Retooling The Canon

“On the way, at a place where they spent the night, the LORD met him and tried to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his feet with it, and said, ‘Truly you are a bridegroom of blood to me!' So He let him alone. It was then she said, ‘A bridegroom of blood by circumcision.’”

From The Class Notes of Kalman Victor

• The role of the female castrator:
  o Zipporah is saving Moses through circumcision, though?
    ▪ Reversal?
    ▪ Where does the need to use “her son”—notice not “their” or “his”—fit into this.
      • Was Moses ever really at risk of being killed? Was his son?

• A Father suffering for the sins of his Son
  o Will come back in New Testament
  o Is God jealous cause His Son/Him will need to be sacrificed, but Moses’ son will not
  o For next paper (maybe): the typology of the phallus
    ▪ From staff to cross
    ▪ From circumcision to crucifixion

• Caps lock on the word LORD???
  • Does Hebrew have capital letters in it
    o Remember to ask Jewish friends

• Why is there so much blood?
  o Circumcision as an Elektran appropriation of the destruction of the hymen?
    ▪ Where do feet figure into this whole thing?
    ▪ The transmigration of sexuality—is every fetish just another iteration of male sexuality?

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1Penned by the Divine, translated into Hebrew from transcendent and ineffable allness, then into Latin, then English, then Revised English, then New Revised English, then the Standard version of New Revised English, because linguistic standardization is essential for what is, no doubt, a singularly correct rendering of a singularly correct Truth/Will.
2Before He Switched to a Pre-Med Track With a Business Minor
• Does Zipporah successfully subvert this?
  o Maybe, because she is a woman, she is immune to the squeamishness that has seemingly prevented Moses from acting on the circumcision.

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Kal:
  My tentative opening line:
The phallus, for all its structural and functional simplicity, has taken on quite a rich semiotic life in the realm of literature, of ritual
R-----d:
  Haha that’s true
  You should define the phallus
Kal:
  really lol?
  or did u mean that sarcastically
  also, have u taken any formal linguistic classes
R-----d:
  I meant it earnest
  And no
Kal:
  lol i don’t want to get too crude necessarily do i
R-----d:
  I just mean that phallus doesn’t always mean penis
Kal:
  it means penis or things that represent penises no?
  maybe I should just say penis
R-----d:
  Penis can sometimes be a phallus and vice versa
  Is a flaccid penis a phallus? How about the penis of a transsexual woman?
Kal:
  a transsexual woman wouldn’t necessarily have a penis after transitioning no?
  also, i think a flaccid penis is still considered a phallus
  Ima check OED
  An image of the (usually erect) penis, esp. as a symbol of the generative power in nature, venerated in various religions; esp. one carried in the Dionysiac festivals of ancient Greece.
  The penis, esp. as an organ of symbolic significance; (sometimes) spec. an erect penis
“usually erect” yo. QED.

R-----d:
The importance is in the symbolic significance
I’m trying to say that not all penises have the symbolic weight of authority as the phallus - so for a transsexual woman who has chosen to not undergo surgery, which is very common wither because of economic reasons or personal, may not actually have a phallus
The phallus may only exist for those who represent positions of power in a society
And that can be shifting on context
The white phallus vs. The phallus of color

Kal:
All good points.
but i mean there’s like the phallus in antiquity, but arguably you could use the term phallus stripped of its classical associations and apply it any version of penile member you want. but i do think u have a good point that people only look for the phallus in symbolism as it adheres to like a very narrow definition of the phallus
based in greco-roman western convention
like i assume the classical phallus is uncircumcised, so i wonder if the circumcised phallus loses all the cachet
and/or authority
wait this is good, i may use some of this
any recs for reading about this btw?

R-----d:
hmm. maybe heck out Julianne Munroe?
or Julienne Monroe?
Julietta maybe
always forget

Kal:
kkkk
thanks man. i’ll try both lol.

* * *

LitHum assignment: Blog Post.

A Letter to Jane Austen’s Self-Help Column Alias, Julie Melrose:

Dear Julie,

I often find myself feeling confused about when you’re being sarcastic, when you’re narrator is being sarcastic, when your actual characters have a sarcastic inflection,
when that sarcastic inflection is just the narrator making fun of them, when that sarcastic inflection is actually you making fun of them and/or the narrator, or when it’s all an just inflection of my own sarcastic reading.

For example, why is Pemberley so phallic?????

“It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; -- and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance.3”

Yours truly,

Woody

* * *

Kalman Victor
Professor A--- D------
J--- --, 20--
Literature Humanities Essay #-

On the Canon: The Trajectory of The Progression of The Asymptote: Is The Phallus at the Heart of the Matter at Hand?4

The phallus, for all its structural and functional simplicity, has taken on quite a rich semiotic life in the realm of literature and ritual.5

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3 Volume III, Chapter 1. In modern neuropsychology, humans’ allocentric (related to other objects) processing of space is said to have evolved from its primitive egocentric (related to self) precursor, still found in most great apes and mammals today. Thus, the Darwinian-Freudian-Marxist paradigm still holds clout, even when a new vocabulary supplants the older, duly stale shorthand. One might say phallocentrism is closer to egocentrism rather than allocentrism, contrary to what orthography might appear to indicate.

