Currents in Biblical Research

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Currents in Biblical Research 2006 4: 293
DOI: 10.1177/1476993X06064627

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://cbi.sagepub.com/content/4/3/293

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Bridging the Times:
Trends in Micah Studies since 1985

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ABSTRACT

Scholars continue to respond to Willis's foundational work of the 1960s, and to each other, using a variety of classical and new methodologies to treat questions of unity, coherence, theme, and other aspects of the book of Micah. Sampling works that use literary criticism, text criticism, form criticism, historical criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, rhetorical criticism, feminist and womanist approaches, canonical and intertextual approaches, and inter-disciplinary approaches, as well as innovative combinations of these (both multi-critical and multi-disciplinary), this article follows the progress of methodological trends in Micah scholarship from the 1980s to the present. These trends have generated new questions regarding ideological concepts such as justice; class differences and power; and the book's use in the church.

Keywords: coherence, form criticism, interpretive trends, methodological approaches, Micah research, redaction criticism.

Introduction

The relatively small book of Micah continues to challenge scholars, as it has done through previous generations of scholarship. This survey shows that questions of authorship are superseded by questions concerning the coherence, reading and readership of the materials, and the compositional history of the text. This is not intended to be a comprehensive discussion of all the works published on the book of Micah. Rather, it is an attempt to identify the trends that have emerged during the last two decades of Micah studies. This is done through a discussion of representative views

within various methodological approaches. The accompanying bibliography includes the works surveyed in the discussion, in addition to others that may be of interest to the reader.

The challenges that have confronted scholars during the last centuries persist into the present. Seen from a longitudinal perspective, discernible trends have emerged with respect to both the methodological approaches and the conclusions drawn about particular texts or themes. These trends reflect the concerns of the past, and raise questions that point to the future of Micah research. With regard to the past, there are challenges that persist over the centuries, including: the historical provenance of the hope oracles in the book; the structure of the book; and matters of textual difficulty. A study of the trends must also take note of the divergence of materials, and respect the possibility of the lack of discernible patterns among some approaches. Thus, it may be observed that a shared methodological approach does not necessarily produce uniformity in the application or results of the method.

This discussion identifies methods and thematic approaches. The questions asked of each study address: its methodological approach; its views of the texts as revealed in the discussion; and finally, a notation as to its relationship to other publications—whether or not these were explicitly identified by the author being discussed. In this essay we will address two main concerns: first, methodological trends, and, second, conceptual and ideological trends.

Methodological Trends

Various interpretive methodologies have been applied to Micah since 1985, including: literary criticism, text criticism, form criticism, historical criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, rhetorical criticism, feminist and womanist approaches, canonical and inter-textual approaches, and inter-disciplinary approaches. While these methods are clearly evident among the publications, it is also evident that some scholars employ multi-critical and multi-disciplinary approaches as the basis of their research question. For this reason, some scholars may be discussed in multiple sections.

Literary-critical Approaches
The decade of the 1980s witnessed sustained attention to the unity/coherence of the book of Micah that continues to influence the study of the book's unity and the language used to discuss that unity. One of the main

works that form the basis of the dialogue among scholars is Willis's 'The Structure, Setting, and Interrelationships of the Pericopes in the Book of Micah' (1966). He combines the literary approach with form-critical observations and redaction-critical analysis to propose a unity for the book. This unity incorporates various types of coherence, such as vertical (within each unit) and horizontal coherence (among the units). He further proposes that the 'natural' representation of the book's structure is the A-B-A pattern signaled by the summons to hear in 1.2; 3.1; and 6.1, and further discernible through the content, length, and theme of the units (i.e., 1–2; 3–5; and 6–7). Within each macro-unit there is an alternation between doom and hope.

