

*Literary-Feminist
Readings
of
Biblical
Narratives*

TEXTS OF TERROR

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in memoriam

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CHAPTER 3

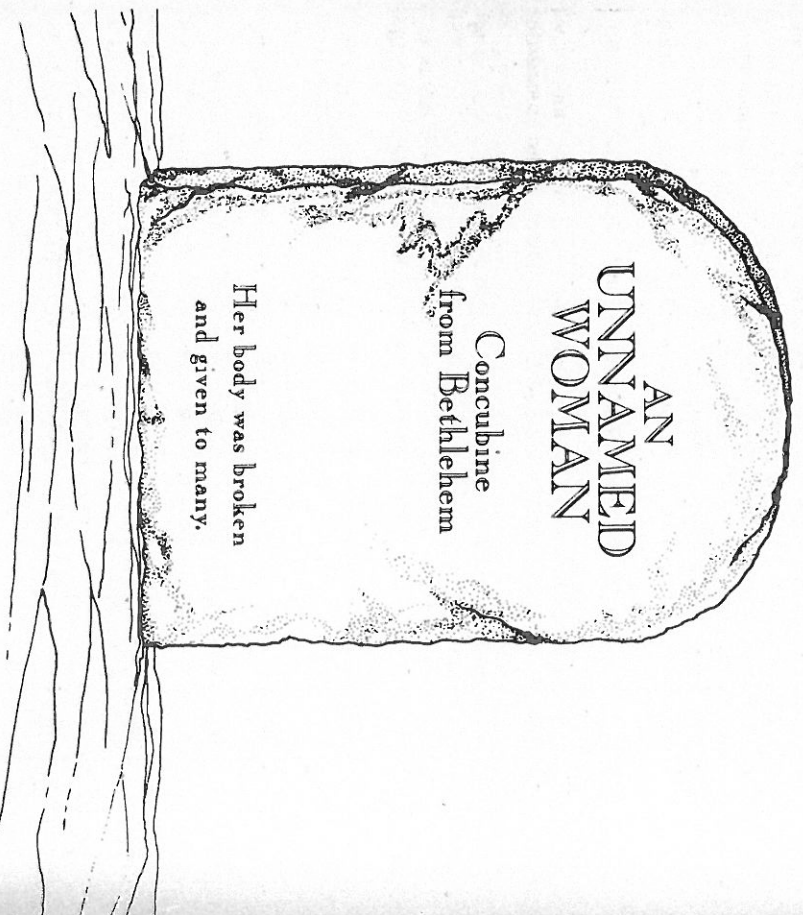
An Unnamed Woman The Extravagance of Violence

Judges 19:1–30

The betrayal, rape, torture, murder, and dismemberment of an unnamed woman is a story we want to forget but are commanded to speak. It depicts the horrors of male power, brutality, and triumphalism; of female helplessness, abuse, and annihilation. To hear this story is to inhabit a world of unrelenting terror that refuses to let us pass by on the other side.

Belonging to the close of the book of Judges,¹ the story reflects a time when leaders were lacking, God seldom appeared, and chaos reigned among the Israelite tribes. Repeatedly, the Deuteronomic editor characterizes this period with the indictment, “In those days there was no king in Israel.”² What is not accounts for what is: that “every man (*’is*) did what was right in his own eyes.”³ Such internal anarchy produces violence and vengeance, as the narratives about the tribe of Benjamin amply demonstrate (chapters 19–21).⁴

Of the three acts that organize these Benjaminitic traditions,⁵ the first claims our attention.⁶ In design, an introduction (19:1–2) and a conclusion (19:29–30) surround two scenes (19:3–10 and 19:15b–28), while an interlude separates them (19:11–15a). With Israel as the larger setting, the geographical movement of the act is circular, beginning and ending in the hill country of Ephraim. Bethlehem in Judah is the location of scene one and Gibeah in Benjamin of scene two. The interlude, focused on Jebus, bridges the distance between them. In content, the two scenes are studies in hospitality. The first portrays a familial gathering and the second a communal reception. Frequent use of the word *house* or *home* (*byt*) underscores their common subject matter. By contrast, the word does not appear in the interlude, for Jebus is a foreign city.



The cast of characters is predominantly male: a Levite, his attendant (*h'ar*),⁷ a father, an old man, and a group of men. Of the two females, a concubine is central; a virgin daughter receives scant attention. All these people are nameless. The men do speak, even the attendant, but the women say nothing. Though most of the characters appear only in sections of the act, each contributes to the overriding theme of turbulent life moving circuitously to violent death. The path is tortuous and torturous. Our task is to make the journey alongside the concubine: to be her companion in a literary and hermeneutical enterprise.

DESERTION

Introduction: Judges 19:1-2

At the beginning, the narrator introduces the two main characters through polarities of sex, status, and geography. "A man, a Levite sojourning in the remote hill country of Ephraim" opposes "a woman, a concubine from Bethlehem of Judah" (19:1). Structurally, these descriptions correspond. Man (*'is*) and woman (*'isša*) are parallel identifications. The remote and unspecified hill country of Ephraim in the north balances the accessible and familiar town of Bethlehem in the south. Similarly, the middle terms, Levite and concubine, match. Yet their meaning poses striking dissonance. A Levite has an honored place in society that sets him above many other males;⁸ a concubine has an inferior status that places her beneath other females. Legally and socially, she is not the equivalent of a wife but is virtually a slave, secured by a man for his own purposes.⁹ The grammar and syntax of this opening sentence exploit the inequality. "A man, a Levite sojourning in the remote hill country of Ephraim took for himself a woman, a concubine from Bethlehem of Judah." He is subject; she, object. He controls her. How he acquired her we do not know; that he owns her is certain.

What a surprise it is, then, to read the next sentence in which subject and object reverse. The lowly concubine acts (19:2). Perhaps her unexpected initiative accounts for the confusion about her conduct. Two manuscript traditions have survived.¹⁰ The Hebrew (MT) and Syriac claim that "his concubine played the harlot" against the Levite, while the Greek and Old Latin maintain that "his concubine became angry with him." At issue is the identity of the offended

party. Was she unfaithful to him or did he cause her anger? Ancient manuscripts give contradictory answers; the story itself allows either reading. All versions agree, however, upon the second action of the concubine: she left the Levite for "her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah and was there some four months" (19:2; cf. 19:3b). Returning to her native land, the woman increases the distance between herself and her master.¹¹ Though called his concubine, she deserts him.¹² Her action in going home introduces a third character to set up another polarity. Father opposes master, with the daughter/concubine in the middle. Resolution of the tensions awaits scene one.

