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Review of Michael S. Moore, *Wealth Watch: A Study of Socioeconomic Conflict in the Bible*

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guarantees orality. Among those characteristics, M. includes story lines and textual elements such as images of situations, traditional phraseology (employing cliché, numeric schemes, visual metaphors, and parallelism), ambiguities and logical inconsistencies, humor, limited character presence, etiologies, and variant traditions preserving a Canaanite heritage. Linguistically, M. considers, as part of this collective set of attributes, paronomasia (particularly when involving the sound of the words and so dependent on aural reception), doubling the demonstrative pronoun, framing clauses by two identical independent pronouns, the needless or redundant addition of an independent subject pronoun, and deictic particles preceding a clause (pp. 78-79).

These characteristics are applied in a manner that is both explicative and illustrative to a handful of biblical texts in the following order: Gen 10:8-12; Num 13:22 and Judg 1:8; Gen 49:9-12, 22-25; Num 21:14-30; 24:17-19; Judges 5; 2 Sam 1:19-27; 2 Kgs 6:24-7:20. M. notes that the majority of texts chosen for application are poetic in form; indeed, some are readily identifiable as lyric insertions into prose accounts.

Having suggested places where the remnants of orality are present in the biblical text, M. observes that “there is a larger issue here” (p. 98). That larger issue is performance. Performance criticism proposes that communication strategies, even a mode of thought distinct from the literary mode, and specific social conditions involving performer, audience, and performance projection are governed by social conventions determinative of performative schemes that take on recognizable form within a particular historical context. It is this step, this larger issue, that warrants inclusion of M.’s book in a series considering biblical performance criticism and places it among the vanguard of investigations into performance criticism of the Hebrew Bible. Apparently mindful of the developing nature of the discipline, M. writes, “With caution we can examine the Bible’s own picture of oral performance” (p. 108). And with due caution, he takes the reader on a final survey of selected Hebrew Bible texts suggestive of performance moments, ending once again with narrative embedded lyric/ song.

Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel is a valuable contribution to biblical performance criticism and a welcome addition to the growing literature in the discipline. M. provides a useful bibliography, although one notes a limited appropriation of publications applying performance criticism to other literary genres in the Hebrew Bible.

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MICHAEL S. MOORE, *Wealth Watch: A Study of Socioeconomic Conflict in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011). Pp. xvi + 304. Paper \$35.

This is not the book one expects from the title, but I do not mean this as a criticism. In fact, it is an unexpectedly detailed reading of a variety of ancient texts with an eye toward possible socioeconomic implications, and among these texts is the Bible. In fact, one might suggest that the subtitle should have been something more along the lines of “A Literary Study of Proposed Socioeconomic Contexts in Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” which would have described much more precisely what Moore tries to do in this interesting work.

Moore begins the book with an interesting vignette about students wanting to ask very practical questions on the relationship between the Bible and practical—even personal—

economic issues facing modern people. M. then proceeds to suggest that such questions require that we clarify the contexts of the Bible and the ancient Near East. After such a practically minded beginning, however, the rest of the book presents a detailed literary analysis of texts known only to serious students of Scripture and ancient Near Eastern history.

Moore's book is divided into six chapters, and I direct the reader's attention not only to the titles of these chapters, but also to the distribution of pages in each: chap. 1, "Introduction," pp. 1-25; chap. 2, "Socioeconomic Conflict Motifs in Ancient Near Eastern Epics," pp. 26-99; chap. 3, "Socioeconomic Conflict Motifs in the Hebrew Bible," pp. 100-167; chap. 4, "Socioeconomic Conflict Motifs in Early Jewish Texts," pp. 168-201; chap. 5, "Socioeconomic Conflict Motifs in the Greek New Testament," pp. 202-22; chap. 6, "Conclusions and Applications," pp. 223-31.

In the introduction, M. leads one to expect a somewhat cursory examination of biblical themes in answer to questions about biblical thought and economics; instead, in chap. 2, beginning with the Epic of Gilgamesh, and continuing with Atrahasis, then finishing with the Epic of Erra, M. presents an overview of each work as a whole, and then offers an interesting psychological and literary analysis of each, noting some similarities among them (similarities, however, that seem to derive from the methodological lens used in the analysis). The following is a sample of the style of M.'s analysis: "Psychologically Gilgamesh preserves a complex match-up between two rivals, a text carefully designed to help conflicted readers learn how to 'meet their match.' Socioeconomically, however, this match-up symbolizes the 'wilderness' vs. 'civilization' conflict threatening to crack open the Babylonian economy into isolated fragments" (p. 40).