Willis's influence is seen in the commentaries of the 1970s and 1980s, for example, in Allen (1976), Mays (1976); and Smith (1984). Likewise, Hagstrom's 1982 dissertation (published in 1988) is a clear response to Willis's work. Within the various literary approaches of the 1980s, the main challenge was to clarify each scholar's understanding of the commonly used terminology—unity and coherence. These studies both illustrate the ways in which the text may be perceived as having a unity, and they also reflect the exigency of defining coherence and unity. For example, Hagstrom (1988) proposes that the extant form of Micah is a coherent product, discernible through its literary features. He is concerned with what he terms 'literary coherence', and gives the following definition:

> A literary work displays coherence or unity when it is capable of being construed as a unit. A literary discourse is capable of being construed as a unit when there are features within the text that hold it together, that make it cohere, that provide keys as to how it might be construed (1988: 3).

He argues that the book of Micah, as a literary work, may be examined for its literary features, and the ways that they exhibit coherence. Hagstrom is suspicious of the use of concepts, because he deems them unverifiable entities due to their generalized nature and their presuppositions concerning authorial and redactional intentions. Consequently, he highlights the use of shared vocabulary, themes, and motifs as both salient and verifiable literary features (1988: 9).

Hagstrom proposes a two-part structure of the extant form of the book: chs. 1–5, and 6–7, each signaled by the decisive position of the summons to hear in 1.2 and 6.1. However, the occurrences of the summons to hear in 3.1, 9; and 6.9 are also indicative of breaks, or sub-units. In addition to the decisive literary features of each unit, the orientation of the content

also signals their coherence. Hagstrom notes that the two macro-units presuppose the court as their setting; however, while the subunits contribute to the overall image, the specific legal language may not necessarily occur in these units (1988: 23; cf. Cuffey 1987: 245, 247, 325; Jacobs 2001: 63-75). Each of the macro-units has a shared vocabulary ('Jacob'/'Israel') and shared motifs (concern for justice; good vs. bad; Israel and the nations), and each culminates with an oracle of salvation. He ignores any motif for which there are no explicit indicators. This is one of the elements of Hagstrom's method that will be addressed in later studies, which argue that his attention only to explicit features results in the elimination of key concepts (cf. Jacobs 2001: 197-200).

Hagstrom denies that coherence is harmonization of dissonance. Instead, he proposes that it is possible to have coherence of a micro-unit constituted by a single motif, without a corresponding coherence of a macro-unit constituted by the logical connections of the various units. Thus, Hagstrom speaks of 'linear coherence' that may be seen on various structural levels, including grammatical and thematic levels (1988: 127; cf. Cuffey 1987: 147-50).

Luker's dissertation, 'Doom and Hope in Micah' (1985), is a redactional study of the book of Micah that explores the place of the doom/hope scheme as a redactional criterion in the final form of the book (cf. Luker 1987). His examination is considered here because of its dependence on literary criticism for its conclusions, and its clear distinction from other works that employ redaction criticism. Luker (1985: 166-68, 224-26; 1987: 285) proposes that three traditions were used to achieve a 'cohesiveness' of the book of Micah—namely, the divine warrior, the lamentation, and the personification of the city. These themes are seen in chs. 2–6, wherein the city (Jerusalem, Zion) is personified as a female who is rescued, or punished, by the deity (cf. Wischnowsky 2001). Luker highlights the contrast between the city and the deity as divine warrior, that is, the one who achieves peace on behalf of Zion (1985: 224-26). In this aspect of his discussion, Luker stands in the company of others who also contrast the images of the deity and the female image of the personified city (Kessler 1999: 64-66; Runions 2001: 183-86; Wischnowsky 2001). Even so, the personification is not the decisive element in the cohesion of the book, nor even of its macro-units.