PURSUIT AND NEGLECT

Scene One: Judges 19:3-10

This scene comprises three episodes: the journey of the master to Bethlehem (19:3abc), the visit in the father's house (19:3d-9), and the departure (19:10).¹³

A. *Episode One, 19:3abc.* Just as "she went (*h'lk*) from him" (19:2), so now "he went (*h'lk*) after her" (19:3). But his pursuit fails to resolve the ambiguity of her desertion. He went after her, says the Hebrew, "to speak to her heart (*lēb*), to bring her back."¹⁴ The words, "to speak to the heart," connote reassurance, comfort, loyalty, and love. In other passages where this phrase describes the action of a man toward a woman, she may be either the offended or the guilty party. For example, after raping Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, Shechem found himself drawn to her, "he loved the young woman and spoke to her heart" (Gen. 34:3). Yet in the prophecy of Hosea, Yahweh, the faithful lover, promises to restore his faithless bride Israel, to bring her into the wilderness and to "speak to her heart" (Hos. 2:14[16]). Thus, the Levite's speaking to the heart of his concubine indicates love for her without specifying guilt. The narrative censures no one for the concubine's departure. Moreover, it portrays the master sympathetically. Be the woman innocent or guilty, he seeks reconciliation. Accompanied by his attendant and a couple of donkeys, he journeys to "her father's house" (19:3b). The phrase, "to her father's house," at the end of this unit matches the same phrase at the close of the introduction (19:2). Such vocabulary is telling because the hospitality of the father-in-law,

rather than a meeting between the Levite and his concubine, governs episode two.

B. *Episode Two, 19:3d-9*. Time periods of shrinking length mark the visit of the master to Bethlehem: three days, another day and night, and a final day. In each of them the father-in-law dominates, though with diminishing power. When he ceases to prevail, the visit ends. Strikingly, as the three periods decrease, the accounts of them increase so that the closer the departure, the longer the delay.¹⁵ The narrated expansion corresponds to the buildup of tension. This pattern foreshadows scene two, the heart of terror, in which the shortest period of time yields the longest narrative and the greatest tension.

The father greets the master with joy. As these two unite, the woman who brought them together fades from the scene. Truly, this version of oriental hospitality is an exercise in male bonding.

And his father-in-law, the father of the young woman,
made him stay,¹⁶
and he remained with him three days;
so they ate and drank and spent the night.¹⁷

On the fourth day *they* got up early in the morning,
and *he* arose to go.

(19:4-5a)

The switch from a plural to a singular pronoun, from *they* to *he*, shows that the woman is not counted in either verb. The two men got up, and one prepared to leave. At this point, direct discourse empowers the father's wish. To the master who came to speak to the heart of his concubine (19:3a), her father says, "Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread and after that you may go" (19:5b, RSV).¹⁸ The plural form of the verb, "you may go," contrasts with the singular imperative, "strengthen." If this plural includes the woman, along with the attendant and the donkeys, the succeeding action explicitly omits her. "So the two men sat and ate and drank together" (19:6, RSV). Neither food nor drink nor companionship attends the female, but the males enjoy it all. Further, having weakened the resolve of the master through generous hospitality, the father of the young woman seeks again to detain him. "Please stay and let your heart enjoy" (19:6). Though he meets resistance, the

father-in-law succeeds: the master "sat and spent the night" (19:7). Hence, the fourth day ends as did the first three (19:4).

For the final period of the visit, two speeches from the father, of increasing length, supplement narrated discourse (19:8-9). While similarities with the earlier periods remain, important differences emerge. Unlike their action the preceding day, the two men do not rise up together. "And he [the master] got up early in the morning of the fifth day to go" (19:8a). Unity between the males begins to dissolve. Nevertheless, the father-in-law detains his guest. "Strengthen now your heart," he implores (19:8b). His request begins an argument that lasts most of the day (19:8c).¹⁹ At the end, the two of them eat together (19:8d), once again excluding the woman (cf. 19:6).

Immediately afterward the master arises to go—not only he but also his concubine and attendant (19:9a). For the narrator to specify concubine and attendant indicates the resoluteness of the master's intention, and yet the father tries one final time (19:9). Twice he uses the Hebrew word *hinneh*, usually translated *behold*, to emphasize his message.²⁰ He observes the danger of travel at night; he cites his hospitality as incentive to stay;²¹ and he promises an early departure the next day. "Tomorrow," he says, "you shall arise early in the morning for your journey and go to your tent" (19:9e). Surely, the reference to the tent suggests an unfavorable comparison to "the father's house" (19:2, 3b) with its lavish entertainment. Rivalry between the males has replaced unity. But the many words of the father are not persuasive. The more he talks, the less he achieves. By contrast, the master, who has said nothing, emerges the victor.²²

The power struggle between the two men highlights the plight of the woman who brought them together but whom they and the storyteller have ignored. Unlike her father, the daughter has no speech; unlike her master, the concubine has no power. A journey "to speak to her heart" has become a visit to engage male hearts, with no speech to her at all. What the master set out to do, he has forsaken to enjoy hospitality and competition with another man. The woman suffers through neglect.²³

C. *Episode Three, 19:10*. Juxtaposed to the first episode, the third matches it in brevity but contrasts with it in content. As the master

earlier journeyed to Bethlehem, so now he leaves. Eager to depart, he risks the dangers of travel toward evening. Quickly the storyteller sets distance by bringing him "opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem)."²⁴ With him were "a couple of donkeys and his concubine and his attendant." Having first arrived in Bethlehem with two possessions, his attendant and a couple of donkeys (19:3b), the master appears at Jebus with three, the woman having been put in this category. Thus concludes scene one.

AN INTERLUDE OF CONTINUING NEGLECT

Judges 19:11-15a

Since the return trip begins late, the travelers cannot complete the journey to Ephraim in a single day. Hence, the narrative provides an interlude for decision making. It begins near Jebus (19:11a) and ends at Gibeah (19:14-15a). A conversation between the attendant and his master covers the distance (19:11b-13).²⁵

The attendant proposes that the group spend the night in Jebus (19:11), but the master, speaking for the first time, refuses because it is a "city of foreigners who do not belong to the people of Israel" (19:13, RSV). He chooses to press on to Gibeah, or perhaps Ramah.²⁶ Though his reasoning makes sense, he knows not the violent irony of his decision. In their exchange, two males again ignore the female. They do not ask her preference for the night. If the attendant is subordinate to the master, she is inferior to them both. Her sex as female, not her status as servant, makes her powerless. Like the donkeys, she belongs only in the "they" who turn aside "to go in and spend the night at Gibeah." The stage is set for scene two.

THE ATTENTION OF VIOLENCE

Scene Two: Judges 19:15b-28

In the earlier report of the master's visit to the house of his father-in-law, narrative length increased as tension mounted. Such coordination of length and conflict foreshadowed the development of scene two. The time of this scene is a single night in Gibeah, and yet the length exceeds significantly the entire account of five days

in Bethlehem. The cast of characters enlarges, though the master still dominates. Like the opening scene, this one is a study in oriental hospitality. It becomes, however, a saga of violence.²⁷ Two episodes organize the action. The first moves from the public square to a house in Gibeah (19:15b-21); the second from the house to the outside and back again (19:22-28).

A. *Episode One, 19:15b-21.* In this episode narrated discourse (19:15b-17a and 19:21) surrounds a conversation between males (19:17b-20). In turn, the dialogue repeats the pattern: two speeches by the old man (19:17b and 19:20) surround the words of the master (19:18-19). Crucial to the symmetry of the unit is the word *house* (*byt*). It appears once at the beginning (19:15b), once at the end (19:21), and twice in the middle (19:18).²⁸ Hospitality is emphatically the issue.

