith of this play because she has absorbed the foibles of her culture. She is adolescent not widowed yet. Her purity comes from the accident of her age as much as from her own pride. Giraudoux, however, draws us into a more serious consideration of Judith's state with the entrance of Susannah, the whore. In imitating Judith's looks, Susannah has made a good livelihood. One has to wonder, along with Judith, why Susannah would volunteer to go in Judith's place. Her answer is difficult to understand. She says

`Oh, Judith, it's not only our condition which alters when we become women: it's as though we change our sex and our species. And I want to preserve this miracle, the young girl Judith' (she steps near Judith and kneels) (22).

This does sound close to Christina of Markyate's view of what it means when the line dividing virginity from experience is crossed. Judith grapples with the meaning of this virginity, suddenly seeing it not as innocence or purity but as a promise "a promise of a
most wonderful defeat, a shame of great stature" (22). Once again we have the depiction of heterosexual intercourse as a destructive force and Susannah echoes what Christina's life demonstrated "Judith, save Judith" (22). And yet an important difference in the story of Christina of Markyate's life and in this play is that relationships between women are deliberately disjointed in Giraudoux rendering. I think it is important that Judith is raised by an Uncle and cared for by John, not by a mother or an aunt or a sister. The only other woman is deaf and dumb (or at least is suppose to be deaf and dumb...she may well be planted by Holofernes, but certainly Judith speaks to her as if she is deaf and dumb and there is no exchange between them). The playwright makes specific choices here which send the opposite message from that of Christina of Markyate.

The scene that follows is an important one since it will be reenacted heterosexually later on. Judith holds Susannah to her, and asks for her dagger. Susannah denies she has a dagger but Judith feels it on her and Susannah relinquishes it. That this intimacy is reenacted with Holofernes and he attains Judith's affection tends to reflect the playwright's intention to show same sex intimacy to be associated with innocence and immaturity (which Susannah wishes to sustain in Judith).

The debasing encounter with Egon in which Judith heroically acts the part of the Apocryphal Judith only to find that Egon is also acting the part of Holofernes, effectively erases the Apocryphal tale from the audience's mind. Her noble deceit is met with ignoble deceit. We are now prepared for a different story. The world of "Judith," as we understood it is upended.
Enter Holofernes, who has been given the gift of language. He sees Judith as a delicacy and wipes away the impurity of Egon's kiss with kisses of his own, accusing her of "gentleness." Judith replies "Gentleness? Don't you feel a dagger under my robe?" and Holofernes responds "I can feel it hard against me, like part of your body. Do you think I am such a greenhorn that I can't feel your body suddenly relenting in my arms?"

He removes the dagger and says "you are surrender, offered on the dagger's point" (35).

Judith has made a relational transition from that of woman-woman to woman-man with the dagger as the valued object that moves between the players. In the first instance, she gains the dagger from the woman Susannah; in the second, she loses the dagger to the man Holofernes, ultimately regaining it to end his life, though, importantly, it was not an act of aggression in Judith's view but an act of love. All the players would view the dagger as a dangerous life-depriving object that gives the holder power. The delicacy of Giraudoux's use of the dagger in these scenes to reveal the fluctuating power of the human will is impressive. As a phallic-object it is powerful because it can produce life.

When Susannah relinquishes it, she has initiated Judith's transformation from icon to flesh, from the isolation of an all female centered world to the integrated world of heterosexuality.

Holofernes is the quintessential sensualist. He sees God as an obstacle to human delight:

From what I know of myself, my sympathies would incline more to a weaker god, a god who finds men necessary to his divinity...The world's atmosphere for those of us who like to breathe, is a hothouse of gods. But there are still some places that keep them out, and I alone know where. They are in the plains and on the mountains, like patches of an earthly
paradise. Even the insects who live there are free of original sin. In these places I pitch my tent (36).

It is hard to believe that this is the man responsible for the deaths of thousands. Can Judith thrive in this place far from Judaism in which Holofernes thrives so well? It promises much, including the idea of "Young men and women simply in each other's arms between lamb-white sheets, without devils or disapproving angels" (37). And when he asks her what she wishes, her first reply is "to lose myself" and next to "be defeated and invaded like a city." She regurgitates the lessons of history that appeared in the Apocryphal tale, the midrashim, the Old English Judith and The Life of Christina of Markyate: heterosexual encounters destroy the self. Yet the entrance of Susannah shakes off what is building into a destructive view of sex. Susannah argues for the preservation of Judith—"while Judith is pure the world is, too." She points out that Judith is allowing her seduction out of anger and disgust with life. Judith strongly responds:

It isn't life that disgusts me, but all of you, my own people, who either encouraged me to come here, or tried to dissuade me. For, either way, you weren't concerned with me, but only with yourselves with an image you clung to. I was to be worshipped or petted. Purity was to be sacrificed or rescued, but not to be trusted. Now I must trust myself (40).

There is a dramatic change in the balance of the dialog at this point. She no longer gives passive responses to Holofernes elaborate paragraphs. Their exchange is equal:

\[H: \text{Jewess, my arms are waiting for you.}\]
\[J: \text{The Jewess is here.}\]
\[H: \text{The word doesn't offend you?}\]
\[J: \text{King though you are, it makes me your equal.}\]
\[H: \text{Even though it conveys to people slovenliness and greed, the extremes of servility and ambition.}\]
\[J: \text{Also generosity and courage, as great as any in the world...}(40).\]
Yet, the two of them still wrestle with the assumptions gathered in their different genders. Judith tries to dismiss her virginity so that she faces Holofernes in the same condition in which he faces her. But he recognizes the lie and exposes her: "Yesterday you loved mankind in the lump. Today you detest it in every particular. And anyway, women like you don't give themselves the first time for love; they give way to force, because they must" (40,41). Here, too, we see Holofernes has some misguided cultural assumptions of his own that sound very much like the argument that women who get raped ask for it. Judith's undisturbed response "There is no other force but God's" helps us to dismiss it as braggadocio while foreshadowing the Guard-angel's action in the final scene. Besides, it is clear by now that Holofernes will not be "forcing" Judith to do anything.

Yet, something else seems to be propelling Judith into Holofernes' arms. She deliberately asks for a woman before laying with Holofernes. Again, we are confronted with Giraudoux's real interest. Speaking to the deaf and dumb Daria (another Abra figure) she speculates:

Suppose I resist him? No; there's no longer any question of being defiled. It is God who has done that ever since He chose me for my purity...I believe God is only concerned with me, not with Holofernes or the Jews...There is no history of nations. There is only the history of Judith, driven to her knees (43).

There emerges from this choice of being with a woman an overall feeling that Susannah was right about the effect of experience (particularly heterosexual) that "it is as though we change our sex or our species." There is a bond among women that is separated from the male world of Holofernes and even more separate from God-ness (also male in this
play). God and Holofernes have more connection to each other (Holofernes even says that he has "been a substitute for God, many times" (41) than Judith can have to either one of them. What it is about then is not really sex. It is about both autonomy and connectedness to society as a doer. Judith's most vivid speech is the Morning speech following her night with Holofernes:

Morning. This belt of blood over the hills; the last owl bewailing the loss of darkness; the breeze ruffling the grass and the hair on the heads of the dead men lying there; no sign of goodness in a relentless world, except the dark footprint in the dew, and the dog here, half-heartedly wagging his tail before he turns and runs away. The sky bruised and golden, Judith shamed and happy. The dawn, they call it (45).

This is no longer the voice of an adolescent; Widow Judith speaks. And to John's accusations concerning herself and Holofernes and any deceit of God, she responds "Which of us, God or Judith, deceived the other is something still to be known" (46).

She is prepared to honestly state her feelings toward Holofernes and her very personal reasons for murdering him as well as her lack of saintly motivations, confronting all consequences, as an adult. But the religious leaders won't have it. God won't have it. Thus, the Guard-Angel rises up to strike her down. Slowly, he reveals God's presence in all events. The angels were like a transparent cloak about her as she lay with Holofernes—she is still a virgin, the Guard-Angel assures her. They guided her hand in the use of the dagger: so that the dagger now is in the only hands that ever made use of it--the hands of God ("There is no other force but God's" says Judith, 41).

The Guard-Angel expects her to recognize how God has glorified her and to go to her people as a hero. Still she resists. The angel and Judith begin to circle "anticlockwise" like two wrestlers at a tournament. The Guard threatens her "do what I
say; otherwise, there, before the people, I must take shape again and wrestle with you to
tear the lie out of your throat, throw you on the ground, as the ploughman throws down
the shepherdess. . ." That the last image is one of rape is unquestionable. This has its
intended effect. She submits. She agrees to Joachim's terms. They place a black cloak
(a garment worn by Burthred in *The Life of Christina of Markyate* and the opposite of
Mary's traditional robe) about her saying that it "becomes the espoused of God."