For Luker, the cohesion of each unit is variously achieved. Thus, the cohesion of ch. 1 is constituted by the focus on the theophany, while in chs. 2 and 3, cohesion is centered on the theme of judgment (1985: 166-68). The role of wordplay in the cohesion of chs. 4.1–5.3 may be seen in

its use of 'mountain of the house' (3.9-12); and 'mountain of the Lord's house' and 'head of the mountains' (4.1-7). Likewise, the use of other literary features marks off the various units; for example, 5.4-15 is marked off by its use of 'and it was', as compared to 'now' in other sections. The literary features also act as resumptive elements, thus connecting larger units—for example, summons to hear in 6.1 resumes the theme of 1.2 (Luker 1985: 167-68; cf. Petrotta 1991). So, while the doom/hope scheme is a salient feature of the redacted text, it is not, for Luker, decisive to the cohesion of the whole. Luker's observation is important to the literary analysis of text, because it is a reminder that the salience of a feature does not determine its significance to the cohesion of the text in which it occurs (cf. Jacobs 2001: 197-200).

Cuffey's dissertation, 'The Coherence of Micah' (1987), is a response to both Willis's (1966) and Hagstrom's (1988) ideas concerning coherence. He recognizes the challenges of discerning and defining coherence, thus rendering the following definition as basis of his investigation:

> Coherence refers to the connectedness of a work. Any features which connect individual parts with each other, or all the parts into a whole, contribute to coherence in a work of literature (1987: 130).

Like Hagstrom, he identifies types of coherence that may be particular to the prophetic literature. Fundamental to his argument is his claim that different types of coherence occur in one work.

First, recurrent features and transitional elements signal 'coherence of internal linkage'. These recurrent features may include genre, metaphor, address, verbal roots, or even parallelism. The transitional elements may also include prepositions, conjunctions, and temporal indicators used to clarify the nature of the interrelationship of units within the whole (1987: 130-31).

Second, 'coherence of structural linkage' is achieved by the arrangement of the units within the whole. There are several types of arrangements, each used to represent a particular relationship to the other parts within the whole—chronological, spatial, logical, natural, associative, and climactic. This process of arranging the book, or any text, is an intentional effort to signify meaning. In the case of the book of Micah, the arrangement and resultant coherence is, according to Cuffey, the work of the redactor (1987: 136-41). For Cuffey, the arrangement stands in connection with the third kind of coherence, the 'coherence of perspective'. This type of coherence is provided by shared presuppositions that are generative of the ideas and arrangement of the units. These presuppositi-

tions may be generated by the redactor or the author, and may also center on a historical situation (1987: 142-47).

The most significant type of coherence, according to Cuffey, is the fourth. 'Coherence of theme' is thematic continuity within units, discerned through the literary signals placed in the text by its author or redactors. Additionally, the coherence of theme is the product of shared historical context, and of logical progression of the material. Cuffey argues that, while the other types of coherence enhance coherence of theme, they do not necessarily indicate thematic coherence. In this respect, he distinguishes between cohesion and coherence (1987: 145-46, 154, 156).

Even without subscribing to the literary method, one can see the implications of Cuffey's work both for the investigation of the historical context, and for the composition of the text. One is readily aware that the shared historical context alone does not result in logical progression within a text. Conversely, the presence of logical progression within the whole may encompass different historical settings. Seen from a redactional approach, coherence is discernible from both the diachronic and the synchronic perspectives.

In addition to his discussion of the types of coherence, Cuffey also identifies levels of coherence. Potentially, a text may have within each unit a coherence that is different from the coherence exhibited within the whole (1987: 147-50; cf. Jacobs 2001: 72-75, 96). Thus, different redactional intentions may be discernible within the various units. The extent to which these are unified by an overarching thematic continuity is the extent to which the whole is coherent. Thus, for Cuffey, the coherence of the book of Micah is the product of the redactor, and, more specifically, of the themes of doom and hope. Cuffey proposes an A-B-B-A pattern: A 1.2–2.13; B 3.1–4.8; B 4.9–5.14; A 6.1–7.20, each consisting of oracles of doom presenting the result of human sin (1.2–2.13; 3.1-12; 4.9–5.14; 6.1–7.6); and oracles of hope regarding the remnant (1987: 245-47, 300, 325).