4 This Author Will, In Fact, Argue Something Nuanced, So the Frame of a Binary Question is Misdirection—See Lysistrata and Jane Austen’s Second Self-Help Alias for Misdirection (Miss Direction)

5 Of course, the two notions may not be viewed distinct—see Dante.
The word “loins” appears in the NRS 59 times between the Old and New Testament. The word “loins” appears 221 times in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It can be concluded, therefore, that Paganism has officially lost and that what Kant would later deem “the imperative categorical” has triumphed. The censorship of the collective human psyche merely took the consolidation of many gods into one God with many faces. And it wasn’t even God who told us to stop saying “loins”—it was Moses who was His conduit, undoubtedly a refractive filter for the content of His message, much like those used by today’s youth in “apps” like “Instagram.” Perhaps it can be speculated that Moses’s aversion to the word originated in a traumatic incident involving his newborn son, an angry God (not the god of anger, but an angry God), and a jagged sliver of flint.

Parallel to the historical decay of certainty in phallic language—the increasing ambiguity of what was at some point, for some, the least ambiguous of symbolisms—communication becomes more oblique, more circumambulatory, yet more aware of its status as such. The creation of capital letters and punctuation thus became essential to God’s perpetuation as distinct and all-powerful, relentlessly fueling the unresolvable dialectical relationship between metaphysics and the intersubjective mind. Could the forceful stop of a period, or the semi-forceful pause of a comma, or the ability to designate a beginning and end in a thought, exist without the prominence the phallus and its relationship to Divine authority (from Bacchus to Min to the Shiva lingam to Jehovah’s Long Outstretched Arm etc.)? It seems unthinkable that any other linguisto-historical permutation could’ve arisen given the nature of male hegemony and the

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6 The author is aware of the problems of translation, but chooses to ignore them.
intractable reality that nearly every animal from the stick-bug to the penguin engages in chronic and ferocious masturbatory behavior. Thus, we must conclude that the symbolic status of the phallus—its fixity, its malleability, its applicability—is perhaps the only objective litmus test for philological and theological change along a forward moving temporal axis.

…

In her seminal\(^7\) work, Juliana Munroe points to the instance in Exodus where transmission, itself, becomes a violent ultimatum, not uncoincidentally revolving around phallic symbolism and ritual\(^8\)…Thus, Munroe concludes, based on the incident in Exodus, that the covenant of circumcision is founded in a collective drive towards semiotic continuity, human definition, leveraging the authority of Divine mandate, on the formulaic immutability of an otherwise highly culturally contingent and socially vulnerable gesture. Munroe, however, nuances this argument even further:

What do the Rabbis say of this instant, of Moses’s cardinal indiscretion meriting express divine wrath, of not only God’s desire to kill the humblest man to ever live, but of His failure to follow through. The late Medieval commentator Rashi cites the following Talmudic apocrypha as a rendering of what actually happened during this enigmatic scene: “the angel turned into a sort of serpent and swallowed him [Moses] from his head to his thighs, and then [spit him out and] swallowed him from his feet to his private parts. Zipporah therefore understood that it was because of [the failure to perform] the circumcision [that this occurred]…”\(^9\) What is most striking about this Midrash is its explanation of Moses’s culpability for his son’s circumcision, when there is in fact no biblical record of Moses’s own circumcision, evidently a kink in the chain of tradition. Perhaps, the inclusion of the snake in this image may strike us as heavy-handed, but there is something profound in fact that a phallic representation itself undergoes anthropomorphosis and consumes Moses—the one who should have agency as the definer of the phallic symbol rather than its subordinate—up to his phallus, but that he is freed not when he addresses his own ostensible lack of

\(^7\) Pun.
\(^8\) Exodus, 4:24-4:26
\(^9\) Tractate Nedarim. 31b-32a, Exodus Rabbah 5:5 (it’s really there, I promise).
circumcision, but when his son’s is addressed...Moses cannot circumcise his son when he, himself, is flaunting his obligation to be circumcised, but Tzipporah—as the feminine presence who is therefore immune to the covenantal obligations surrounding the cult of the phallus—can simultaneously transcend the fixity of the circumcision ritual as an outsider, while still maintaining its integrity as a transgenerationally constant symbol. So, in effect, it is the female figure who is the arbiter of covenant, who, with her critical distance, can maintain its integrity.

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The Inn
By Kalman Victor

After Julienne Monroe After Francis Bacon as William Shakespeare as a Composite of All Who Come
After

...Within submissive arms Zipurrah holds their dicks
The flinty female voice redeems the wayward sins
Of uncircumcised lips.
The blood is flowing like a dark merlot
And kind and giving God lets feckless Moses go...