The master enters the city of Gibeah.²⁹

And he went in and sat in the open square of the city;
no man took them into his house to spend the night.

(19:15b, RSV*)

Having rejected Jerusalem because it is a "city of foreigners," the master finds no reception among the people of Gibeah. The tribal town becomes the alien place. Moreover, the introduction of another character, who resides here temporarily, heightens the irony.³⁰

Now (*hinneh*) an old man was coming
from his work in the field at evening;
the man was from the hill country of Ephraim,
and he was sojourning in Gibeah.
The men of the place were Benjaminites.

(19:16, RSV)

A sojourner in Benjamin, in fact, one from the territory of the master, will provide the hospitality that the natives do not offer—only to demonstrate its severe limitations.

Lifting up his eyes, the old man sees the wayfarer in the open square of the city. "Where are you going (*h/k*) and from where have you come (*bd*)?" he asks (19:17, RSV*).³¹ Destiny and origin, rather than present situation, are his questions, but the master's reply intertwines all three concerns (19:18). First, acknowledging

his traveling companions, he describes the present situation:

We are passing over from Bethlehem of Judah
to the remote hill country of Ephraim.
(19:18a, RSV*)

Next he reports only his origin and destiny:

From there I [came].
Then I went to Bethlehem of Judah.
Now to my house I am going.³²
(19:18b)

At last, he returns to the present, without acknowledging his companions. "No man takes *me* into his house" (19:18c). The words alter even as they echo narrated discourse (19:15b).³³ The master continues to talk. Needing a place to spend the night, he assures the old man that the travelers will not burden him:

Also straw and provender there is for our asses;
also bread and wine there is for me and for your maidservant
and for the attendant with your servant.
There is no need of anything.
(19:19)

Is the master speaking the truth or is he feigning provisions to improve his chances for overnight lodging? Two ingratiating touches arouse suspicion. He refers to his own concubine as the old man's property, thereby offering her as bait; he demeans himself (or perhaps the entire party) in the phrase "your servant(s)," thereby flattering the old man.³⁴ Whatever the truth, these inventions work. The master gets what he wants. The old man said:³⁵

Shalom to you.
I entirely (*raq*) will care for all your needs.
Only (*raq*) do not spend the night in the square.
(19:20, RSV*)

Concluding this episode, the narrator mitigates the danger stated at the beginning. "No man took (*sp*) them into his house to spend the night" (19:15b) yields to "so he brought (*bô*) him into his house" (19:21a, RSV). The switch from the plural *them* to the singular *him* echoes the master's language (19:18c). It is also prophetic. Though the master is safe in the house, the woman is not. For the time being, however, the travelers wash their feet and eat and drink.³⁶ The old

man gives the donkeys provender (19:21).³⁷ Hospitality prevails. Yet safety within the house cannot control danger without.

B. *Episode Two, 19:22-28*. The second episode of scene two begins in the house, shifts outside, and then returns. These three movements organize its content. A distinctive feature is the play on the words *house* (*byt*), *door* (*dl*), and *doorway* (*pt*). Continuing its thematic journey throughout the story, the term *house* occurs in each of the three sections of this episode. Altogether new, the words *door* and *doorway* alternate in the first and second sections but appear together in the third. Symbolically, the door or doorway marks the boundary between hospitality and hostility. Throughout this night of violence, only the female crosses the boundary; the males make sure of that.

1. *Within the house, 19:22-25b*. Structured with narration surrounding direct discourse, the first section opens with a party. Inside the house, the travelers "are enjoying (*yib*) themselves to their heart" (19:22), a phrase that recalls the days of hospitality in Bethlehem when the girl's father urged the master to "let your heart be merry" (*yib*; 19:6, 9). In turn, this recollection leads back to the motive of the master in going to Bethlehem: "to speak to the heart of his concubine" (19:3). Thus far in the story he has spoken to her not at all. Instead, he has directed his attention to other males: his father-in-law, his attendant, and now the old man from his home territory.

In the midst of this festive occasion,
suddenly (*hinneh*) men of the city,
men of the sons of wickedness,
surround the house, pounding on the door;
and they shout to the man, the lord of the house,
the old man.
(19:22)

Danger knocks at the door of merriment. The extended descriptions of the two groups presage their struggle. The men of Gibeon are "men of the sons of wickedness";³⁸ the old man is "the lord (*ba'at*) of the house." Male power confronts male power. "Bring out the man who came to your house that we may know him" (19:22c, RSV). Though the phrase "to know him" may itself be ambiguous,³⁹ on the lips of wicked men it bodes the worst. They wish to violate the

guest sexually. The man, the lord of the house, replies decisively, ⁴⁰ "No, my brothers." The vocative is ironic, used perhaps to mollify them. Then he continues, encircling his male guest with the protection of prohibitions:

Do not act so wickedly;
seeing that this man has come into my house,
do not do this vile thing (*nēbālāh*). ⁴¹
(19:23, RSV)

But the lord of the house can do more than forbid. He can offer an alternative. To counterbalance prohibition he grants permission. He even accents the positive by introducing his suggestion with the emphatic Hebrew word *hinneh*: "Look, now," he exclaims, "my daughter the virgin and his concubine!" (19:24). Two female objects he offers to protect a male from a group of wicked "brothers." One of these women is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, his very own daughter. The other belongs to his guest. Moreover, these two females can satisfy the gamut of heterosexual preferences. One is virgin property; the other, seasoned and experienced. Both are expendable to the demands of wicked men. In fact, the lord of the house will himself give these women away. "Let me bring them out," he offers. ⁴² The male protector becomes procurer. Further, just as he has used two negative imperatives to defend his male guest, so he employs two positive commands to imperil his female captives:

Ravish them,
and do to them the good in your eyes.
(19:24)

No restrictions whatsoever does this lord place upon the use of the two women. Instead, he gives wicked men a license to rape them. His final words of negative command emphasize again the point of it all. "But to this man do not do this vile thing" (*nēbālāh*, 19:24). If done to a man, such an act is a vile thing; if done to women, it is "the good" in the eyes of men. ⁴³ Thus the old man mediates between males to give each side what it wants. No male is to be violated. All males, even wicked ones, are to be granted their wishes. Conflict among them can be solved by the sacrifice of females.

To those familiar with the traditions of ancient Israel, terrible memories surface. Once upon a time two messengers came to the

city of Sodom to visit Lot, who, similar to our old man, was a sojourner, not a native (Gen. 19:1-29). ⁴⁴ Lot persuaded these strangers to enter his home. ⁴⁵ Feasting followed, and then they prepared for bed. At that moment, the men of Sodom, from youngest to oldest, surrounded the house. While the wicked men of Gibeon constitute only a part of the male citizenry, all the men of Sodom demanded that Lot turn over the guests "that we may know them" (Gen. 19:5).