The far-reaching influence of work done during the 1980s cannot be overestimated. A selective look at the dissertations defended between 1985 and 2002 may exemplify at least two decisive trends. The first trend is the examination of coherence of the text (Miller 1991; Dempsey 1994). Included in this trend are Wagenaar's 'Ordeel en Heil' (1995), published as *Judgement and Salvation* in 2001; and Jacobs's *Conceptual Coherence of the Book of Micah* (1997; published in 2001). A second trend is a thematic examination of the texts in light of specific hermeneutical impli-

cations, discerned through a literary analysis of the text (Runions 2001; Davis 2002). Other studies do not necessarily fit into either of these trends.

Dempsey (1994; 1999) focuses her work on Micah 1–3 as a case study of the relationship between the literary and theological aspects of biblical texts. She uses as her starting point the works of Hagstrom (1988), Cuffey (1987), Shaw (1990, published in 1993), and Miller (1991)—all of which are concerned with the coherence of the text, but do not share a method. Dempsey identifies various literary and conceptual levels, focusing on the levels of communication. The first level of communication consists of the 'speaking characters' (Micah, God, others), and the implied audiences (Micah, political leaders). In light of Dempsey's 1999 analysis, one may add the intended reader. These three segments of the first level of communication may be further identified as the explicit/primary audience, verifiable by the specific identification within the passage. The second level of communication is constituted by the interaction between the unintended audience and the 'implied authorial voice' (1999: 118). Along with these levels of communication, the conceptual aspects of the text are the products of the authorial intent, which was to make Micah 3 central to the message of the book.

Dempsey argues that the infractions identified or implied in Micah 2–3 are actual crimes that may be located in specific historical situations. The intent of the book, then, is to 'communicate a specific ethical message' describing God's concern about justice (cf. Alfaro 1989). Dempsey, like Ben Zvi (2000), affirms that the book of Micah is primarily a 'written' work addressed to a literate audience able to understand the techniques employed to convey the message. Among these literary techniques are distinctive genres such as disputation and salvation oracles, and devices such as verbal repetition and wordplay (Dempsey 1999: 117-20; cf. Petrotta 1991).

The strength of Dempsey's work is her analysis of the structural aspects of the text as discerned through literary forms and techniques, in addition to the ethical elements of the distinctive units. Dempsey also discusses the contribution of ethical elements, from the level of the micro-units to the coherence of the whole. For Dempsey, the coherence of chs. 1–3 is its portrayal of God's justice, and the ethical and theological dimensions of that portrayal. Her use of Hagstrom (1988) and Cuffey (1987) is clearly evident in her understanding of levels and types of coherence, and in her identification of thematic elements as decisive to the coherence of the book.

Painter's literary analysis of the book of Micah (1997) focuses on recurrent motifs. Toward this end, two sets of metaphorical usages are identified—the personification of Jerusalem as female, and the imagery of shepherd and sheep. These metaphors have specific functions within the message of the book, and demonstrate the unifying motifs of the message, both contextually within the prophetic literature, and intra-textually within the book of Micah (cf. Luker 1985, 1987; Ortland 1996; Kessler 1999: 64-66; Runions 2001: ch. 5). In his analysis of the personification of the city, Painter shares some of the views identified by other scholars, including Shaw (1993) and Wischnowsky (2001). Painter's examination of each motif often incorporates a contextual scope of the motif, and nuances within that motif.

The emergence of the literary method into the foreground of Micah studies is also exemplified in works that combine various methods. Notably, there are several ways that a multi-critical approach is carried out. First, there is the tendency to juxtapose the various critical approaches, using each at various points in one's investigation. Wagenaar (2001) uses this mode of the multi-critical approach by incorporating the results from literary, form, and redaction criticism into his work on Micah 2–5. He proposes that literary work must be preceded by form-critical analysis. The scholar must do all this before attempting the reconstruction of the composition history of the text is attempted (2001: 202-203). Although Ben Zvi's work is presented as a form-critical study (2000: 6), it also reflects this multi-critical approach, in that he uses historical criticism and form criticism. Furthermore, his discussion of the 'readership' also indicates his use of literary criticism. In his other works, Ben Zvi discusses the results of redaction criticism, and evaluates the use of this approach in understanding specific elements of the text, namely, whether or not deuteronomistic materials are present (1999a: 233-34, 239-53).

