

Bringing Heaven Down to Earth

Hum 110 Lecture
March 21st, 2007
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Outline

INTRODUCTION

- I. WHAT DOES THE TABERNACLE HAVE TO DO WITH EXODUS?
 - a. Legend: Genre Analysis
 - b. Migration Legend as Transformative Rite
- II. MIGRATION AS TRANSFORMATION: SEPARATION, MARGIN, INCORPORATION
 - a. Separation: the Broken Covenant
 - b. Limen (Margin): Law at Sinai
 - c. Incorporation: Sacred Space
- III. THE TABERNACLE AND THE SPACE OF UNITY
- IV. TEMPLE, SYNAGOGUE, & CHURCH

CONCLUSION

Quotes & Diagrams

1. "One may find this entire account very puzzling. Today we live in exile, and have no Tabernacle, no Holy Temple, no High Priest, and no sacrifice. What good then does it do us to read about how the Tabernacle was made? Why do we have to know how the beams and pillars were made, what their dimensions were, and how the priestly vestments were made? Of what use is it to us to know how the sacrifices were offered? This is of no practical use to us today, and when the Messiah comes [and the Temple is rebuilt] with God's help, we can learn all these things and know how to keep them." (*Me'am Loez* IX.136)

2. Legends are "*prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today...their principle characters are humans*" (Bascom 9, emphasis in original).

Three Forms of Prose Narratives" from William Bascom's "The Forms of Folklore" (9):

<i>Form</i>	<i>Belief</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Principle Characters</i>
Myth	Fact	Remote past	Different world: other or earlier	Sacred	Non-human
Legend	Fact	Recent past	World of today	Secular Or sacred	Human
Folktale	Fiction	Any time	Any place	Secular	Human or non-human

The "distinction between fact and fiction refers only to the beliefs of those who tell and hear the tales, and not to our beliefs, to historical or scientific fact, or to any ultimate judgment of truth or falsehood" (Bascom 12).

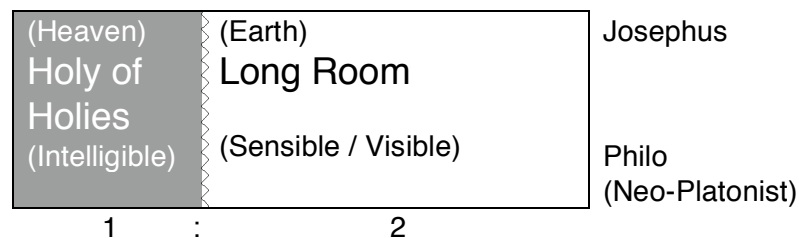
3. “Transformation performances are clearly evidenced in initiation rites, whose very purpose it is to transform people from one status or social identity to another. An initiation not only marks a change but is itself the means by which persons achieve their new selves: no performance, no change” (Boone quotes Schechner 145-46).

4. According to Genep, rites of passage have three distinguishable phases: (1) separation, (2) margin or limen, and (3) incorporation or reaggregation (Boone 146). The “first stage separates the individual from his or her former situation, and the third stage attaches the individual to his or her new situation... they detach ritual subjects from their old places in society and return them, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed to new places.’ The second or middle state was the ‘neutral zone,’ a ‘symbolic and spatial area of transition’ through which one passed to move from one territory to another” (Boone 146).

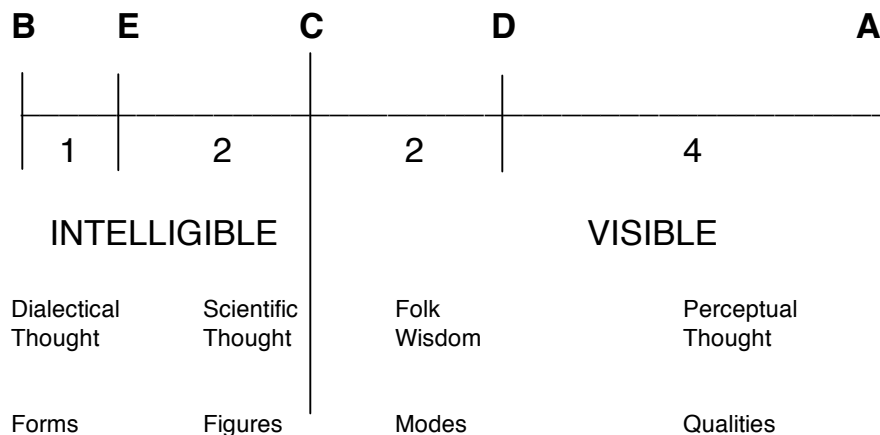
	Separation	Limen	Incorporation
Exodus	1-13	13-24	25-end
Aeneid			

5. “Sacrifice joins people together in community, and, conversely, it separates them from defilement, disease, and other dangers”; “it unites worshippers in one moral community” (Jay 17, 19).

Symbolic Readings of the Tabernacle:



Drawing of the Line Analogy from p. 205 of Reeve’s *Republic*:



Terms

Covenant (*brit*): “A mutual agreement between two or more persons to do or refrain from doing certain acts; a compact, contract, bargain; sometimes, the undertaking, pledge, or promise of one of the parties” (OED).

Commandments (*mitzvot*): 613. There are 365 negative commandments (thou shall not...) and 248 positive (thou shall...) commandments. The negative commandments were believed to correspond to the days of the year and the positive commandments to the number of bones and significant organs in the human body.

Migration Legends: “explain the movements of the tribe” (Wiget 26). To study a migration legend “is not, of course, to study the migration itself” but rather to explore “an account of that ancestral path which, despite any evidence to the contrary, gives a group its irreducible common identity” (Howe 3-5).

Origin Story: “complex symbolic tales that typically dramatize the tribal explanation of the origin of the earth and its people; establish the central relationships among people, the cosmos or universe, and other creatures (flora and fauna) of the earth; distinguish gender roles and social organization for the tribe; account for the distinctive aspects of climate and topography of the tribe’s homeland; and tell the origins of the tribe’s most significant social institutions and activities” (Wiget 24).

Second Temple Era: the Era during which the Second Temple stood in Jerusalem, roughly 515 BCE-70 CE (Jaffee 174).

Tabernacle (*mishkan*): The “mobile home of God.” Literally “A temporary dwelling; generally movable, constructed of branches, boards, or canvas; a hut, tent, booth” (OED). Also known as the “Tent of the Meeting.”

Torah: sometimes this term is used just for the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Other times it is used to refer to the entire Hebrew Bible. Usually people distinguish between the “written Torah” (Five Books of Moses or Hebrew Bible) and the “Oral Torah” (Mishnah and Talmud).

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