Just as the old Ephraimite goes out to talk to those who pound on his door (Judg. 19:23), so Lot went out of his door to speak to these men (Gen. 19:6). The words of the two hosts are virtually identical. Lot implored, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly" (Gen. 19:7, RSV). Then he offered an alternative. "Look, now (*hinneh*), I have two daughters who have not known a man" (Gen. 19:8; cf. Judg. 19:24). If the old man can offer one virgin who is his own flesh and blood, Lot could promise two. And like the old man, Lot the father would give his daughters away. "Let me bring them out to you," he said (Gen. 19:8, RSV). Then followed one positive command to match his earlier negative prohibition. "Do to them according to the good in your own eyes." Again, the language heralded the words of our old man. Moreover, Lot's conclusion underscored the point of it all. "Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof" (Gen. 19:8, RSV). Like the old man in Gibeon, Lot tried to mediate between males, giving each side what it wanted. No male was to be violated. All males were to be granted their wishes. Conflict among them could be solved by the sacrifice of females. The male protector, indeed the father, became procurer.

These two stories show that rules of hospitality in Israel protect only males. Though Lot entertained men alone, the old man also has a female guest, and no hospitality safeguards her. She is chosen as the victim for male lust. Further, in neither of these stories does the male host offer himself in place of his guests. Constant only is the use of innocent and helpless women to guard and gratify men of all sorts. Nonetheless, Lot's proposal was rejected, not out of concern for his virgin daughters but out of animosity that a sojourner should try to adjudicate the crisis (Gen. 19:9). Ironically, male anger against another male spared Lot's daughters the horrors for which he had volunteered them. Similarly, one line in our story reports

the dissatisfaction of the Benjaminites with the proposal of the old man. "But the men would not listen to him" (19:25a, RSV).⁴⁶ This time, however, male anger does not spare the female.

Parallel in setting, vocabulary, and motifs, the two stories now diverge to make ours the more despicable. Nothing has prepared us for the terror to come. Dialogue stops; bargaining ceases; the old man and his virgin daughter disappear. No one waits to learn what the dissatisfied Benjaminites might propose next. Instead, a non sequitur follows the comment of the narrator that the men would not listen to the old man. "And the man," that is our master, the overnight guest, "seized (*hazq*) his concubine and pushed to them outside" (19:25b).⁴⁷ So hurried is his action that the Hebrew omits the direct object *her* for the second verb. The one whom the storyteller earlier portrayed sympathetically, seeking out his concubine "to speak to her heart," turns her over to the enemy to save himself. Truly, the hour is at hand, and the woman is betrayed into the hands of sinners (cf. Mark 14:41). At the end of this section, then, safety within the house has lost to danger without. Yet only the concubine suffers the loss. No one within comes to her aid. They have all fallen away in the darkness of night (cf. Mark 14:26-42). "And the man seized his concubine and pushed to them outside." Danger knocking at the door of merriment acquires its victim.

2. *Outside the house, 19:25c-26.* Pushing the concubine outside (*hahās*) marks the shift to the middle section of the episode. Through the distancing of narrated discourse, the tale of terror unfolds. The crime itself receives few words. If the storyteller advocates neither pornography nor sensationalism, he also cares little about the woman's fate. The brevity of this section on female rape contrasts sharply with the lengthy reports on male carousing and male deliberations that precede it. Such elaborate attention to men intensifies the terror perpetrated upon the woman. Reporting the crime, the narrator appropriates the vocabulary of the wicked men of the city who wished to know the male guest. "And they knew (*yād*) her" (19:25c). In this context "to know" loses all ambiguity. It means rape, and it parallels a verb connoting ruthless abuse. "And they raped (*yāf*) her and tortured (*ʾil*) her all night until the morning" (19:25d).⁴⁸ These third-person plural verbs and the time reference guarantee that the crime was not a single deed but rather multiple acts of violence. "They raped her and tortured her all night until the morn-

ing." A third verb completes their action. "And they let her go as the dawn came up" (19:25e). Raped, tortured, and released: brevity of speech discloses the extravagance of violence.

Strikingly, the next action belongs to the woman herself.

The woman came at daybreak
and fell down at the doorway
of the house of the man
where her master was until light.
(19:26)

For the first time since the beginning of the story, the lone female is the subject of active verbs, though she is no longer a subject with power to act. Instead, she is the violated property of the master who betrayed her. Once she left this man, but he reclaimed her only to deliver her into the hands of other men who beat on the door (*dlr*) of the house (19:22). Now that they have raped and discarded her outside (19:25d), she has no choice but to "fall down at the doorway (*prh*) of the house." Her physical state embodies her servile position. Meanwhile, the master has remained safe within throughout the night. Morning confronts him with the atrocity that he initiated. Contrasts between darkness and light enhance the ironies of the situation. Juxtaposed to the single phrase "all night," four references accent the coming of the day:

They tortured her all night until the morning.
(19:25c)
They let her go when the dawn came up.
(19:25d)
The woman came at daybreak
and fell down . . . until light.
(19:26)

Daybreak exposes the crime and its aftermath. Rather than dispelling the darkness, the light of morning presages its overwhelming presence. Perversely, the discovery of the crime leads to further violence against the woman. For it, the master alone is responsible. Though the men of Gibeah raped the concubine all night, he will perform his despicable deed "in the morning" (19:27).

3. *At the door of the house and away, 19:27-28.* In the final section of this episode, the devastated woman succumbs to the will of the master. Form and content demonstrate his power and her plight.

Predominantly narration, the section begins with the master's resolve to leave. But the appearance of the woman interrupts. Only then come words of direct discourse—his, not hers. At the close, the man resumes his way, having fit her into his plans. Artfully constructed, the unit builds on themes and vocabulary from the preceding sections, while organizing itself through the placement of the verbs *arise* (*qûm*) and *go* (*hlk*) at the beginning, middle, and end.

a. *Resolve*

Now her master arose in the morning,
and he opened (*pîh*) the door (*dlr*) of the house (*byt*)
and he went out to go on his way.

b. *Interruption*

But, behold (*hinneh*), there was the woman his concubine,
having fallen at the doorway (*pîh*) of the house (*byt*),
her hands upon the threshold.
And he said to her,
'Arise and let us be going.'
But there was no answer.

c. *Resumption*

Then he put her upon the ass,
and the man rose up and he went away to his place.
(19:27-28, RSV*)

At the beginning of this unit, the phrase, "in the morning," continues the time references of section two (19:25, 26). The words *door*, *doorway*, and *house* echo from both sections one and two. Indeed, by using the word for *door* (*dlr*) that appeared in the first and the word for *doorway* (*pîh*) in the second, the final section underscores the boundary that the master has managed to observe while forcing his concubine to transgress.

"Now her master arose in the morning, and he opened the door of the house and he went out to go on his way." The text reads as though he intended to depart alone without regard for anyone else. And why not? By manipulation and force he has gotten what he wanted, even though all that he feared has come to pass inversely. He set danger on the road at night over against safety in a town, but it was not so; danger in a foreign city over against safety among his own people, but it was not so; danger in the open square over

against safety in a house, but it was not so. Nevertheless, he saved himself through an act of cowardice that transferred the danger to his concubine. Now the master must face the victim.