Another mode of the multi-critical approach to the study of the text integrates aspects of various critical approaches to form one approach. Jacobs (2001) presents 'concept analysis' as an approach that integrates form criticism, historical criticism and literary criticism (2001: 54-57). She proposes an examination of the book of Micah that discerns the conceptuality of the whole, and the coherence of each structural level. As with others who wrote in the 1990s, Jacobs's work evidences the influence of both Hagstrom (1988) and Cuffey (1987) in its definition of coherence, and in the use of literary and conceptual indicators to discern that coherence. Jacobs proposes that the text is divided into two macro-

units (chs. 1–5 and 6–7), each being a dispute signaled by the summons to hear (1.2; 6.1-2), and centered on the concern about Israel's fate. While there are notable alternations between judgment and hope in each section, that alternation itself serves the larger conceptual framework, which addresses the question of Israel's fate.

Like Mason (1998) and Ben Zvi (2000), Jacobs's analysis of the text focuses on the extant text, but also proposes that the coherence of the text may be constituted by more than the written conventions. While Ben Zvi (2000) sees the tensions and conceptual challenges as the author's intention of having the text reread, Jacobs does not attribute such an intention to the author or the redactors. Rather, she builds on the results of redaction criticism to the extent that she identifies competing perspectives within the book as products of the attempts by different communities (pre-exilic to post-exilic) to address their needs.

Jacobs notes that, when addressing issues of coherence of the whole, the extant text is to be read synchronically, but with an awareness of diachronic concerns and insights (cf. Mason 1998). Jacobs proposes that the text is controlled by a conceptual framework that illustrates its ideology. She therefore identifies various concepts within the text that contribute to the coherence of the whole, including justice, sin, judgment, and hope. Jacobs goes beyond Hagstrom (1988), however, in proposing that the literary features or indicators of coherence may be different from the explicit terminology or motif of the text. Thus, she argues that there are primary and secondary indicators of concepts that contribute to the coherence of the whole. These concepts also point to a larger framework to which they belong, and within which their interrelationship is to be discerned. Thus, for example, justice is related to the discussion of the leaders' sins in Micah 3, as well as to judgment as a response to those sins. Likewise, within the larger framework of the concept of justice, questions arise regarding the nature and extent of judgment (Jacobs 2001: 197-202).

It is at this juncture that the hermeneutical concerns of the text and those of the modern community may intersect. Jacobs notes that justice is a multi-faceted concept that both affirms the need for correction of abuses, and challenges the fairness of judgment when that judgment further ravages the oppressed. The hermeneutical concerns intersect at various points, for instance, where the inter-textual conceptual frameworks challenge justice as it is presented in the book of Micah; and where they stimulate questions about the ethical implications of the texts (Jacobs

2001: 200-202; cf. Dempsey 1994, 1999; Green 1997). It is also at this juncture that we may perceive the hermeneutical challenges of using Mic. 4.1-4 as the starting place for discussions of peace and justice in the modern community. These challenges are evident in the 1996 volume of *Bibel und Kirche*, in which several scholars address issues of the relevance of the texts of Micah for German society (Hentschel, Kriener, Schwendemann).

Before closing the discussion of the literary approaches, we must consider another noteworthy methodological trend. In this trend, the tendency is not multi-critical, but rather multi-disciplinary. Among other studies, Runions's *Changing Subjects* (2001) fits into both categories. She uses the results of textual criticism, literary criticism (of both biblical and non-biblical literature), and ideological criticism. She situates her work in biblical studies, and provides various discourses that inform the concerns of the present study. The main purpose of the work is 'to look carefully at the shifting signs of gender, nation and future vision in the book of Micah in order to suggest that readers' negotiation with the text's ambiguities might be able to reposition, or reconfigure, their subject positions…' (2001: 12-13). This purpose is articulated in light of textual difficulties, as well as the difficulties arising from the indeterminacy of text.