The repartee between the Guard and Judith in the last scene satirizes Judith's
misconceptions. "For love. She killed him for love" he says. Then, "Judith, her name
was. And what a body! All night long, without stopping." He blows her a kiss saying
"For Judith the whore." The epitaphs are meaningless. Judith has had nothing to do with
it. She no longer resists, however, which is why she says the guard's tongue should be
cut out and that he should be killed. The past has no bearing. The fact that the Guard
and Judith share the secret, accounts for her look of tenderness and repugnance. And,
although the scene is very dark, Judith has found peace within that darkness. She says,
"What has happened to me no one but I can know. Judith has experienced Judith, and
been fulfilled. Now you can use her name for your scapegoat or your saint. Whichever
you choose, there is no one to contradict you" (59-60). Recognizing the death of her
aspirations for autonomy, she also realizes that the people around her are in even greater
darkness, for they have not had the chance to react as autonomous individuals
confronting "It." She has understood. Her response sounds very much like Job's: "I
knew of thee then only by report/but now I see thee with my own eyes./Therefore I melt
away;/I repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).
D. Judith, A Parting from the Body

by Howard Barker

Howard Barker's one act play was published in 1990. It is the darkest rendition of these three Judith plays. Holofernes, as in Hebbel's version, has the opening speech and it is a speech about death. He needs to discuss it before a battle. In the midst of his talk, as Judith and her servant try to get their footing with him, he tells her to "Take your clothes off now." He soon makes the death-nakedness connection saying "Tomorrow many will be naked. And so humiliated in their nakedness. So cruelly naked and smeared with excrement" (Barker 52). Judith, who has been gradually removing her clothes, stops, saying "This is so much harder than I thought."

Holofernes, we soon realize, is filled with loneliness and a need for love. When asked if he likes women, he says

I do like women, but for all the wrong reasons. And as for them, they rapidly see through me. They see I only hide in them, which is not love (51).

He believes that love is based on pity:

When a woman loves a man, it is not his manliness she loves, however much she craves it. It is the pity he enables her to feel, by showing, through the slightest aperture, his loneliness. No matter what his brass, no matter what his savage, it creeps, like blood under a door...(53).

He begins to take off his clothes, some pieces of which have belonged to dead men. The exchange that follows seems to be the killing of time, until nervously Judith says "All right, let's fuck." She babbles on about herself in comparison to him and then screams. Holofernes then picks up from the previous dialog (some three pages back) about love by
saying "And yet I want to be. (pause) I, the impossible to love, require love. Often, I am made aware of this." He (I believe, unfortunately) elaborates:

Frequently I expose myself to the greatest danger. I court my own extinction. Whilst I am exhilarated by the conflict I am also possessed of the most perfect lucidity. So absolute am I in consciousness, yet also so removed from fear of death. I am at these moments probably a god. Certainly that is how the enemy perceives me. It is only when the action is over, and I am restored to the weary and sometimes damaged thing that is my body, that I sense a terrible need; not for praise, which I receive in abundance, but of that horror in another that I might have ceased. I am not the definition of another's life. That is my absent trophy. I think we live only in the howl of others. The howl is love. (Pause) (57).

A reader has to ask at this point: "Are we suppose to like this guy or what?" And immediately we are persuaded of his humanity. After the servant's lecture that his problem is his strength, he sobs in the servant's arms and then elaborates on his past weakness and cowardliness. He admits it was both cunning and running that saved him.

He admits he lies. Judith loves it:

And you say--you confess--all is trickery, all is deception, facade and affectation! Excellent! Forgive my hysteria, it was the pressure, the sheer suffocating pressure of sincerity. And now I am light! I am ventilated! A clean, dry wind whirls through my brain! I intend to kill you, how is that for a lie? And that must mean I love you! Or doesn't it? Anything is possible! I think, now we have abandoned the search for truth, really, we can love each other" (58).

Note the similarity with Hebbel's action: Judith tells him she is going to kill him and that is followed by the bedroom scene. They decide to love each other and the Servant (and the reader/audience) are unable to tell if one or both are lying. They embrace, kiss and evaluate each other's kisses, then Holofernes sleeps. Judith justifies Holofernes sleep to the Servant explaining that loving and giving has been "a terrible battle for him" (59).
It is interesting to note that Giraudoux's Judith is upset by the sleep of Holofernes and recognizes that she is just another notch on his belt—she is forgettable, sleep is a forgetting. Both Judths share a sense of disappointment in the fleshly practicality of their lovers. Barker's Judith, feeling the need to defend Holofernes and his snoozing, accuses the Servant of hating men and calls her a whore: "it is real whoring when a woman mocks the modesty in a man!" (59) The servant starts encouraging Judith to take the sword and do the job and reminds Judith of her child who she must protect. To my knowledge, this is the only work that makes Judith a mother-protector, and it is not entirely clear what that role means to Judith since she never speaks of the child or of her fear about the child's safety. Judith does raise the weapon after these words but without any further reaction. It seems likely that the playwright drops this in to show the lengths to which the "State" will go to preserve itself, as if the child is being held hostage until Judith returns, but it is not entirely clear.

Holofernes pipes up "I'm not sleeping. I'm only pretending." Judith falters and her arm begins to ache. He reflects that they both lied, "But in the lies we. Through the lies we. Underneath the lies we" (61). The servant tells Judith that he is smiling so that she will believe that Holofernes still only plays with her and Judith brings down the sword. Judith steps back stunned and the servant takes hold of the sword and begins to saw.

Judith says that she has been silly and almost "fucked it." A world of misogyny pours out of her mouth:
A right bitch cunt, I was, nearly bollocked it, eh, nearly...Nearly poxed the job, the silly fucker I can be sometimes, a daft bitch and a cunt brained fuck arse--(61-62).

As the servant wraps the head, Judith acknowledges that she wants to fuck him. The servant directs her to count to a hundred. Judith replies "You count to a hundred, I'll arouse him, look!" and she exposes Holofernes to herself (62). Her comments are gentle and loving towards the body and the Servant's discomfort grows. Judith is sitting in "the wreckage of the bed" and cannot move. She screams as if to attract the guards to come and kill her for the deed. But the Servant takes control with language:

First, remember we create ourselves. We do not come made...Secondly, whilst shame was given us to balance will, shame is not a wall. It is not a wall, Judith, but a sheet rather, threadbare and stained. It only appears a wall to those who won't come near it. Come near it and you see how thin it is, you could part it with your fingers. Thirdly, it is a facility of the common human, but a talent in the specially human, to recognize no act is reprehensible but only the circumstances make it so, for the reprehensible attaches to the unnecessary, but with the necessary, the same act bears the nature of obligation, honour, and esteem. These are the mysteries which govern the weak, but in the strong, are staircases to the stars. I kneel to you. I kneel to the Judith who parts the threadbare fabric with her will...(65).

There is a lot of rhetoric here about shame and will. It appears that the servant believes her act to be reprehensible, though necessary. She reasons that the strong person makes the most out of her/his reprehensible acts (which seemed to be what Holofernes had been doing in his dialogs earlier).

Suddenly, Judith is up and begins to command the servant like a tyrant a slave, harshly asking her "Who said you could get up?" She makes her kiss her foot and clean the bloody sword with her hair. She calls her "filth" repeatedly and makes her rid her hair of the blood by hacking it off with the same sword.
Dawn rises and Judith—a different Judith—describes it:

Dawn! Yes! This is the hour sin slips out the sheets to creep down pissy alleys! Morning, cats! Did you slither, also? Morning, Sparrows! Rough night? Hot beds cooling. The running of water. Well, it has to end some time, love! But its smell, in the after hours...magnificence! (she laughs with a shudder. A cracked bell is beaten monotonously).

Israel!
Israel!
My body is so
Israel!
Israel!
My body was but is no longer
Israel
is
My
Body! (67)

This morning speech is as dark as Judith's in Giraudoux's play, where she sees "no sign of goodness in a relentless world" (Giraudoux 45). They are kindred sisters since they both belong to the state by the end of these plays. Their sexuality is sacrificed and shamefully becomes their sin in these contemporary re-writes of Judith. Holofernes is magnified ten fold at least from the Apocryphal tale in which he has far fewer words to say than Judith. In all three plays, Holofernes becomes related to Judith in mutually destructive ways. This is what contemporary male renderings of the tale really change about the Biblical tale: Judith is confined for taking up the sword which more than any other action represents male power. In Hebbel Judith punishes herself; in Giraudoux, God reasserts his right to the sword and in Barker, Judith and the sword become the same reprehensible object used in defense of the State. These women have no self-defense available to them constructed as they are here. It leads me to believe that men continue to fear and despise autonomy in women. Whether it is the rules of an imperial God or a
method of the State, women are dangerously other and must be contained. Think how far
distant this scene is from *Judith* of the Apocrypha. She is no longer a woman
administrator but a degraded object.

If women were to use these plays as the basis for a generalization about modern
thinking on Judith, they might make a fairly damning statement. Are we so obsessed
with beauty as weapon, sex as achievement and violence as male perogative that
we can't follow Dorothy Dinnerstein's directions for liberty and "reject what is oppressive
and maiming in our prevailing male-female arrangements ..." (12)? These plays show
us scars of generation after generation of hand-me-down male attitudes concerning the
importance of their dominance (and the necessity for women's cooperation in their
dominance). However, there is one more modern work to consider. Nicholas Mosley's
1986 novel, *Judith*, brings men and women together. His "hopeful monster" seems to
symbolize a new conceptionalization of man and woman that inspires optimism for the
future.

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25 In *Men on Rape*, Timothy Beneke describes the idea of women's appearance as
weapon as "inseparable from the notion that sexual pleasure makes one helpless," an
idea, he says, that "pervades American Culture" (22-23).