"Behold, there was the woman his concubine, having fallen at the doorway of the house, her hands upon the threshold." The Hebrew word *hinneh* introduces the female presence. The two nouns "the woman his concubine" indicate her inferior position. The phrase "having fallen at the doorway of the house" dramatizes her pain and powerlessness. And the touching detail "her hands upon the threshold" secures her plight.

Having returned the woman to the threshold of safety, the narrator keeps her outside. A poignant image yields cruel irony. Will this woman, violated and discarded, elicit compassion or remorse from her master? Two Hebrew words give the answer. "Arise," he orders, addressing her for the first and only time. "Let-us-be-going." Where are the words that speak to her heart? Certainly not here. Nowhere in the story has the portrayal of the master even hinted that he might fulfill the narrator's description of his intention. Instead, he forces the woman to fit his plans.

"Arise and let us be going." But there was no answer. "Is she dead or alive? The Greek Bible says, 'for she was dead,' and hence makes the men of Benjamin murderers as well as rapists and torturers. The Hebrew text, on the other hand, is silent, allowing the interpretation that this abused woman is yet alive.⁴⁹ Oppressed and tortured, she opens not her mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so she opens not her mouth. "Arise and let us be going." But there was no answer." Her silence, be it exhaustion or death, deters the master not at all. What he set out to do in the light of the morning, he does. Putting her upon the donkey, "the man rose up and he went away to his place." No words describe the journey. His mission is completed, though not as the narrator proposed it.

CONTINUING VIOLENCE

Conclusion: Judges 19:29-30

With radically altered lenses, the conclusion of the story plays upon the introduction (19:1-2). As the narrative began in the hill country of Ephraim with the Levite but then moved away with the

concubine to her father's house in Bethlehem of Judah (19:1-2), so the closing verses begin in the house of the master in Ephraim (19:29abc) and then move away with the concubine into all the territory of Israel (19:29d-30). But the differences between beginning and ending yield terror. The live concubine who once left her master has become the dead object of his appalling violence. Her movement away from him now is actually his call for revenge.

Arriving at his house,⁵⁰ the master wastes no time. In rapid succession, four verbs describe his activities: took, seized, cut, and sent. "He took (*lqḥ*) the knife"—not a knife but *the* knife (19:29a). How provocative is this sentence because it echoes a line from the sacrifice of Isaac. "Then Abraham . . . took (*lqḥ*) the knife" (Gen. 22:10). In all of scripture only these two stories share that precise vocabulary. Yet Abraham took the knife explicitly "to slay his son." Perhaps that intention can be stated because it did not happen; an angel stopped the murder of Isaac. The master also "took the knife." Does he intend to slay the concubine? Though the Greek Bible rules out such a possibility, the silence of the Hebrew text allows it. Moreover, the unique parallel to the action of Abraham encourages it. Perhaps the purpose in taking the knife, to slay the victim, is not specified here because indeed it does happen. The narrator, however, protects his protagonist through ambiguity.

"He took the knife and he seized (*ḥzq*) his concubine." Raped, tortured, and dead or alive, this woman is still in the power of her master. Her battered body evokes escalated brutality from him. No agent, human or divine, intervenes. Instead, the knife, symbol of a terror that faith once prevented, now prevails. Earlier the master had "seized (*ḥzq*) his concubine and pushed to them outside" (19:25b); this time he himself completes the violence. "He cut her (*nṯh*), limb by limb, into twelve pieces and sent her (*šlh*) throughout all the territory of Israel" (19:29c).⁵¹ Is the cowardly betrayer also the murderer? Certainly no mourning becomes the man; no burial attends the woman.

Of all the characters in scripture, she is the least. Appearing at the beginning and close of a story that rapes her, she is alone in a world of men. Neither the other characters nor the narrator recognizes her humanity. She is property, object, tool, and literary device. Without name, speech, or power, she has no friends to aid her

in life or mourn her in death. Passing her back and forth among themselves, the men of Israel have obliterated her totally. Captured, betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, dismembered, and scattered—this woman is the most sinned against.⁵² In the end, she is no more than the oxen that Saul will later cut (*nṯh*) in pieces and send (*šlh*) throughout all the territory of Israel as a call to war (1 Sam. 11:7).⁵³ Her body has been broken and given to many. Lesser power has no woman than this, that her life is laid down by a man.

As the fragments of the body of this nameless woman scatter throughout the land of Israel, the singular horror presses its claims upon the people.⁵⁴ According to the Greek Bible, the master instructs the messengers who carry the bits and pieces to say: "Thus you shall say to every man [not generic] of Israel, 'Has there ever been such a deed as this?' from the time the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt to this day?" The Hebrew Bible, on the other hand, omits both messengers and message to have Israel, in effect, answer the question before it is posed. Hence, the RSV reads, "And all who saw it said, 'Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day'" (19:30).⁵⁶

Yet the declaration in Hebrew contains a nuance that English translations cannot preserve. The verbal forms and the object are all feminine gender. Hebrew has no neuter. The feminine gender can accent the woman herself, not just this abstract or collective "thing" that has happened. Literally, we may translate, "And all who saw *her* said, 'She was not, and *she* was not seen such as this from the day that the people came up out of the land of Egypt until this day.'" In other words, the ambiguity of the grammatical forms serves a particular hermeneutical emphasis: to highlight the woman who is the victim of terror. The commands that follow enhance the point.

In both versions, the Greek and the Hebrew, three imperatives instruct Israel: consider, take counsel, and speak. Strikingly, the first command is actually the Hebrew idiom, "direct your heart," followed by the phrase "to her." Translations yield such readings as "consider it" (RSV), "put your mind to this" (NJV), or even the casual "take note of it" (NAB). Thereby both the feminine object

and the play on the imagery of heart disappear. Long ago the man was supposed to speak to the heart of the woman, though he did not. Now Israel must direct its heart toward her, take counsel, and speak. Act One of the Benjaminites traditions concludes with an imperative to respond.

RESPONSES TO THE STORY

From Tribal Israel. Acts Two (Judges 20) and Three (Judges 21) constitute an immediate response. All the people from Dan to Beer-sheba gather as "one man (*'ish*) . . . to the Lord at Mizpah." Clearly this answer will be extravagant. Even God, who has been absent altogether from the preceding act, participates as four hundred thousand soldiers demand an explanation from the Levite.

His reply (20:4-7, RSV) begins in a straightforward way. "I came to Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. And the men of Gibeah rose against me and beset the house round about me by night." Then the master continues with an interpretation that departs from the stated intentions of the men of Gibeah: "They meant to kill me." They had asked, instead, to "know" him. Even if the Levite's understanding of their request is legitimate, his next words obscure the truth. "They meant to kill me, and they ravished my concubine, and she is dead." Omitted altogether is the contribution of the Levite, who had seized and given her to the men. By the crime of silence he absolves himself. Moreover, his carefully phrased admission, "she is dead," rather than, "they killed her," reinforces the suspicion that he is murderer as well as betrayer.⁵⁷ The dismemberment of the concubine the Levite readily reports as his own deed. "And I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and I sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; for they have committed abomination and wantonness in Israel." Certainly, the Levite fears no retribution for having mutilated the body of this woman. That act is an acceptable call to revenge. Hence, the wrath of all Israel turns against the Benjaminites. Outrage erupts at the harm done to a man through his property but ignores the violence done against the woman herself. Once more, having gotten what he wanted, the Levite leaves the story.

