Laughing In The Face of Violence: Theological Implications of the Inter-relationships between Violence and Humour in the Book of Judges

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Abstract (summary):
I assume that there is a theological basis and meaning to each book of the Hebrew Bible and I contend that the inter-relationships of the narrative devices humour and violence in the same story present theological messages and insights that have not, till now, been adequately examined in 21st century theological study. This thesis is an inter-disciplinary undertaking, involving a range of exemplars and scholarly insights. It does not fit neatly into either the traditional theological or the biblical studies categories. I draw on René Girard's Scapegoat Mechanism, Bruno Bettelheim's insights on imagination and Stephen Leacock's understanding of humour, among others, employing particular social and literary theories about märchen, violence and humour, viewed from a contextual feminist perspective. I scrutinize three stories in the book of Judges and I propose that violence and humour, presented together, modify and alter any interpretation that may be suggested and impact on the theological meanings of the corpus as a whole. Their interactions verify, yet moderate, the interconnections between the theological intent of the text and its reception by the 21st century Canadian reader. While the violence may be unacceptable as a theological device in post-modern Western society, the humour modifies and amends any motifs that are presented, making them, and the anti-non-Israelite motif that is so clearly delineated, more palatable to the present-day reader.

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Violence is “the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy”. Other definitions are also used, such as the World Health Organization's definition of violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic many countries have reported an increase in domestic violence and intimate partner violence. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, noting the “horrifying global surge”, has called for a domestic violence "ceasefire". Domestic violence and sexual exploitation, which is already an epidemic across the world, spike when households were placed under the increased strains that come from security, health and money worries, and cramped and confined living conditions. The Inter-Disciplinary Press aims to promote and encourage the kind of work which is collaborative, innovative, imaginative, and which provides an exemplar for inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary publishing. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a. Understanding violence in the context of the contemporary world leads us to an infinite number of viewpoints and theoretical frameworks which, according to Ray, could be quite fragmented within the sociological backdrop. Not only the study of violence has been largely split into specific groups, but at the same time different disciplines seem to have assumed the existence of a peaceful society. Violence and crime inside the family and between intimate partners has been a hidden issue. They may get caught in the crossfire of violence towards people, or the batterer may target the pet in order to gain silence and compliance from human victims. Families and communities are at risk when animal abuse is ignored or unreported alongside family violence. (Phillips & Lockwood, 2013). NDAA. The Importance. Of. The Link. When multiple forms of violence occur in a home, including animal abuse, the home is at increased risk of escalated and continued violence...