26 Beneke argues that "status, hostility, control and dominance" characterize the
actions of men when they believe in the metaphor of sex as achievement (16).
Throughout the novel, Judith, Nicholas Mosley interweaves aspects of the Apocryphal tale of Judith into the narrative of his contemporary Judith character, who is a narrator of her own self-consciously written autobiography. In the opening passages, she describes herself in relation to society as "in some way like Judith in relation to the Assyrians" (13). In this early recollection, society is an enemy that she must conquer before it conquers her. This way of seeing her world shifts by the end of the novel as experience reshapes her outlook. The novel at its core is about the discovery of a visionary outlook that sustains the individual in community and if adopted en masse could potentially preserve all life on the planet.

The novel is set in the early 1980's in London. It is a time when the reality existed and seemed imminent for human beings to destroy themselves completely. Judith enters England observing that Londoners acted as if "...some juggernaut had gone over them, and they were like new-born babies left lying on the edge of a bed while doctors tended to the dying earth, their mother" (3). The anxiety of the scene is not unlike that described among the people of Bethulia as the massive army surrounds the town. In the last section of the novel, the catastrophe of nuclear destruction seems imminent as Mosley locates Judith, and several characters related to events of the novel, on the common of a town which has become the site of an American Cruise missile base. With Mosley's emphasis on female protest at the base, it becomes apparent that this fictional location is very much like Greenham Common, the location of an ongoing protest against
nuclear armament (and patriarchy) by women since 1981. The image of the baby on the edge of the bed while the mother suffers is resonate in this context and is echoed elsewhere in the novel (pp. 83, 282). The Apocryphal Judith and this contemporary Judith are drawn to action (of different sorts) by an enormous threat of annihilation.

Judith of the Apocrypha trusted in God for the salvation of her people and with that trust she added action that resulted in salvation. For Mosley's Judith, trust might work, if one knew what to trust. There is a yearning in this contemporary Judith for salvation, for a future, in a world in which no one seems innocent of violence or victimization. She relates to the role of victim, acknowledging that "Perhaps everyone gets a kick out of seeing themselves as a victim" (15). Yet she believes "the point of Judith was that she did not; was it not?" (15).

Precisely because of her interest in the Apocryphal Judith and the hesitant hope that good can come out of evil (4), she becomes the understudy of an actress who is playing the role of Judith in a play. She notes that this play "had been written some sixty or seventy years ago at a time when people had stopped making much use of the idea of God's will--either as a belief, or as an excuse for their own purposes or desires" (4,5). So it is that Mosley intertextually weaves the Apocryphal Judith with Jean Giraudoux's

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27 In *Femininity in Dissent* (1990), Alison Young summarizes the importance of this event:

The 1980s will be remembered as the decade in which disarmament and nuclear policy constituted the central issue of the age. The Greenham Common peace camp is a protest by women outside a Cruise missile base in Berkshire, England. It began in August 1981 and (at time of writing) it continues today. Its unique dynamic was a demand for disarmament yoked to an analysis of patriarchy (1).
Judith. Judith's summary conclusion about Giraudoux's work is significant to Judith's own story:

The playwright told the story without bringing in much about God; sexual passion has taken God's place: it was this now, conventionally, that was seen as the force behind dramas about interactions between good and evil. When Judith went down to the Assyrian camp it was because she had become obsessed by fantasies about Holofernes: the saving of Bethulia was incidental to her sexual desires--it was almost admittedly her excuse (5).

Sex, then, will be a medium for this Judith character. The issue of free will, so prevalent in my discussion of Giraudoux's play earlier in this paper, will become an issue of control. "If you cannot trust, then use sex to control human interactions," might be one of Judith's speculations at the beginning and during the middle of the novel. (Women use sex; men use violence--it is the modus operandi?)

This contemporary Judith senses that women have an especial gift for "control."

But in the early action, Judith becomes a bit of a midwife in her acting role as an Assyrian handmaid. Though she is the understudy of the star who plays Judith, she learns nothing at all from the actress while learning much from the actor who plays Holofernes, just as Giraudoux's Judith learns about life from Holofernes' sexual passion and God's tyranny, not from Susannah's warnings about men.  

28 Nicholas Mosley confirmed the allusion in personal correspondence dated 10/5/93.

29 How does one read this observation? Is it true that women themselves discount the advice and experience of other women, demonstrating the presence of the "oppressor within" (Freire 29-32) or must we recognize that behind these plots are male authors and finishers perpetuating the oppression of women?
On one particular evening as the play opens, the performers and stage hands are aware that the stars have been arguing quite fiercely in the dressing rooms. Once the play begins, it is quickly apparent that they are carrying their battle into the drama:

When Holofernes did make his entrance -- coming in from a day of war in full and shining armour -- it was evident immediately that whatever had been happening behind the scenes was to be carried on to the stage...after Holofernes had taken one look at Judith he walked to the front of the stage and winked and put a finger to his lips: then he raised and lowered his eyebrows several times (7).

When the codpiece wouldn't come undone properly, Holofernes does a Charlie Chaplin walk, playing to the audience and upstaging the serious acting of Judith. Angry, Judith rises from her couch and pulls Holofernes by the straps such that "Holofernes appeared to be immobilized -- like an old horse dangled from a crane of a ship...From the back, bits of Holoferne's flesh bulged out. I wondered--Has something happened to the front?" (9). The narrator (in the role of the handmaid) goes to the front:

...I saw that yes, indeed, one of his balls had come half out of his codpiece and was squashed against his thigh...I knelt down in front of him and pulled at the bottom of his codpiece; his ball like a sea-anemone, popped back inside. He said in a deep voice 'Thank you, my dear.' The audience remained hushed...(9).

She notes that for the remainder of the scene Holofernes continued his non-acting: I mean he said his lines, but it was as if at the same time he was showing that he knew this wasn't the point: as if he expected you -- you on the stage (myself) and you in the audience (you?)--to know that something quite different was going on...(9-10).

The actress, Judith, begins to respond in kind:

They did their whole love scene, seduction scene, passion-and-death scene, in this style -- as if this were indeed, yes, the sort of fix that poor humans found themselves in: but what an odd joke it was! and might there not still be something dignified in the fact that humans could see this? (my emphasis, 10).
The performance fractures Giraudoux's cynical hopelessness ("free will is a myth")—converting it to celebration of human resilience in the face of double binds. But this "unique theatrical experience" would not have happened if the handmaiden (narrator-Judith) had not passed between Judith and Holofernes. The play would have deteriorated because Judith's humiliation of Holofernes would have been complete. That the actor and actress recognize this is demonstrated by the gift of red roses Judith receives from both of them after the play finishes its run.

Judith takes a risk in departing from her script. This is the first of many risks she takes as she chooses her experiments in the hopes of controlling the future. Her ideas about risk-taking are further enhanced by an encounter with a second wise man, the Professor, a cybernetics specialist.

The Professor is described as someone who says one thing out loud but seems to be thinking something else entirely. She meets him at a lecture in California and his topic concerns the sustaining of paradox. Here's how she describes it:

...when one talked about physical reality one found oneself inescapably involved in paradoxes: light was a matter of both particles and waves: one could measure either a particle's position or its velocity but not both at the same time. This had to be accepted: it was impossible to observe objectivity without objectivity being affected by that by which it was observed...`Reality is a function of the experimental condition' (30).

Judith stays after the lecture to ask him her pressing question: "...could you not choose your experiments, in order to affect reality?" and he replies "You can do that for a time,

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30 A nice refrain to Gentileschi's paintings that infuse the handmaid with value and without whom the paintings would not be whole.
and then you will stop; or else you will destroy yourself" (31), a nice foreshadowing of Judith's coming actions.

Judith's second experiment involves a group called Die Flamme, a group whose social purpose seemed also to be that of mid-wife. Die Flamme was a scandal and gossip magazine. The magazine managed to move things about between good and evil, evil and good: "They prided themselves on performing a genuine public service in shedding light on murky corners, but there was also the suggestion that no one need believe what they said" (13). Judith admits of a certain ambitiousness in desiring to associate with the Die Flamme crowd because they had a large reputation in America and England.

In her effort to become associated with the Die Flamme crowd, Judith plays a more aggressive role than that of handmaid. In Die Flamme fashion, she attempts control with seemingly spontaneous outrages. She selects Desmond, a handsome Die Flamme writer, as her target Holofernes. To get his attention, and to threaten him, she throws a dart at his head at a restaurant hangout of the Die Flamme crowd. Amazingly this works in getting them together for dinner. They have an affair, though Desmond has a wife and child.

It is in her comments on this relationship that one hears echoes of Love in the Western World:

But then--perhaps Desmond and I really were a bit in love. I liked being taken round by him: I liked being on show with the Die Flamme people. Perhaps Desmond liked showing me off as his girl. Is there not always something narcissistic about being in love? (21).

It is echoed again when she compares the Die Flamme people to Manichaens:
Several people who worked for *Die Flamme* magazine called themselves Christians...but it seemed to me they were more like Manichaens--if you think the world is irredeemably evil then you have no responsibility for it; you can do what you like; you have some license simply to amuse and to be amused (22).

Judith was herself careening on the Manichaen course. She allows Desmond to come to her room knowing that her Indian boy lover would not stand for another man to enter with her. The fight leads her to another experiment and in reaching for this experiment she sheds both the Indian boy and Desmond. This time she plays with real fire in the form of the artist, Oliver. This is when she begins to talk of being ill:

One of the forms my sickness had begun to take at this time was to have visions, almost physical, of human beings trapped in mud: they were struggling to get out; they had no hope; everyone was trying to climb upon, and was only pushing down, everybody else (35).