In short, M.'s method is, in my opinion, a combination of psychological analysis of ancient texts and proposals of certain socioeconomic or class analyses that are "symbolized" in the characters and their stories. If one agrees with the highly symbolic nature of the analysis, then the results are certainly intriguing—but it seems to this reviewer that this is a potentially difficult problem. Much of the result depends on accepting the rather unusual psychological and sociologically influenced literary analysis involved and the generalizations that are derived. M. admits that the socioeconomic themes he detects in the selected ancient Near Eastern texts are "covert" and must be dug out of the symbolism that he finds inherent in the stories.

In the following chapters, M. suggests that the biblical material contains equally covert themes discernible from a literary analysis of the text. Continuing with the themes of "wilderness" versus "civilization" and other binary themes, M. concentrates mainly on the Genesis and Exodus narratives. He does not include any examples from the historical books or the Prophets, except to specify that this material, because it does not usually address itself to socioeconomic questions, allows him to continue his form of analysis that attempts to reveal "covert" socioeconomic messages.

The early Jewish texts that M. discusses include 1 and 2 Maccabees, the *Damascus Document*, the *Rule of the Community* (1QS), the *Habakkuk Commentary* (1QpHab), and the *Thanksgiving Scroll* (1QH). M. contrasts what he sees as the direct historical description of Hellenistic "acquisition" (Maccabees) with the ritualized language of impurity in the "dystopian" literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In other words, these texts are purported to reveal different responses to the socioeconomic situations of the post-Alexandrian Hellenistic empires.

The final analytical chapter examines selected passages and parables from the Gospel of Luke. The choice is a bit more obvious than the texts chosen for previous chapters, but here again, the limited number of selected texts raises questions about the kind of analysis M. attempts here.

I am afraid I must admit that I did not entirely understand M.'s "Conclusions and Applications." This section seems to raise new issues not discussed in the previous chapters and occasionally returns to some of the themes raised only in the introduction—namely, how the Bible can speak to basic economic issues faced in the modern world. Chapters 1 and 6 seem quite different from chaps. 2–5.

Moore's work offers provocative and interesting ideas and insights. I puzzle, however, over how it relates to what he identifies as the goal of the analysis, particularly because the goals seem to differ from one chapter to another. For those interested in literary analysis particularly, I think that M.'s work would reward a careful read. But for those who are simply asking questions about the relationship between the Bible and economics (ancient or contemporary), I am not convinced that M.'s work is the place to begin. The many controversies and complexities in his literary method tend to overshadow the questions about economics. Still, the work proposes information and insights from which to wrestle with the question of how literary analysis can address concerns about ancient and modern economics.

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JONATHAN Y. ROWE, *Michal's Moral Dilemma: A Literary, Anthropological and Ethical Interpretation* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 533; New York: Clark, 2011). Pp. xiv + 255. \$130.

In his study of 1 Samuel 19, Rowe employs a combined literary and social-scientific approach in his analysis of the "moral dilemma." Among his reasons for delimiting the text to 19:10c-18a is the narrative's concentration on Michal's actions, discernible in three distinct sections. Regarding the approach to the dilemma, R. highlights the existence of cultural gaps between the OT and its modern interpreters and proposes a combined anthropology and ethics approach to the literary study of the Michal narrative. R.'s awareness of the potential benefits and liabilities of each of these approaches to biblical narratives informs his analysis, but he overlooks key aspects of his approach and presuppositions.

In the six chapters of the book R. describes his methodology and analyzes the content of 1 Samuel 19. As insightful as chaps. 1–4 are for setting up the various components of his method, these chapters also add layers to the analysis of the biblical text—layers that could be more succinctly and clearly presented. Even so, R.'s observations may be summarized according to the main elements of his study—the method and the content. Regarding his method, in chap. 1 R.'s concern is to illustrate how the OT may contribute to the "resolution of value conflicts" (p. 34). Accordingly, R.'s discussion includes a few salient aspects. First, he grounds his discussion of the OT law on the premise that the law is aware of the propensities of its recipients and thus includes both positive and negative motivations for ethical living. Second, R. observes that there is a natural morality to which various prophetic texts allude and that provides the basis for admonition about appropriate behavior. Third, R. posits that the moral good is a priority for the OT. In chap. 2, R. expands on the latter observation regarding moral good by looking at the nature of good (instrumental and intrinsic),