Runions addresses the nature of the text and its potential for affecting its readers. While identifying scholars who have analyzed the coherence of the text of Micah, Runions asserts that her goal is to focus on 'difference' in order to discern or construct coherence. Her goal raises several questions, the answers for which are dispersed throughout the book. One such question is: since difficulties and difference already suggest normativity, what is the norm in the text against which these are discerned? As the basis for her understanding of 'difference', Reunions uses Bhabha's (1994) understanding of the concept. Runions also cites Ben Zvi (2000: 37, 54), by examining his ideas about the re-reading of the text, and the differences resulting from the blurred distinctions between speakers (Runions 2001: 25, 29). Runions, however, goes beyond Ben Zvi and others, proposing not simply to identify the differences, but also to note the changes in the readers resulting from interaction between the text and the reader.

Additionally, in her discussion of the text's 'indeterminacy', Runions arrives at her understanding of ideology's influence on textual indeterminacy (Runions 2001: 48-59, 72-73). Her reading of the text reflects the

concerns of scholars such as Ben Zvi (2000: 5-8) in his look at the readership of the text. Runions's reader is much like Dempsey's (1999: 117-19) second level of communication—the unintended readers—formed by the interaction between the text and the modern reader.

One of her goals is to understand how texts may affect readers' positioning in ideology. Her discussion builds on theories of subjectivity and signification, including such topics as ideology and 'lack in the other'. Runions concludes that it is possible for subjects to be repositioned through a complex process of controlling textual indeterminacy 'from the outside', namely, the reader (Runions 2001: 63).

Having noted the shifts in subject throughout the book of Micah, Runions uses the notion of 'pedagogical objects and discourse' to examine Israel and God. She concludes that Israel is often depicted as the oppressed female figure—the Damsel in Distress—whom God, the male figure, must rescue (2001: 183). Runions's concern is that the differences within the text are conflated into a homogenized image that presents women as oppressed victims to be rescued or, in some instances, to be punished. Her observation of that homogenization is clearly evident in the works of several scholars with whom she interacts. Thus, Runions (2001: 182-209) discusses Luker's representation of the dynamics of passive female/active male encounters in various texts (e.g., 4.9–5.3; 6.9; 7.18) (see Luker 1987: 285, 292-95; cf. 1985). Runions also identifies Shaw's (1993: 50-51) discussion of Samaria and Jerusalem in Mic. 1.2-16 as further evidence of the homogenization of the female/male dynamics. She argues against Shaw's (1993: 50-51) presentation of Samaria as the prostitute who is punished, and Jerusalem as the mourning but passive woman who is infected by the diseased Samaria and surrounding nations. Runions does not deny that there are instances in the text where the female image is used to convey a characterization of Israel (e.g., 4.9); rather, she objects to the conflation of all the texts to conform to this understanding. She concludes that the reader's identity and ideology are decisive to the interpretation of the text (2001: 190-94). In this respect, Runions's work addresses the implications of understanding the text in light of the repositioned reader, who is able to re-evaluate key concepts such as justice and judgment. Her work suggests that the models built on a homogenization of the text's varying perspectives may be oversimplifications of the text and the modern situations into which they are incorporated (cf. Mosala 1989; 1991; Kriener 1996; Schwendemann 1996; Davis 2002).

One cannot deny the plethora of ideas that emerge from the use of literary criticism in its various manifestations. First, the application of the method facilitated the multi-critical approaches used to address the magnitude of the task that literary criticism attempts. Second, the ideas that are identified from the conceptuality of the text raise further questions, which are usually addressed under the rubric of theological discussion. Additionally, the application of the method itself generates questions— such as the nature and identity of the reader; the interaction between reader and text toward the production of meaning; and the influence of the reader's ideology on the understanding of the text. These sets of questions have themselves illustrated the inter-dependence of literary criticism and other approaches, and along this line have given rise to the multi-disciplinary approaches to the text, as discussed below.