It is no coincidence that this slippery vision precedes her own slide downward. After all, Judith has begun to prove her own lack of trustworthiness.

Oliver was a connoisseur of women and as a painter he was famous for his female nudes: "done in a boy, unerotic, skinnily life-like style; they usually had wrinkles and hairs and they sat or lay with their legs apart and there were bits of everything showing" (36). The latter description of his work reminds one of Hans Baldung's witches and death images and points to a misogynynistic view of women born out by Oliver's treatment of Judith. That he will be a powerful and evil character is clear in that even *Die Flamme* couldn't get to him. Desmond claimed it was "like trying to get at Mephistopheles by depicting him as a successful devil" (37).

Curious as always, Judith must find out what he's like. Very intentionally, I believe, Mosley describes Judith's enticement of Oliver through the use of erotic, Shiva-
like dancing at a party (here, too, the image of Salome floats to mind and will be recalled by Judith herself in one of her encounters with Oliver). Shiva figures prominently in the last "act" of the novel as the third-eye symbol of internal vision. At this point, however, the Shiva-like dance foreshadows the destructive nature of her encounter with Oliver. Oliver is immediately interested.

His eyes are described as "strange enamel-like" and "when he laughed his face lit up for a moment like a lot of candles coming on within a pumpkin" (38). She admits he is the first man to make her feel inadequate. In this high stakes game, Oliver attempts suicide to entrap Judith. He entraps her not by making her obligated to him but rather making himself obligated to her. She saves his life and in essence gradually begins to lose her own: "--I am the goat; and Oliver is the peg to which I have wanted, needed, to be tethered?" (59). The myth of Achilles and Penthesilea is illicited as a comparison: both at war; both in love. Every action they make is destructive because in the tradition of Love in the Western World, love is destructive.

At first Oliver is sick and womanly. When she describes her drive to his apartment, it is "as if I were a knight approaching where a sleeping beauty was lying" (44). When Judith approaches Holofernes, he, too, is lying down. She also compares him to the Holofernes of the play she was in "looking down on himself, playing with words" (55). She sees him as "a grandmother pretending to be a wolf: but would not

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31 Shiva is one of the important Hindu gods, known as the "Lord of the Dance" (Hanna 6). One dance is creative (promoting fertility) the other is a frenzied dance (called Tandava) representing the destruction of the world (Hanna cites Homer Custead 1972, 6).
Little Red Riding Hood have always hoped that her grandmother was a wolf?" (56). She knows that he is dangerous to her like Holofernes to Judith because, wolf-like, he hungers for her. Like the woman in the cellar of the pornographic story to which she alludes (The Story of O), she "doesn't have to think anymore, doesn't worry; whatever happens is the responsibility of the man who owns her" (59).

Oliver places an electronic egg inside her which he operates by remote control: "When he pressed the button there was the sensation of a snake uncoiling somewhere near the bottom of my spine and shooting up to burst in the sky above my head" (71).

Oliver calls her "Virgin Queen" and tells her "You are all at one. There is no hollow inside you!" He takes her to a pub:

It was to be some ordeal: a test for witches...I had done my hair up in a crest like a bird. That woman from the cellar in the story had a mask like a bird had she not? There were chains and trinkets around my body/I was to be enthroned, entombed...I was to be guardian of the secrets (71).

Thus, Eve and Mary are diabolically collapsed into one destructive image.

In another equally bizarre ritual the "queen" is toted around on a platform carried by Thai boys for the entertainment of Oliver's foreign oil-merchant guests (all male). Her drug infused confusion is apparent in this stream-of-consciousness speech in which worship (Mary) and sacrifice (Eve) become one:

If a woman were to be the sacrifice, do you think the satisfaction for men would be just the nails having gone in? That's enough, Princess Salome! Blot her out! There are shafts between the conscious and the unconscious: they are like bars of light. (Did not you, Bert, once make a film like this? A new-born baby lies on the edge of a bed--) What I remember is the audience becoming very still. I looked amongst them: I was saying -- Is it you/ is it you? You can paint the sacrificed god: could you paint the sacrificed goddess? Would she not be watching you? Looking down-- That is why you did not want to be on top?" (83).
The confusion of female power—the power to bear the new-born baby—with omniscience to destroy and create powerful men (through the body—its sexuality and its sacrifice) produces a fear that paralyzes intergender communication. She is intended in this scene to represent the paradox of Shiva to create and destroy at will, while, on another level, she feels that she is being sacrificed, the nails are going in with no end to the pain in sight. She is God and Lamb, incarnate.

It is not until Desmond and Oliver have her cornered in the apartment that she begins to break from this evil womb (wound). She crawls out one window and into another. Someone follows her (Desmond) and falls to his death. This marks Judith's gradual recovery and transformation (which is marked also by guilt, the sense that she is somehow responsible for the man's death...she can never lose her Eve-ness?). Her condition during the Oliver phase is comparable to that of the Holofernes of the Old English Judith—she indulges in self-destructive drugs and stimulants, relinquishing self esteem, becoming zero; prepared for final defeat as a passive-aggressor.

She is in a deranged state as she journeys to India to the Ashram—a walled place, like Bethulia, a place of calm, called by its inhabitants, "the Garden." She comes here having been the handmaid; Judith, the conqueror, and Holofernes, the conquered. This section is addressed to the professor, though it is a woman who helps heal Judith at the Ashram. The scenes here are reminiscent of those found in Christina of Markyate's dreams; they are woman-centered, erotic and creative.

Judith compares the woman to the "painting of the Madonna with all the children of the world under her skirts like chickens." But she prefers to call the woman "Lilith"
not "Mary," a choice that is ultimately more powerful for Judith because of Lilith's equality with God. Her eyes are blue and she has fair hair. She touches Judith: "The woman continued to smile, she put her arms round my shoulders... I did not know quite what was happening to me; it was as if my mind were being lifted, so that I could look down" (108). Later her healing qualities are described: "When I looked at her she had this golden face with very fine wrinkles like something containing heat: like salt, like something you could lick" (109). And as Judith continues to fight her awakening and all its pain:

The woman with hair that was like an aura of light came and sat cross-legged beside me on the concrete floor. She arranged her golden robe across her knees... She put her arm around me and pulled me towards her; but this time she went on pulling me.... She seemed to be trying to get me on to her lap: this did not seem possible; I was too large. I was an old body, dangling, being pulled and bumped up a rock face... Just in front of my face, where it lay on her lap, was one of her feet, where she sat cross-legged. I thought -- her toe is like one of those toes of a Pope or a Buddha which people crawl to lick or to suck--Of course, a toe is like a breast. She said 'Go on. You do what you like' (116)

The therapy of the Ashram included a daily routine of exercise, breathing and then dancing:

All dancing is a form of celebration -- perhaps of the fact that a human can be on his own, neither an animal nor a god; but something of both; which is more than either. Dancing, we were the snake, and the tree and the person watching the tree...(125).

Meditation is also used:

People had grown hard shells around themselves: if they became watchers, listeners, in whatever it was they were doing, that which was hidden inside the shells might grow: after a time, the shells would fall off (126).
In this process, she reflects on Oliver and Desmond seeing Oliver as having been a part of her: "Oliver was of the dark, deep: we were accomplices in the town of Bethulia./Desmond was so obviously bright; like Holofernes" (162). But she believes Oliver "freed me from that part of me that thought I was omnipotent. Of course, yes, this involved some going down towards perdition" (162).

In the final section addressed to Jason, Bert is called Holofernes: "Well, what happens now: you think we have grown up, do you Holofernes?" (215). But then Holofernes seem to be everywhere: "You can tell these people, can you, because they all seem to be auditioning for the part of Holofernes" (250). One particular "detective" sits in the bar between Lilia and Judith and she muses "I thought--which one of us do you think, might kill Holofernes?" (251). When Judith attempts to leave, "I thought--Holofernes, he prefers her to me?" (252). This multiplication of Holofernes seems appropriate to the tension established in this last section. Threats are everywhere. It is feared that a group of women protesters have built a bomb and are planning to detonate it near the test sight (an idea given to them by Bert to show what bombs can really do). In the meantime, Lilia's son is lost and could be in grave danger. Lilia, as one of the women protesters, is threatened by police and military personnel. There is anger between Lilia and Judith because of the affair between Lilia's husband, Jason, and Judith. Judith is looking for Bert (who may also be in danger) to propose marriage to him because she is pregnant and is full of uncertainty about his response since he may not be the father.
As these characters all stumble about on the English rural countryside on the brink of destruction due to irreconciliable differences between the male and female political ideology concerning war, Judith reflects on men in terms of the Judith story:

I had said [to Jason]--all men want to imagine women are like Judith! Then they can think their heads are being chopped off and so need have no conscience...You had drunk a lot of wine: why do you think men drink wine: so that they can get out of going to bed with women like Judith? (272).

It seems with this reflection near the end of the story that the Judith-Holofernes, woman-man, love-hate dynamic is still unresolved. Yet, the appearance of the two-headed sheep, "the hopeful monster", in the midst of the chaos, seems to image the dilemma (it is monstrous!) and transform it:

One head might have been growing out of the other: but each head seemed to be equal in relation to the other; it was as if each had grown to balance the whole -- as if on some tightrope...(my emphasis, 289).

On closer inspection, she discovers that the tightrope effect is caused by the presence of a third eye in the middle of the two heads:

I suppose it was some conjunction of what might have been the other eyes of the two heads: an enormous eye, watery and flickering: some heroic attempt to attain that third eye -- I mean, the eye of Shiva. This is the eye that looks inward, isn't it?...I knelt down in front of the sheep, I thought -- what can I offer you? --frankincense, love, myrrh? Precious humanity! (289).