Subsequently, the tribes of Israel demand that Benjamin give up

the wicked men of Gibeah so that "we may put them to death and put away evil from Israel" (20:13, RSV). But the Benjaminites refuse, and the battle begins.⁵⁸ In great detail, the narrator describes a conflict of incredible proportions. Thousands and thousands of men participate. Yahweh also joins the fight against Benjamin. After two initial defeats, the tribes gain victory by a ruse. Carnage is everywhere. Over twenty-five thousand men of Benjamin perish in a day. First the city of Gibeah and then all the towns of Benjamin go up in smoke. Not a single woman (21:16), child, or beast survives (20:48). The tribe of Benjamin is virtually annihilated, only six hundred men having escaped to the wilderness.

This gigantic outpouring of violence causes second thoughts. The victors cannot live with the reality that "there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel" (21:3, RSV). To replenish itself, the tribe of Benjamin must have women for the six hundred male survivors. One oath complicates and a second resolves the problem. Having vowed not to give their own daughters in marriage to Benjamin (21:1), the other tribes have also sworn to destroy anyone who failed to help in the war (21:5). Accordingly, they attack the derelict town of Jabesh-gilead, murdering all the inhabitants except four hundred young virgins (21:10-12). These females they turn over to the male remnant of Benjamin, just as the Levite once turned the concubine over to the wicked men of Benjamin. The rape of one has become the rape of four hundred. Still the Benjaminites are unsatisfied because four hundred women cannot meet the demands of six hundred soldiers. This time the daughters of Shiloh must pay the price. To gratify the lust of males, the men of Israel sanction the abduction of two hundred young women as they come out to dance in the yearly festival of Yahweh (21:23). In total, the rape of one has become the rape of six hundred.

Entrusted to Israelite men, the story of the concubine justifies the expansion of violence against women. What these men claim to abhor, they have reenacted with vengeance. They have captured, betrayed, raped, and scattered four hundred virgins of Jabesh-gilead and two hundred daughters of Shiloh. Furthermore, they have tortured and murdered all the women of Benjamin and all the married women of Jabesh-gilead. Israelite males have dismembered the corporate body of Israelite females. Inasmuch as men have done it unto

one of the least of women, they have done it unto many. Tribal Israel failed to direct its heart to the concubine.

From the Editor of Judges: A second response comes from the editor of the book of Judges, whose voice merges with that of the narrator. At the beginning of Act One, he indicted the age thus: "In those days, there was no king in Israel." Now, at the conclusion of Act Three, he repeats this judgment and adds: "Every man did what was right in his own eyes."⁵⁹ The phrase, "in his own eyes," plays on the words of the old man to the wicked men of Gibeah: "Do to them [the virgin daughter and the concubine] the good in your own eyes" (19:24). The lack of a king is a license for anarchy and violence. So the editor uses the horrors he has just reported to promote a monarchy that would establish order and justice in Israel.⁶⁰ Concluding not only this story but the entire book of Judges with an indictment, he prepares his readers to look favorably upon kingship. What irony, then, that the first king, Saul, should come from the tribe of Benjamin, establish his capital in Gibeah, and deliver Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites!⁶¹ But undercutting Saul to advocate the Davidic monarchy may be precisely what the editor intends. The reign of David, however, brings its own atrocities. David pollutes Bathsheba; Amnon rapes Tamar; and Absalom violates the concubines of his father.⁶² In those days there was a king in Israel, and royalty did the right in its own eyes. Clearly, to counsel a political solution to the story of the concubine is ineffectual. Such a perspective does not direct its heart to her.

From the Shapers of the Canon. Yet a third set of responses arises from the canonical orderings of the scriptures. It is the response by juxtaposition. In the Hebrew Bible, the story of Hannah follows immediately the story of the concubine (1 Sam. 1:1—2:21).⁶³ Though also set in the hill country of Ephraim, with travel elsewhere, this narrative depicts a different world inhabited by different characters: Elkanah, the loving husband who attends to the grief of his barren wife Hannah; Eli, the honorable priest who blesses the woman and seeks divine favor for her; Yahweh, the gracious deity who answers her tears and prayers with fertility; and Samuel, the special child who honors his mother by ministering to the Lord at Shiloh.

Throughout the story, Hannah receives sympathetic and focused attention. She is a woman of name and speech, piety and perseverance, fidelity and magnanimity. The male characters and the narrator highlight her worth and her faith. And all this belongs to the days of the judges. What a contrast is the treatment of Hannah to that of the concubine!

Similarly, the response by juxtaposition occurs in the Greek Bible. There the story of Ruth follows immediately the story of the concubine. Like scene one of this narrative, the book of Ruth is set in Bethlehem. It too is a study in hospitality, but this time a female version.⁶⁴ Through its women, the whole town greets the widow Naomi upon her return from Moab with Ruth, her foreign daughter-in-law. Under the blessing of God, these two women work out their own salvation. The patriarch Boaz cooperates by providing sustenance and marrying Ruth. When the benevolent elders of Bethlehem threaten to subsume the concerns of these females to male perspectives, the women reclaim their narrative. They reinterpret the language of a man's world to preserve the integrity of a woman's story. The son born to Ruth restores life to Naomi rather than the name of the dead Elimelech to his inheritance. In naming this male child, the women of Bethlehem make a new beginning with men. And all this happens "in the days when the judges ruled" (Ruth 1:1). What a contrast is the treatment of Ruth and Naomi to that of the concubine!

The absence of misogyny, violence, and vengeance in the two stories juxtaposed to the Benjaminitic traditions speaks a healing word in the days of the judges. The portrayal of the women enhances the message. Alongside the concubine, the women of Benjamin, the young women of Jabesh-gilead, and the daughters of Shiloh stand Hannah, Naomi, Ruth, and the women of Bethlehem. Though the presence of the latter group cannot erase the sufferings of their sisters, it does show both the Almighty and the male establishment a more excellent way. To direct the heart of these stories to the concubine, then, is to counsel redemption.

From the Prophets. Within scripture, a fourth response to the story comes from the prophetic literature, specifically from Hosea. Two passing references suggest that memories of Gibeah lingered for cen-

turies.⁶⁵ In announcing days of punishment for Israel, the prophet declares:

They have deeply corrupted themselves
as in the days of Gibeah.
God will remember their iniquity;
God will punish their sins.
(Hos. 9:9, RSV*)

A second time he says:

From the days of Gibeah,
you have sinned, O Israel.
(Hos. 10:9, RSV)

Two allusions are meager memories for the crimes of Gibeah. The prophetic tradition scarcely directed its heart to the concubine.

From the Rest of Scripture. Overwhelming silence is the fifth response to this text. It comes from both ancient Israel and the early Christian community. If the Levite failed to report the whole story to the tribes of Israel, how much more has the canonical tradition failed to remember it. The biting, even sarcastic, words of the prophet Amos on another occasion capture well the spirit of this response:

Therefore, the prudent one will keep silent
about such a time,
for it is an evil time.
(Amos 5:13, RSV)

Silence covers impotence and complicity. To keep quiet is to sin, for the story orders its listeners to "direct your heart to her, take counsel, and speak" (19:30; 20:7).

