

Sharon Jacob, *Reading Mary Alongside Indian Surrogate Mothers: Violent Love, Oppressive Liberation, and Infancy Narratives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 223 pages. \$109.99. ISBN: 9781137542526

Since the late 20th century, various ethnic groups have developed different contextual biblical interpretations on the basis of their specific geopolitical contexts. These include the liberation, African(a) and African American, Asian and Asian American, and islander biblical interpretations. Such contextual approaches, which read the Bible through different lenses, have revealed new and creative interpretations of the biblical texts. Sharon Jacob's *Reading Mary Alongside Indian Surrogate Mothers* engages in such an approach and effectively defamiliarizes the traditional understandings of Mary as represented in Matthew and Luke. Jacob does not follow the binary interpretations of many feminist works. Based on Homi Bhabha's concept of ambivalences and ambiguities, Jacob argues that Mary's practices in the Matthean and Lukan infancy narratives blur the boundaries between liberation and oppression (120).

In Chapter 1, Jacob introduces the figure of the wet nurse living in India during the British colonial period. In Chapter 2, which is of greater relevance than Chapter 1 to her overall interpretation, she argues that, in the age of globalization, the postcolonial Indian surrogate mother destabilizes the lines between oppression and liberation by selling her womb to First World prospective parents to support her own family (19, 21). By reading the five mothers in Matthew's genealogy through the lens of the Indian context, in Chapter 3, Jacob illustrates how these mothers' "exploiter-exploited motherhood...blurs the boundaries between exploited victims and exploiter heroes" (46). Then, in Chapter 4, Jacob reads the Lukan Mary through the same lens and contends that both Mary and the Indian surrogate are "victimized heroes" (93) because they "consent to their exploitation with the hope that their victimization will eventually lead to a better life for their children or their nation" (120). Finally, Chapter 5 offers a reading of both the Matthean Mary and Lukan Mary together.

Jacob's contextual approach is impressive and remarkable. Her work not only unpacks Mary's ambivalent motherhood but also exposes the "racial and economic agendas of the global Empire" (23). In Stephen D. Moore's article ("Paul after Empire," in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul Through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011]), he warns that "nothing in the professional training of the average biblical scholar equips him or her to lock analytic horns with the Behemoth and Leviathan of neocolonialism and globalization" (22). Undoubtedly, Jacob's contextual interpretation effectively connects the ancient world to the world of globalization—an approach that, as Moore notes, is rarely encountered in scholarly works.

Jacob's analysis of Indian surrogacy in Chapter 2 is powerful and deeply compelling, offering important insights into how people from the First World exploit women from the Third World. However, the issue of the "global Empire" might be further enriched by briefly acknowledging surrogacy practices within the First World. Under "the Empire of globalization," First World surrogate mothers—particularly white women in the U.S.—also sell their wombs to wealthy intended parents from developing countries, such as China. This emerging pattern invites us to reconsider how capitalist power structures blur the traditional binary between the Global North and the Global South, suggesting a more fluid and multidirectional flow of reproductive labor in the age of globalization. Despite this limitation, I still highly recommend this book to those interested in the contextual approach.

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