Within the eye she sees things going on, "here were snakes, and networks, and notes of unheard music: here were the nerves and branches of a tree" (289-290).

Because the child has placed food in front of the sheep, she recognizes him also as "that third eye; for which conditions will one day be ready, to look outwards on the world outside" (292). Judith herself bears within her the hope of a new generation. And all the
characters of the novel become harmoniously connected as the book concludes, with Bert accepting his role as father of Judith's child. The theme that "everything has to do with everything" allows for all people to be "fathers and mothers who go across that desert with a donkey" (295).

The connectedness of all things is the underlying philosophy of the novel. The guru of the Ashram speaks of it directly:

'Two thousand and five hundred years ago you see the pain coming down; there is an impossibility here, humans sense they are trapped by the very same mind, the rationality, that sees that they are trapped...to defend yourself you have to attack; to protect yourself you have to blame others and not yourself. Yet you also see, suddenly, that it is yourself that you attack: you look around -- it is by yourself that you are trapped. Things both are your fault, and are not: you are free, but you cannot order things' (113).

This, to me, is a clear admission of the tragic consequences of patriarchy. The guru recommends metacommunication32 (though he does not use this term) as the way to wholeness and a greater understanding. This is his description of the process:

...you do not get wholeness by antagonism; you do not use the mind to get out of the traps of the mind. You need to give up, give over, to drop or rise to another level. You have to become detached in the way that you now know one part of you is able to be detached -- that part which can see how you are trapped (113, my emphasis).

This is Bateson's key to resolving double binds: stepping outside of the relationships that bind you and witnessing how they work (Bateson, Steps, 215-216). Only then can you begin to change the patterns.

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32 Metacommunication is a method of breaking out of double binds by stepping outside of your situation to view the communication pattern. This was first discovered by Gregory Bateson in work with schizophrenics (Steps 206-216).
The author gets at the complexities surrounding genderized mythology which is why Judith and Holofernes continually re-appear in the narration. This contemporary woman demands to solve the problem between men and women when the woman asserts her power. She tries on the role of handmaid (helper), then a Judith (doer), then a drunken Holofernes (passive-aggressor). And all the roles have to be understood sideways, not head on. Results come as she experiences the consequences of her role-actions. The consequences state that neither sex, violence, nor dropping out are workable solutions to the problems of trust and survival, though mediation (the role of the handmaid) gets closer to a positive solution.

Of the several re-visions of *Judith* that I have examined, Mosley has made the most extensive contemporary use of Judith and Holofernes to describe the adversarial and passionate workings of male and female relations. Through his contemporary Judith narrator, he illustrates how much these patterns have been internalized. He allows Judith to act out the possible roles of the Apocryphal story to demonstrate the connectedness of each character's experience: everything is part of everything. The hope of the hopeful monster is derived from the middle eye between male and female cultural-historical conditioning; the eye that can take it all in with detachment and allow the individual to transcend her/his drive to self and other destructiveness. In the contemporary world, two heads merged are better than one head rolling on the ground (even if a few chosen people are saved as the result of it--we should all be the chosen people, afterall): collaboration is the basis of humanity's salvation.
Yet, doesn't this position deny a feminist reading of the Judith character in the novel? A feminist Judith of this time would have been one of the outraged voices of Greenham Common, not someone wandering about looking for a husband to serve as father to the child she carries. A feminist Judith would not have sought Holofernes for a husband, in the person of Bert, the film-maker, who is depicted as exploitive of the Greenham situation and someone who enjoys feeling "omnipotent" (described in this way by the reliable Eleanor 257). Yes, Bert is, indeed, the contemporary Holofernes, the guy who wants to get Mother earth's last breath and the baby falling off the edge of the bed on tape (even if he doesn't really want anything bad to happen, after all). A feminist writing of the novel would not have found such an ending, happy.

Yet, Mosley has nonetheless, focused on the artist as a young woman and in centering our view in the feminine he has taken a feminist tact. The mother (Judith) is well and she watches over the child, safely in its crib, not on the edge of any bed. And, rather conventionally, there is a father, busy at a job. But, this father has been chosen by the woman and he is not the "biological" father. She has told her story to an audience of men (the first section is to Bert, the second to the Professor and the third to Jason), all men she loves. But is it not because they have been the material of her art like the potter's clay? Men have counselled her and shared their wisdom about unconventional ways of looking at the world. But her experience with risk-taking is what activates her

33 See Alison Young's *Femininity in Dissent* for insights into the treatment of the women protesters as deviant by the news media.
salvation--she drags herself out of Plato's cave into the light and this brings humility, not omniscience.

It is no surprise that Judith's encounters draw on the thousand year history of male angst as symbolized by the metaphor of Plato's cave. She refers to Plato's cave five different times. In Oliver's apartment in her drugged state before the soundless glowing television set, she notes that humans "find it easier to stay watching shadows in the wall of a cave" (65) (and television is still the cave-escape of a large part of humanity). When the professor meets her outdoors in an attempt to bring her back to reality, she still contemplates the cave: "I thought--Oh, but would they not, indeed have been blinded, those people, when they looked out from their cave, into the sun!" (80). On the parapet, outside Oliver's apartment, as she escapes: "I thought--no wonder those shadow-watchers liked staying within their cave" (95). At the Ashram, as she recalls the unpleasant relationship between her mother and father that involved her at times in being drawn before her mother to protect her mother from the father's rage, she speaks of children: "What is their duty to these shadows; these bits and pieces that cavort on walls inside and outside their minds?" (141). With rumors that the God of the Ashram is dying, again she refers to the cave: "What is it that stops people in Plato's cave coming out into the sun? The fear of the fact that they are dying anyway?" (198-199). These frequent references to Plato's cave surely signals Mosley's recognition of the immobilizing fear rampant among individuals during this ominous period of the 1980's (I know I heard many women denying any desire to have children in a world that appeared to have no future).
Judith, paradoxically, gains the strength to leave the symbolic Platonic Cave by entering another cave. A beautiful metaphor is drawn here as Judith recalls a piece of natural history concerning the elephants in central Africa who travel to a cave that contains stalactites with essential minerals. When the elephants get deep inside the cave "they break off the stalactites with their tusks; they chew them: they give them to their children. They have to do this or they would die" (129). At the Ashram, Judith gives over and allows herself to be sustained by the Lilith figure:

…it was as if she were the cave and I were the elephant in the mountain. She would lie on her side and she would accommodate me as if I were …piglets, a whole brood: she would raise an arm here, a leg there....and it was indeed, as if I had been starved of minerals...But here, now, was not this body in the half-dark like the roof of a cave; like salt and wine; like nectar (148).

Once again we see the nutritional value to the soul of physical contact between women (as in Christina of Markyate's dream) and it follows that this contemporary Judith recognizes that women do not do battle in the way men and women do battle because the woman-to-woman relationship is circular not linear (148) as in the curving physical form of woman in contrast to the lines of the masculine frame so often holding the spear, the sword, the gun or the sharp rhetorical remark. Thus, though Judith has addressed her self-revelation to three different men, and has in fact gained her "wisdom" from the words and thought of men in combination with her own risk-taking experiments, she is not free until she has made peace with Lilia, a woman she has hurt emotionally; a woman to whom she hopes to be related through marriage (Lilia is Bert's sister) and point of view (Lilia stands for peace, like the lilly). This peace is gained when Judith finds Lilia's son (who is with the "hopeful monster,")) and reunites them.
In the last scene, Judith describes herself alone with her child—"who is a girl" (298). The child sleeps near a window while Judith watches her—the baby has been removed from the edge of the bed and the mother lives. She has settled in to an understanding that at all times there will be this going within for sustenance or escape and venturing out to conflict, victimization, risk of death as part of life. But in the living (and the dying) there must be a vigilant resistance to control (of self and others). This resistance is a form of loving and though difficult, it is not destructive.

The very spirit of what Mosley supports here has been captured by Bateson in his important warning to social scientists to

...hold back our eagerness to control that world which we so imperfectly understand. The fact of our imperfect understanding should not be allowed to feed our anxiety and so increase the need to control. Rather, our studies could be inspired by a more ancient, but...less honored, motive: a curiosity about the world of which we are part. The rewards of such work are not power but beauty (Bateson Steps 269).

Mosley has accomplished much in his novel, converting the simple story of good overcoming evil in the Apocryphal tale as well as converting the adversarial nature of relationships between men and women in Jean Giraudoux's play into the far greater complexity of contemporary life. In personal correspondence he says,

In my novel I left the biblical story behind quite early on, to follow what might happen to would-be Judiths: heads may be severed, but then what? Stories often end when the complications of life begin (10/5/93).

Indeed, it is the complications of life which draw us into the cave of fictional literature for our minerals and in Mosley's Judith there are many rich ores for men and women, alike.
CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

As I think this review of Judith art and literature has demonstrated, woman as degraded object has a long history. But I have also shown how women have transformed darkness into light, thanks to Judith's perpetual image of strength and action. Women who have taken up the Judith theme have been empowered by the strength of the Biblical icon of Judith as *femme forte*. Despite the misogyny apparent in portraits of Judith by such artists as Hans Baldung, Rubens and Saraceni, and such plays as Hebbel's and Barker's *Judith*, we have the inspiration still of the original tale. Judith took courage, defied normative behavior, and acted to save her people. We have examples of how that courage inspired the twelfth century recluse, Christina of Markyate, to also act to preserve her integrity. We see Judith as part of Christine de Pizan's defense in the *querelle des femmes*.