From the Readers. "Direct your heart to her, take counsel, and speak." From their ancient setting, these imperatives move into the present, challenging us to answer anew. Thus, the sixth response awaits the readers of the story. Truly, to speak for this woman is to interpret against the narrator, plot, other characters, and the biblical tradition because they have shown her neither compassion nor attention. When we direct our hearts to her, what counsel can we take? What word can we speak? What can we, the heirs of Israel, say in the presence of such unrelenting and unredeemed terror?

First of all, we can recognize the contemporaneity of the story. Misogyny belongs to every age, including our own. Violence and vengeance are not just characteristics of a distant, pre-Christian past; they infect the community of the elect to this day. Woman as object is still captured, betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, dismembered, and scattered. To take to heart this ancient story, then, is to confess its present reality.⁶⁶ The story is alive, and all is not well. Beyond confession we must take counsel to say, "Never again." Yet this counsel is itself ineffectual unless we direct our hearts to that most uncompromising of all biblical commands, speaking the word not to others but to ourselves: Repent. Repent.⁶⁷

NOTES

1. On the composition of Judges, see Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1975), pp. 29-38; idem, "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel," in *A Light unto My Path*, ed. Howard N. Bream, Ralph D. Heim, and Carey A. Moore (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 33-48; J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), pp. 4-5.
2. *Judg.* 17:6a; 18:1a; 19:1a; 21:25a.
3. *Judg.* 17:6b; 21:25b.
4. Wherever they are not identified in this essay, chapter and verse citations come from the book of Judges.
5. The three acts are the story of the concubine (19:1b-30), of Israelite wars against Benjamin (20:1-48), and of the securing of wives for the Benjaminites (21:1-24). Cf. Martin Buber's description of this material as "put together from a baroque, overspread elaboration of a legendary theme . . . in a loquacious style . . . reported circumstantially and unclearly . . ." (*Kingship of God* [New York: Harper & Row, 1967], p. 78). For a study of this unit focused on the theme of community, see Susan Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme in Judges 19-20: Family, Community, and Social Disintegration," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 365-78.
6. For a thorough analysis of this text, see, most recently, Hans-Winfried Jungling, *Richter 19—Ein Plädoyer für das Königtum* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981).
7. *Contra* the RSV, I translate *n'ir* as attendant, rather than as servant and/or young man, to differentiate it from *'bd* (servant) in 19:19.
8. See Raymond Abba, "Priests and Levites," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* 3 (hereafter *IDB*), ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 876-89.
9. See Otto J. Baab, "Concubine," *IDB* 1, p. 666; Soggin, *Judges*, p. 159.
10. For discussions of these traditions, see the commentaries; e.g., George F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), pp. 409-10; C. F. Burney, *The Book of*

- Judges* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1970), pp. 459-61; Boling, *Judges*, pp. 273-74; Soggin, *Judges*, p. 284.
11. Throughout I shall call the Levite "the master" to distinguish him from the other nameless males and to indicate his power over the concubine.
 12. Jungling compares the departure of the concubine from her master to Hagar's flight from Sarai (Gen. 16:6). He observes also the uniqueness of the concubine's act in the traditions of Israel: she, not the man, initiates the separation. See *Richier 19*, pp. 87-90.
 13. For a different analysis of the divisions in this scene, see Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 90-152. Note especially his literary comparisons of the fourth and fifth days of the master's visit (pp. 115-18).
 14. On the preferability of the Qere *lahāšibāh*, "to bring her back," see Moore, *Judges*, pp. 409-10; Burney, *Judges*, p. 461.
 15. On this instance of retardation, see Jacob Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978), pp. 106-7.
 16. Boling observes the *inclusio* formed around the visit by the phrase, "his father-in-law, the father of the young woman," in 19:4a and 9 (*Judges*, p. 274). On the graciousness of the greeting, cf. Jungling's comments on the verb, "made him stay" (*Richier 19*, pp. 106-8).
 17. *Contra* Soggin, *Judges*, p. 285, the phrase "spent the night" (19:4, 6b, 9b) is not "a euphemism for the resumption of matrimonial relations." Male bonding is the point; see below on 19:5-7.
 18. Like Abraham who entertained three strangers in his tent at Mamre, the father plays down his generosity by the phrase, "Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread" (cf. Gen. 18:4-5). Further, like Abraham, he pictures the delay as an aid to departure.
 19. For this interpretation of the Hebrew *hinnhnhw* in 19:8, see Boling, *Judges*, pp. 87, 275.
 20. On the varieties of meaning for *hinnhnh*, see Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), pp. 168-71; C. J. Labuschagne, "The Particles הָן and הֵן," *Syntax and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Syntax and Biblical Exegesis*, Oudtestamentische Studien 18, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 1-4.
 21. Note again the father's expression, "Let your heart be merry" (19:9).
 22. In the three time periods of this episode, power has passed from the father (19:4) to the two males joined equally (19:6) to the master (19:8-10).
 23. Cf. Boling, *Judges*, p. 274: "It was a man's world. There is no mention of the interest of the girl [*sic*] in rejoining her husband, nor of what the womenfolk did while the two men celebrated for most of a week."
 24. On Jebus, see Soggin, *Judges*, p. 286; Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 147-48.
 25. For a stylistic analysis of the conversation, see Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 162-70. Note his comparison (following W. Richer) with the story of the daughter of Jephthah, especially with *Judg.* 11:34a-40. On the Jephthah story, see chapter 4 below.
 26. On the place names, see Soggin, *Judges*, pp. 286-87.
 27. The word *saga* here means story.
 28. If one counts the two occurrences of the name Bethlehem, then the word house (*byt*) occurs four times in the middle (19:18).

