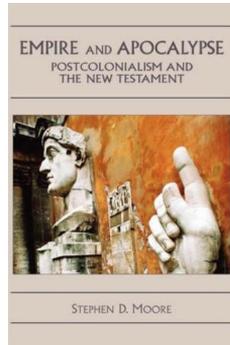


○ REVIEW OF STEPHEN D. MOORE, *EMPIRE AND APOCALYPSE. POSTCOLONIALISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT*

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Dear Stephen D. Moore,

I know you probably hear this all the time, but I really really (and I mean really) love reading your work. I must admit, I have not read it all, but what I have read I return to again and again and enjoy it again and again.

You see, it is not only your style; it is also your insight. You see so many things I don't, and you point them out in a way that does not make me feel like an idiot. And then of course, it is fun to read.

While your work usually points the way for studies in this (oh let's say, deconstruction and the gospels), that (maybe masculinity studies and the book of Revelation), and the Other, this book here is somewhat different, in that it enters into a field which already exists, and so can map out the field, the central issues and the important contributions within it, after which you then volunteer your own readings. And at this stage in postcolonial biblical studies, that is a very helpful input – not to mention a refreshing perspective from someone other than the usual suspects, say no more.

My first thought was: is this meant to be a textbook? I was just wondering because of the comprehensive mapping of the field in chapter 1 and the twenty-six pages of annotated bibliography, which is indeed a treasure chest, not least because it really gets around, and brings in scholars from Asia and South America and thus highlights the multifariousness of approaches, experiences and contexts. Speaking of contexts, compared to your previous work, you have kept yourself in the background. Your personal voice (you know, butcher-dad, LSD, mental hospital) was not there, apart from the Ireland reference cozily tucked away in the preface. Is that because

you wanted to be more of an outsider instead of wrenching the texts open from within? Because your personal investment seems to be less apparent in this book. Time for coffee, I'll be back.

I just finished reading your first section and its two chapters on interpretations of Mark and John. Both readings used lots of well known arguments, and still managed to be utterly unpredictable. I thought your idea to compare both texts with the treatment of empire in Revelation to discern differences a good one. And you really did succeed in navigating between liberation from and complicity with the Roman Empire as you had set out to in the first chapter. I especially enjoyed your point about John lacking prophecies of Rome or Caesar's end, as in Revelation and the Synoptics. And instead the Roman Empire is destined to be transformed from within, that eventually, the two, Christianity and the Roman Empire will become one. I also think you are right in pointing out that it is important to remember that this narrative contains 'the most trenchant critique of Roman imperialism.' This critique you mention as the critique of slavery, which is the fundamental institution of the empire. I still have to think through the implications of your interpretation of the trial scene, in particular Pilate's scourging of Jesus as an expression of the relationship between empire and torture.

I thought that chapter 4 was exceptionally valuable, and this is in part because my own work has moved outside biblical studies, and so I did find your theoretical chapter on the Postcolonial, the Postmodern and the Evangelical very informative, especially the sections on Homi Bhabha and his work. This is definitely a chapter to which I shall return.

Yet, in the last chapter on Revelation I did get a little disappointed, because I suddenly found the scope of the book somewhat narrow, in spite of all its theoretical richness and comprehensive mapping. You see, I loved *God's Gym*. And in particular I enjoyed the sections *Heaven can be Hell* and *The Beatific vision*. And what about *Revolting Revelations!*? All your analyses on male narcissism and the spectacle I kind of expected to be included in your postcolonial study of Revelation. I am not saying that 'your old stuff was better, and so this should be more like it,' I just thought that *you* would find masculinity issues an important and inescapable aspect of empires, past and present. Yes yes, I saw that you had referred to *God's Gym* in a footnote (p. 103, n. 15) and also *God's Beauty Parlor* (p. 114, n. 32), but these references are an aside to what you are discussing here; they do not explicitly inform your analysis of Revelation – nor Mark and John for that matter. Okay, I suppose that I am influenced by having been completely engrossed in *Imperial Leather* this past week, but still ... knowing that you have made important contributions to gender hermeneutics and biblical texts, I found it bewildering and disheartening that gender was completely absent from your postcolonial analyses of Empire and Apocalypse.

That's all from here
Best wishes
Christina Petterson