There is Artemisia Gentileschi whose personal experience with male violence undoubtedly steeled her to the task of transforming the iconography of Judith and Holofernes, Judith and the Maidservant, in her magnificent paintings. Garrard herself has been a great inspiration to me because of the impressive quality of her writing, research and the values that underlie her work. Shelley Reed's art features the most radical act of all since she once again removes Holofernes head and transforms Baldung's misogynistic *femme fatale* into a woman ready to defend her own body against attack in the spirit of the feminists who conduct vigils to "take back the night." God's words in
Judith's prayer ring forth through all the attacks on women (both physical and otherwise): "'It shall not be done'" (Jth 9:2).

In Mosley's novel, Judith, the images of Judith and Holofernes, Abra and Bethulia flash before us as they do within this contemporary woman's mind as she seeks her path to understanding and community. She goes the path of woman as sex object, debased and dehumanized, but she finds her way out of it as well and it is because the myth of Judith is at its very core concerned with survival. Clearly, in Mosley's novel he wants men and women to survive together and that is why, by the end of the novel, Judith looks and finds her man despite the numbers of Holofernes who appear everywhere. His "hopeful monster" is indeed that place in which the genders overlap and share commonality and love, despite all the ways in which culture and society pull them apart (as the individual is pulled apart, fractured, lost in the shuffle of dog-eat-dog).

As John Banks states in his Book Review of Mosley's Judith, "Judith is his examination of the indirectness of the path to grace" (188). It is heartening to me that a contemporary novelist can portray a contemporary woman character so deftly and support a philosophical movement towards unifying the world, maybe even saving the world from itself. The act of writing this novel is indeed a loving act.

I feel that I am in most honored company in looking through the lens of the Judith story and finding hope for both men and women that violence will be replaced with resistance and compassion and that there is indeed "grace."
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Paris. Coll. part., *Revue du Louvre* 27.3,
1977, 139.
APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF JUDITH IN LITERATURE, MUSIC AND ART
1. 9th century. *Versus de Judit et Holofernem*, "A few strophes of a Latin poem ... giving beginning and end of the narrative" (Purdie 1).

2. ca. 9th century. Old English *Judith*, MS. Cotton Vitellius A XV. British Museum (Radavich 189).


5. ca. 11th or 12th century, *Judith*, A long didactic poem called "Jüngere Judith" (Purdie 2, 34-36).

6. ca. 12th or 13th century. Middle High German Poem, "ältere Judith" (Purdie 1, 31-34; Radavich 189, *EJ* 459).

7. 13th century. *Judith*, "A poem of the 'Teutonic Order' preserved in one MS of the late 14th or Early 15th c. (Purdie 2).

8. 13th century (ca. 1250). The narrative of *Judith* in Heinrich von München's continuation of the *Weltchronik* of Rudolf von Ems, taken direct from the Vulgate account (Purdie 2, Radavich 189).

9. 13th-14th c. Heinrich von Meissen (Frauenlob) *Judith*. "A Short 'Sprüche' giving the story of Judith as an example of Nemesis and the fall of man from high estate" (Purdie 3, Radavich 189).


12. 1536. Joachim Greff: *Tragoedia des Buchs Judith*, academic drama, Wittenberg, copy in British Museum, "the first extant Germanic drama on the subject" (Purdie 41, see also fn. 9, p. 3 and 43)


19. 1556. *Holofernes*, lost drama performed in 1566 at Hatfield House to entertain Princess Elizabeth (Purdie 5).


21. 1565. *Judith und Holofernes* Volksschauspiel (folk play) performed in Vomperfeld, Tirol (German) (Purdie 6, Radavich 190).

22. 1565. The famous history of the vertuous and Godly woman *Judyth* wherein is declared the great myght of God...Trans. into English meter by Edward Jeninges, with a Preface of Exhortacyon to the same. London: Thomas Colwell (Purdie 6, Radavich 190).

23. 1566. *Belegerung der Statt Bethania*, Wien: Caspar Stainhofer (German) (Purdie 6, Radavich 190).


1604. Judith, performed in Freiburg (Purdie 8, Radavich 190).

1607. Ein schön Meyster Lied, von der Gottsförchtigen Frauen Judith, wie sie Holoferno das Haupt abschlug, Leipzig (a beautiful song from the God...Judith, how she Holofernes the head discharged) (Purdie 8, Radavich 190).

1618. Martin Böhme, Ein Schön Teutsch Spiel Vom Holoferne Und der Judith, tragicomoedia. In Drei Geistliche Comoedien, Wittenberg (Purdie 8, 53-55 where she notes "In its main outlines, Martin Böhme's Tragicomoedia Vom Holoferne und der Judith agrees with Sixt Birck's treatment; but the play lacks the dramatic interest of the earlier version;" Radavich 190)

1620. Felipe Godinez, Judit y Holofernes, Spain (EJ 10:459).


1640. Holofernes Assyrorum Dux, performed in Salzburg (Purdie 9, Radavich 190).


1642. Nicholas Avancinus, Fiducia in Deum sive Bethulia Liberata, Latin Jesuit Drama performed in Vienna (Purdie 9, Radavich 190).

1647. Tragoedia Mundi, performed in Luzern (Purdie 10, Radavich 190).

1648. Christian Rose, Holofern...allen des Teutsch=Landes Friedens-Störern und Blut=gierigen Kriegern in einem lustigen Schau-Spiel zur anderen Probe der Rhetorischen Mutter=Sprache Vorgestellt...Hamburg (Purdie 10, 43 and 56 where Purdie has rather pointed criticism of Rose's treatment; Radavich 190).

1650. David Hautten, Judith Herois Tragoedia, Lucern (Purdie 11, Radavich 190).

1650. Judith, Latin drama performed in Luzern (Purdie 11, Radavich 190).


1660. Marie Peuch de Calages, Judith ou la Délivrance de Béthulie. Toulouse (Radavich 190).
45. 1663. *Holofernes*. Puppet play, performed in London (Purdie 12, Radavich 190).
48. 1676. Fiducia victrix sive *Judith de Holoferne Triumphans...Graz* (Purdie 12, Radavich 190).
56. 1693. *Bethulias Rettung durch Judith* believed to be the same as the other listing by Maria Magdalena Utzschneiderin (Purdie 14).
58. 1701. *Judith mit Holofernes*, performed in Einsiedeln (Purdie 14, Radavich 191).
59. 1708. Stumme Scenen aus der Geschichte der *Judith* performed in Einsiedeln (Purdie 15, Radavich 191).
60. 1714. *Judith sua in deum fiducia de Holoferne triumphans* (Purdie 15, Radavich 191).


69. 1743. *Firma in Deum fiducia maxima Regnorum tutela, in Judith Bethulieae vindice*, performed in Prag (Purdie 16, Radavich 191).


71. 1755. Ein Comödia, oder christliches Schauspilh von dem Arhazat, ein Kunig der Medycr: und auch von der heldenmuothigen Judith, wie selbe den Holofernem uberwunden; MS., in three acts dating from 1755 and written by Mathias Schmidli in Ruswil, in the possession of a family in the canton of Luzern (Purdie 17, Radavich 191).

72. ca. 1760-70 (performed) *Judith und Holofernes*. Volksschauspiel (Purdie 18, 73-76; Radavich 191).

73. 1760. *La mas valerosa Judith*, Seville (Radavich 191).


75. 1763. *Judith*. Tragoedia Reverendissimo....Aachen (Purdie 18, Radavich 191).


80. 1779. Manuel José Martin, *Historia...de la gloria de Bethulia, Judith contra Holofernes,* Madrid (Radavich 191).

81. 1785. *Judith und Holofernes.* Puppet play performed in Hamburg (Purdie 18, Radavich 191).


84. 1816. *Il trionfo di Giuditta, istoria bellissima.* Lucca (Radavich 191).

85. 1818. *Judith und Holofernes.* Ein drama in 5 Akten. Zerbst (Purdie 19, 89-91 Purdie points out that the anonymous author intends "to express detestation of Judith's deed" (89); Radavich 191).

86. 1820. Mrs. Maria (Gowen) Brooks, "Judith," in *Judith, Esther and Other Poems,* Boston: Cummings & Hillard (Radavich 191).


88. 1825. J. F. Pennie, *The Fair Avenger, or the Destroyer Destroyed.* "An academic drama." London (Purdie 19, 91-93 where she notes "The work is of little value; but at least the author's Preface does not encourage expectations (91); Radavich 191).

90. 1830. *Cantic spirituel var suject ar Brincess Judith, Peini a zibennas Holofernes*, Montroulez (Radavich 191).


94. 1847. Johann Nestroy, *Judith und Holofernes* (1847) in *Werke* Leipzig: Volkverlag, Weimar, 1962. This is a parody of Hebbel’s play, especially the character of Holofernes. (Purdie 20, 103-104; Radavich 192).

95. 1849. *Judith, or the Prophetess of Bethulia*. A romance from the Apocrypha, London (Purdie 20, Radavich 192).

96. 1854. *Judith or, an Old Picture of Absolutism Retouched*, London (Purdie 20, 105 where she states it is "undistinguished"; Radavich 192).