29. Note that the master alone is the subject of active verbs; those traveling with him are explicitly included only as objects of the verb *took*.
30. On ironies in the story, see Stuart D. Currie, "Judges 19-21: Biblical Studies for a Seminar on Sexuality and the Human Community," *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 87 (1971): 14.
31. Cf. the similar question asked of Hagar (Gen. 16:8); see Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 185-86.
32. On the difficulties of the Hebrew text, see Moore, *Judges*, pp. 415-16. Cf. "house" here with "tent" in 19:9; see Boling, *Judges*, p. 276.
33. On the interplay of narration and direct speech, see Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), pp. 63-87.
34. Though the preponderant textual evidence is for the singular "your servant," the plural "your servants" is not inappropriate. The precise meaning of the phrases "your maidservant" and "your servant" is uncertain, but their context suggests that the master is speaking of his concubine and himself. Altogether his references include the entire party (master, concubine, attendant, and animals). Cf. Boling, *Judges*, pp. 275-76.
35. Note the brevity of the two speeches of the old man (19:17b and 19:20) as they surround the longer discourse of the master (19:18-19). Cf. this discourse with the silence of the master in scene one (19:3-10). In both instances the master prevails over another male. On the particle *rag* in 19:20, see B. Jongeling, "La Particle פֶּגַע," *Syntax and Meaning*, Oudtestamentische Studien 18, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 97-107.
36. Note the structural parallel between this narrated ending (19:21) and the ending of the master's speech in 19:18c-19. In each case discourse continues beyond a repeated phrase that might otherwise signal the conclusion of the unit: "Nobody takes me into his house" (19:18c) and "so he brought him into his house" (19:21a).
37. This report increases the suspicions raised in 19:19 about the master providing provender. On the other hand, it may testify to the generosity of the old man.
38. On the phrase, "sons of wickedness," see Burney, *Judges*, pp. 467-69; Boling, *Judges*, p. 276; Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 199-203.
39. See Boling, *Judges*, p. 276.
40. Though the text says, "he went out to them" (19:23), it does not use the dangerous symbols for exit, *door* and *doorway*. The old man is safe both outside and in.
41. Cf. the reply of Tamar to Amnon (2 Sam. 13:12-13); see chapter 2, note 34 above. For this and other thematic and verbal links between 2 Samuel 13 and Judges 19-21, see R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), pp. 165-67. On *nēbālāh*, see further Currie, "Judges 19-21" p. 19; also Jungling, *Richier 19*, pp. 211-17.
42. On the apparent grammatical anomaly of masculine pronouns, see Boling, *Judges*, p. 276.
43. Cf. the use of the idiom, "the good in your eyes," in reference to the affliction of Hagar (Gen. 16:6); also the numerous sexual references to eyes in the story of Tamar (e.g., 2 Sam. 13:2, 5b, 6b, 8); cf. Gen. 19:8 below.

44. Many scholars argue for the dependence of Judges 19 upon Genesis 19. See, e.g., Moore, *Judges*, pp. 417-19; Burney, *Judges*, pp. 443-44; Soggin, *Judges*, pp. 282, 288; Robert C. Culley, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 56-59. See also D. M. Gunn, "Narrative Patterns and Oral Tradition in Judges and Sam-uel," VT 24 (1974): 294, especially note 1. (I have not had access to the article by A. van den Born.) But cf. Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme in Judges 19-20," pp. 375-78, who argues for the primacy of Judges 19 over Genesis 19. Yet another approach views such stories as type-scenes that move between fixed conventions and flexible appropriations, without specific literary dependence (cf. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 47-62). For recent discussions of these stories, see Tom Horner, *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), pp. 47-58 and John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 92-98.

45. Unlike any inhabitant of Gibeah, Lot ran out to meet the strangers, insisting that they spend the night in his house and enjoy his hospitality. At first the travelers refused, declaring that they would spend the night in the street. Hence, their desire was the reverse of the wish of the master from Ephraim.

46. Cf. Amnon's narrated response to the words of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:14a, 16b), see Jungling, *Richer 19*, pp. 217-20.

47. On this translation of Judg. 19:25b, see the NJV. Cf. the prominence of the verb *seize* (*hazq*) in the story of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:11, 14b).

48. On the verb *torment* (*'il*), cf. 1 Sam. 31:4; Jer. 38:19; Num. 22:29.

49. For an excellent discussion of the ambiguity, see Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), pp. 200-202.

50. The occurrence of the word *house* revives the motif of competition between the master and his father-in-law. Narrated discourse contrasts "the father's house" at the beginning (19:2) with the master's "house" at the end (19:29). Yet the father referred to the master's abode as a "tent" (19:9). The discrepancy between the terminology of the narrator and the father suggests that "tent" was the sarcastic term (*contra* Boling, *Judges*, p. 276).

51. This verb *divide* is used elsewhere in scripture only for animals. Cf. the use of the verb *send* (*shl*) in the story of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:16-17).

52. In an unpublished paper entitled, "Intracacy, Design, and Cunning in the Book of Judges," E. T. A. Davidson offers some illuminating parallels between the story of the concubine and other narratives in Judges that exhibit the themes of father-daughter and husband-wife, viz., the story of Caleb, Achsah, and Othniel (1:11-15); of Jephthah and his daughter (11:29-40); and of the Timnite and her father (14:20-15:8). She suggests that the placing of the concubine story at the end of the book completes an artistic progression from domestic tranquility (1:11-15) to utter degradation. The progression symbolizes the story of premonarchic Israel itself. Indeed, the concubine is Israel ravished and cut apart.

53. For a comparison of Judg. 19:29 and 1 Sam. 11:7, see Jungling, *Richer 19*, pp. 236-40. Cf. Soggin, *Judges*, p. 289; also Alan D. Crown, "Tidings

and Instructions: How News Travelled in the Ancient Near East." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17 (1974): especially 253-54.

54. Thus, the ending contrasts with the corresponding section of the introduction (19:2). Rather than reporting the destination of the concubine, narrated discourse gives way to direct speech from all of Israel.

55. On meanings of "this," (19:30), see Currie, "Judges 19-21," p. 17; also Gerhard Wallis, "Eine Parallele zu Richter 19:29f und 1. Sam. 11:5ff. aus dem Briefarchiv von Mari," ZAW 64 (1952): 57-61.

56. See Jungling, *Richer 19*, pp. 240-44.

57. Yet the narrator continues to protect his protagonist through ambiguity. Note in 20:4a the description, "the man, the Levite, husband of the woman who was murdered," that again leaves unspecified the identity of the murderer. Cf. Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible*, pp. 78-79.

58. On this response as holy war, see Currie, "Judges 19-21," pp. 18-20; Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 202-4; Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme," pp. 371-75.

59. Although such a process of decision making may have worked for the good in an earlier time (cf. Deut. 12:8), in this context the words hold a negative meaning. For opposing interpretations, see Boling, *Judges*, p. 293; W. J. Dumbrell, "In Those Days There Was No King In Israel: Every Man Did What Was Right In His Own Eyes," *JSOT* 25 (1983): 23-33.

60. See Martin Buber, *Kingship of God*, pp. 77-80; Jungling, *Richer 19*, pp. 244-96.

61. 1 Sam. 9:1-2; 10:26; 11:1-11; 15:34; 22:6; 23:19.

62. 2 Sam. 1:2-27; 13:1-22; 16:20-23.

63. For literary readings of the story of Hannah, see Zvi Adar, *The Biblical Narrative* (Jerusalem: Department of Education and Culture of the World Zionist Organisation, 1959), pp. 19-28; Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible*, pp. 90-91, 114-115; Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 81-86.

64. For a literary reading, see Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 166-99.

65. For comments on these references, see Jungling, *Richer 19*, pp. 280-84; also James Luther Mays, *Hosea*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 131, 143; Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 158, 184.

66. See Dudley Clendinen, "Barroom Rape Shames Town of Proud Heritage," *New York Times*, 17 March 1983, sec. 1, p. A16. A summary of this article reports that "the rape of a 21-year-old woman in a New Bedford, Mass., bar has shocked the Northeast. The woman was hoisted to a pool table, tormented and repeatedly raped by a group of men who held her there for more than two hours while the other men in the tavern stood watching, sometimes taunting her and cheering. No one aided her or called the police" ("News Summary," *New York Times*, 17 March 1983, sec. 2, p. B1).

67. Repentance is a radical change in thinking that manifests itself in a radical change of behavior.