98. 1856. J. M. Neale, *Judith*, A Seatonian Prize Poem Cambridge. Neale sees it as a great joke that he got the prize, see Purdie 106. (20, 105-106; Radavich 192).

99. 1860. Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Marble Faun*. The main character, Miriam, is a painter. She paints Jael, Judith and Salome. The narrator describes her Judith and Holofernes. Judith looks at the head as if startled like a "cook if a calf's head should sneer at her when about to be popped into the dinner pot" (53). Holofernes "had a pair of twisted mustaches, like those of a certain potentate of the day" (53). The narrator comments that these portraits in which "woman's hand was crimsoned by the stain" (of blood) seem to propound the moral that "woman must strike through her own heart to reach a human life, whatever were the motive that impelled her" (54).


103. 1870. Julius Grosse, Iambic version of Hebbel's Judith in Gessamelte Werke Vol. VII, Leipzig (Purdie 21, 104-105 where she says "The passion of the Munich school of writers for smooth verse and soothing rhetoric seems to have atrophied the critical faculty of at least one of their number"; Radavich 192).


114. 1911. George Kaiser, Die Jüdische Witwe, German Expressionist comedy, in Werke, Band 1, Frankfurt-am-Main: Ullstein 1971. (Purdie indicates that the play revolves around "Judith's desire"--Freudian throughout, see 122 ff; Radavich 192, EJ 10:459).


122. 1921. Rosemarie Menschick, *Judith*, Biblisches Schauspiel in 4 Aufzügen mit nur weiblichen Rollen (Biblical performance in 4 acts with only womanly roles...), München (Purdie 22, 135, 135; Radavich 192).


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MUSIC

I. Middle Ages


5. 1588. ballade intytuled the moste famous historye of Judith and (H)Olofernes, London: Sampson Clerk, (Purdie 7, Radavich 190).


II. 17th Century

7. 1635. Martin Opitz, Judith, Breslau, A "singspiel" or opera text from Italian source (Purdie 9, 78-80; Radavich 190).

8. 1646. Andréas Tscherning: M. Opitzen, Judith, auffs neu aussgefertigt (expansion of Opitz's "singspiel", Rostock (Purdie 10, 80-82, Radavich 190).


12. 1691. *Faustus Confusus seu a Juditha fusus Holofernus*, music by Henricus Biber, Salzbug (Purdie 14, Radavich 191).

III. 18th Century


15. 18th c. Judith, bel canto by Elly Ameling.


18. 1720. Joachim Beccau, L'Amor insanguinato oder Holofernes in einem Singspiel, an opera with arias both in Italian and German and comic scenes in dialect; in Theatralische Gedichte und Ubersetzungen, Hamburg (Purdie 15, 82-84; Radavich 191).


22. 1741. Firma in Deum fiducia...in Judith Israelis Amazone (melodrama) Prague, Joseph Anton Sehling (EJ 10:460).


25. 1757. In cymbalis and Hymnum novum two puzzle canons in his Storia della musica (165, 334), Giovanni Battista Martini (EJ 10:460).


IV. 19th Century

36. ca. 1800. *Judith*, Joseph Emmert, Oratorio performed at Würzburg (Purdie 19, Radavich 191).


38. ca. 1830. *Judith*, oratorio, Joseph Strauss, performed in Karlsruhe (Purdie 19, Radavich 191).


50. 1891 (performed by the United Hebrew Opera Company (sung in German). Judith und Holofernes, Lyric drama, Boston (Purdie 21, Radavich 192).

V. 20th Century


ART

I. Early Period


2. 12th c. Charles Ourself, *La miniature du XII siècle a l'abbaye de Citeaux, d'après les manuscrit de la bibliothèque de Dijon*, 67, pl. 10 and 12. The "A" is the scene of Judith beheading Holofernes in a tent (as in Vulgate) plus a banquet scene with Judith and Holofernes seated at table (from Brown, fn 21, p. 394).


6. 14th c. illuminated manuscript, *le somme le roi*: MS B.M. Royal 19c.II, 85v; British Museum, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collection*, by Sir George F. Warner & Julius P. Gilson, 4pl. 109, depicts the vice of *Luxuria* with one example Judith slaying Holofernes (Brown 394).

II. Renaissance

7. ca. 1427. Hebrew illuminated manuscript from Germany from *Hamburg Miscellany*, Mainz (?) pictured in *EJ* 10:458.


9. ca. 1473. Pavement of Siena Cathedral (Osborne 620).
10. 15th c. Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), "Judith appears as a niche statuette on Ghiberti's Paradise doors to the left of the David panel" (dates of Ghiberti from *Grollier Encyclopedia* 5:202) (Garrard 284). Reid notes that the association of Judith with David is a prophesy of "'Christ's victory over death'" (378).

11.,12.  
a) Brussels Musees royaux d'art et d'histoire  
b) French (ca. 1515) now in Cathedral of Sens.

13. ca. 1456-60. Donatello, Bronze Sculpture, Florence, Piazza Signoria, Judith grasps Holofernes head with her left hand, his dagger held in her uplifted right hand ready to strike, his body is limp, his head twisted unnaturally, he is sitting... (*EJ* 10:453 (pictured as fig. 1) and 460; Osborne 620; Garrard 250, 286). Pictured in Garrard on 250. She says "As a public monument symbolizing the triumph of Humilitas (and also Fortitudo) over Superbia--the victory of a small but forceful figure over a luxurious, barbaric giant--the *Judith* of Donatello could fill, as did other Quattrocento *Davids*, a metaphoric role first conceived for an ancient chosen people, the Israelites, and now suited to a Renaissance city-state in its struggle against modern political tyrants" (286). For Jane Reid's comments, see 378-379.

14, 15, 16, 17.  
ca. 1470-72. Boticelli.  
- *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* (Uffizi)  
- *The Discovery of the Dead Holofernes* (Uffizi)  
- *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* (Cincinnati Art Museum)  
See figures 4, 6, 5 in Lightbown's  
*Sandro Boticelli, Vol. II.*  
Reid describes the occurrence of Judith in a niche "at the extreme right of *The Calumny of Apelles*. There is also a larger panel of *Judith* done around 1490 and located at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (also referred to in *EJ* 10:460). Other references include: Osbourne 620, Garrard 285 and Reid 384-385.
18, 19, 20.
ca. 1495. Andrea Mantegna.
-Giuditta (National Gallery, Washington, D.C., Widener Collection); (Tav 108, Cipriani)
-Giuditta, Dublin (Tav. 160, Cipriani)
-Giuditta, Montreal (Tav. 148, Cipriani)
See also EJ 10:454 (pictured as fig. 2), 460; Garrard xviii, 282, 284; also on album cover for Marc-Antoine Charpentier's Judith sive Bethulia liberata; Reid 385. Reid also refers to a later drawing that is located at the Uffizi and she considers this his masterwork (Fig. 2 in Reid).

21. ca. 1500-1504. Georgio Giorgione (1477-1511), Judith, painting "upright figure of the heroine delicately trampling on Holofernes' head" (Hermitage, Leningrad, (EJ 10:460), Georgio is Venetian. Garrard pictures the painting on 287 and notes that the character of Judith stands outside of time in this "High Renaissance" painting: "She comes to represent the distilled essence of the story's potential broader application: the heroine as an emblem of Virtue itself" (286). Reid sees Giorgione's figure as "perfectly classical and perfectly Jewish" (380).

22. 1509-1511 pendentive. Michaelangelo, (1475-1564), Judith Slaying Holofernes, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Rome, Vatican, (EJ 10:460; Garrard xviii, 284 (pictured). See Reid's commentary where she hints that "Michelangelo embodies the legend for us" (380).

23. ca. 1512-14. Correggio, Judith, Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Garrard xviii and 298 (pictured as Fig. 261). She notes: "In Correggio's tiny but powerful painting in Strasbourg (Fig. 261), the grotesquely distorted face of Abra vividly connotes an atmosphere of evil and wrong doing, even as Judith herself, a pure-profile, beautiful maiden, sustains the sense of virtue. In such an image, the erstwhile 'good' character of Abra, who loyally aided and abetted her mistress's brave deed, is made to personify the evil and negative aspects of Judith's character, a transference that ingeniously makes possible the inclusion of both the good and evil Judiths within the same painting." (298).


25. 1525. Hans Baldung, Judith, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (Garrard xviii and p. 296 where she states: "Other artists created pictorial interpretations of Judith that reflected the associations of evil intent and danger to men that had steadily accrued to the character at

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least since the misogynous description by Chaucer's Merchant. For Baldung (Fig. 258), the heroine of Bethulia is cast as a seductive, crafty nude with crossed legs (an image of female allurement, but also deception), who boldly flaunts her victim's head and her castrating dagger, as conspicuous a sexual instrument as the phallic knives of Cranach's Lucretias (Figs. 188, 89)" (296).

26. 1528. Jacques Bink, Judith, engraving, copy from H.S. Beham; B.VIII.263.8 (Garrard 318, fig. 283). Sees this engraving as an influence on the position and style of hair of the Pitti Judith by Artemisia Gentileschi (317).

27-35. Lucas Cranach (1472-1553), #214 Judith Dining with Holofernes (1531); #215 The Death of Holofernes; #230 Judith; 231 Judith; 233 Judith; 234 Judith; 358-359 Lucretia & Judith (after 1537) and 360 Judith (Friedlander Figures 214-360, also pp. 111, 140).


37. 1560-70. Titian. Judith painting. See Tietze, pl. 275; Reid 381.


39. ca. 1564. Battista Naldini, Judith Displaying the Head of Holofernes, drawing, Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts. (Garrard xviii and pictured on p. 288).

40, 41. ca. 1570. Paolo Veronese - painting - Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (EJ 10, 460), see pictured in Garrard 294; also 16th c. attributed to Veronese, portrait titled Judith, Rome, Palazzo Barberini, pictured in Garrard 296. Garrard notes the difference in "type" of this painting from the previous one--Judith is substantially sweeter in the 1570 painting. Reid describes three treatments of Judith by Veronese--all failures by comparison to Tintoretto's smaller oil (Prado). See 381. For full page photographs of two of Veronese's Judiths, see Antoine Orliac's Veronese.

42. ca. 1585. Hendrick Goltzius, after Bartholomaeus Spranger, Judith, B. III. 83.272 (Warburg Institute), Garrard xviii and 287. Garrard sees it as reminiscent of Cellini's Perseus.
43. 1596. Fede Galizia, *Judith*, Sarasota, Fla., John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art (Garrard xix and pictured as Fig. 279, 315). In endnote, Garrard comments that "Despite the picture's somewhat retardataire style, Galizia presents in her Judith a rather heroic and refreshingly unsex-stereotyped image" (Garrard 554-555).

44. 1598-99. Michelangelo Amerighi da Caravaggio, 1569-1608, (the dates and the fact that he himself was a murderer found in *Grollier Encyclopedia*, 1944,v. 3, 4), *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, Rome, Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini (from Garrard, 290, pictured). Reid finds Caravaggio's work a failure, noting that "Melodrama and its inadequacy is one of Caravaggio's problems" (381).

III. 17th Century


46. 1619. Cornelius Galle I, after a lost work by Rubens, *Judith Beheading Holofernes, known as "The Great Judith,"* engraving. NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Warburg Institute) (Garrard viii-xix, 308, fig. 273). Garrard believes Artemesia Gentileschi's Naples Judith was certainly influenced by Rubens' painting preserved only in this work by Galle (307).

47, 48. Orazio Gentileschi:
- ca. 1610-12. *Judith and Her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes*, Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection.
- ca. 1616. *Judith and Her Maidservant*, believed to be Orazio, see discussion and endnotes in Garrard 39-40, Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet (pictured on 40).

49-54. Artemesia Gentileschi (ca 1597-1651):
- ca. 1612-13. *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, Naples, Museo di Capodimonte (Garrard Color Plate 4)
- ca. 1613-14. *Judith and Her Maidservant*, Florence, Palazzo Pitti (Garrard Plate 5)
- ca. 1620. *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, Florence, Uffizi (Garrard Plate 8)
55-60.

1613. Cristofano Allori, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, Hampton Court (Copyright reserved to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II) (from Garrard xviii) and *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1616-20, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, both pictured on page 300 of Garrard. Garrard describes how Allori uses himself as the model for Holofernes and his mistress, La Mazzafirra, as Judith. She notes the difference in Judith of each painting. In the Pitti Palace version "we see a calculating and powerful woman who takes measure of the viewer, dominating him exactly as she has dominated Holofernes. In this instance, it is not only we, the viewers, who are the victims of her wiles, but the artist as well" (299). In actuality it is the earlier picture that was inspired by La Mazzafirra, "although the Pitti picture may be one step removed from the painful personal experience that prompted Allori's first autobiographical conception of the Judith theme, it nevertheless preserves the artist's idea of Judith as a cool and heartless mankiller" (299).


62. ca. 1618-20. Simon Vouet, *Judith*, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, (Garrard viii, and pictured p. 304 as Fig. 270. Garrard describes Vouet's Judith as "an ominous virago" (302).

63. 1621. Simon Vouet (ascribed to), *Judith*, Paris, Louvre. (From Georgette Dargent and Jacques Thuillier, "Simon Vouet en Italie," in *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, vol. 4 (Venice: Neri Pozza Editore) - Garrard p. xii and pictured on 71. Garrard believes they lived in same neighborhood and traveled in same circles and were mutually influencing in their work. However, Garrard adds "Vouet remained, like nearly all of Artemisia's male contemporaries, fundamentally unaffected by her heroic female iconography. His Judiths, fortune-tellers, and female lovers are thoroughly conventional types who play the stock roles of women, either as temptresses or saints" (71).
64. ca. 1620-25. Anteveduto Grammatica, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, Stockholm, National Swedish Art Museums (Garrard, viii and pictured on 304 as Fig. 271). Garrard sees Grammatica's painting as exceptional for the period in that Judith has a "queenly bearing" and the "thoughtful absorption" in the face connects her with the Davids of the period: "But unlike the Davids, the object of this Judith's meditation is not the head of her enemy (in which she would have seen no mirror of herself). Yet the artist has not made clear what it is that has plunged the heroine into deep thought at the very moment when her companion anxiously urges their escape...Judith is not permitted to grow into a multi-dimensional character defined by psychological or philosophical complexity, because she could not be regarded by male artists as an heroic extension of themselves. Unlike David, she was not invested with the aspirations, doubts, and meditations of the dominant sex" (303).

65. 1625-26. Guido Reni, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Geneva, Sedlmayer Collection). Fig. 134 in *Guido Reni, A Complete Catalogue of His Works* by D. Stephen Pepper; discussed in Reid 4.

66. ca. 1626. Valentin de Boulogne, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, La Valetta (Malta). Garrard xii and pictured on 72. Also a Caravaggisti painter but Garrard describes this Judith as a "coldly virginal executioner" (72).

67. early 17th c. Massimo Stanzione, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, NY, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Edward W. Carter, 1959 (59.40) (Garrard viii and 304 pictured as Fig. 269; Garrard sees Stanzione's treatment as one in which Judith is viewed as a "pious maiden" (302).

68. 17th c. Elisabetta Sirani (attributed to), *Judith*, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery. Garrard xviii and pictured on 294. Garrard comments: "The good Judith appears in 16th and 17th century art, from Veronese to Elisabetta Sirano (Figs. 256, 257), and the latter example--if it is by Sirani--reminds us that even women artists may have shared in sustaining the image of an eternally feminine Judith" (293). See also Reid 383.

69. ca. 1630's. Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish), "used a dramatic chiaroscuro to portray Judith in the act of Killing Holofernes" (Brunswick Museum) (*EJ* 10:460). Dates from Gröllier, vol. 9, 143, 1944, 1577-1640. See also Garrard 32-33, 308, 331, 297, 310, etc. "Perhaps the most unforgettable 'evil' Judith of art (at least, before the nineteenth century) is that of Rubens, in his Braunschweig picture of the early 1630s (Fig. 260). Here, a sinister, powerful protagonist glares out of the picture, menacing the viewer both through her gaze and through her militant gesture, even as the
bared breasts are thrust upward, a combination that recalls simultaneously every negative association that has attached to Judith—her sexual entrapment of Holofernes (who looks unusually innocent here), her deceitful manipulation of him, and the unnatural masculine strength through which she confirms the inevitability of her victory over him" (297). Reid describes the power of this painting as well: "An unforgettable Judith; certainly 'true' to the apocryphal source; and, as certainly, worlds removed from Boticelli's 'truth" (382).


71. ca. 1649 or 1653. Armenian Bible, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Armenia Patriarchate, MS 1927, fol. 219b, (EJ 10:455).

72, 73. -c. 1652. Rembrandt, Naples drawing (Reid 383); -c. 1652-53, Judith Returning in Triumph with the Head of Holofernes (British Museum). Reid describes this drawing as "Both monumental and moving" (383). She notes Rembrandt never completed any paintings of Judith (to anyone's knowledge).

IV. 18th Century

74. early 18th c. Francesco Solimena, Judith Displaying the Head of Holofernes, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Garrard xviii and fig. 254, 289).

V. 19th Century

75. ca. 1814. Goya. A drawing and a painting were done by Goya in the period of his "Black Paintings" (Reid 384). Both are illustrated in André Malraux's book, Saturn, an Essay on Goya, NY: Phaidon P, 1957. See Reid's comments (383-384) where she sees Goya's Judith works as examples of his ability to evoke the "terrible in the arts".

76. 1831. Horace Vernet, Judith, Paris, Louvre (Garrard, Fig. 264, 301). Garrard describes it thus "In Horace Vernet's painting of 1831 (Fig. 264), Judith broods majestically as she contemplates her deed, and Vernet's figure was the immediate inspiration for the 1840 Judith drama of Friedrich Hebbel, in which the theme was treated, on one level, as a battle of the sexes, with Judith cast as a tragically willful and self-assertive woman" (300).
77. 1848. Alfred Stevens, *Judith*, Tate Gallery, London, Fig. 7 in Reid, 384.

VI. 20th Century

78-79.

Gustave Klimt.
-1901. *Judith and Holofernes I* (Osterreichische Galerie, Vienna), Fig. 1, Froedl 76.
-1909. *Judith and Holofernes II* (Galery of Modern Art, Venice), Fig. 2, Froedl 77.
See also Garrard viii and 301, Reid 384.


81. 1989. Shelly Reed, painting (full length portrait), Cambridge, MA. Ms. Reed in a telephone conversation with me explained that she had extracted the figure from the 1525 painting done by Hans Baldung Grien (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum). The major change to the portrait is the removal of Holofernes' head. She was unfamiliar with the story of Judith.
WORKS CITED