Form Criticism

Form criticism has contributed much to the study of the book of Micah through its identification of the setting and genre of the book, as well as the attention given to the message of the book as a whole. Even here, however, the multi-critical approach is evident. Ben Zvi's commentary (2000) incorporates both form criticism and historical criticism as the basis for his investigation. As a part of the FOTL series, it includes the traditional categories used in form criticism—structure, genre, setting, and intention. His attention to the deuteronomistic elements is also clear in this study, along with his assertion that the book of Micah exhibits literary independence from its place in the Book of the Twelve (1999a: 239-47; 1999b: 98-99; 2000: 47-55). Ben Zvi refers to the 'readership' as those to whom the book was addressed in its historical time (2000: 6). Unlike those who define 'reader' to include the modern reader (e.g., Dempsey 1994, 1999; Runions 2001), Ben Zvi defines the 'primary readership' as the intended ancient reader (1999b: 90-93; 2000: 6-7).

Regarding the structure of the book, Ben Zvi identifies three macro-units: superscription (1.1); body (1.2–7.17); and conclusion (7.18-20). He notes that the book as a whole was produced in written form for its audience. The macro- and micro-units are identified as 'prophetic reading', which the author intended to be read repeatedly (2000: 4-11). Unlike Shaw, who sees the various components of the book as speeches attached to moments of delivery and specific historical setting (1993: 19-20, 222), Ben Zvi views the various components as written literature, with the attenuating challenges and complexities. Thus, he notes that the allusions,

wordplay, and competing perspectives are deliberate techniques used by the author for the sake of the readers (cf. Dempsey 1994, 1999; Petrotta 1991). Ben Zvi speaks of the cohesion of units such as 3.1-12, and the shared themes within the sub-units. Likewise, the shared vocabulary is also used as evidence of the unit's cohesion (2000: 71). He shows the influence of Hagstrom (1988) and the literary approaches of the 1980s in his assertion of the literary links between chs. 1 and 3, and between chs. 3 and 4–5. His classification of all units as prophetic readings de-emphasizes the form-critical approach, and in this way ignores some classifications, such as disputation (2.6-11), while noting others, such as announcement of judgment (3.1-12).

On matters of coherence and cohesion, Ben Zvi's emphasis on the written text and audience is the basis of his understanding. He therefore understands any dissonance of theme across and within the units as deliberate constructs, born out of the authorial intent to challenge the readers. Furthermore, the literary links are used to illustrate his thesis. One aspect of the intended challenge would be to generate reading of the text to achieve further understanding of its message. The classifications are seen to have their original setting within the life of the intended audience, and do not presuppose a typical setting of the units—for example, the dispute as part of the larger legal setting. Likewise, his idea of the 'readership' moves Ben Zvi to attempt to locate the historical moment in Israel's history when the writing may have taken place (1999b: 98-99; 2000: 50-54), a task that he deems futile. He concludes, for example, that the characterization of the individuals accused of crimes is thus of a general group of persons, rather than of a specific historical group identified with a specific historical situation (1999b: 98-99; 2000: 50-54). What is evident from Ben Zvi's discussion is his use of multiple methodological approaches, including redaction criticism, historical criticism and form criticism (2000). Certainly, he is not alone in this multi-approach to the text; but, as with the applications of a mono-critical approach, there is no uniformity in the results of the multi-critical approach (cf. Andersen and Freedman 2000).

Traditio-historical and Historical-critical Approaches
Notably, many modern commentaries identify with the historical-critical approach (Waltke 1993; Mason 1998; Barker 1998; Andersen and Freedman 2000). Cuffey (1987) also identifies his approach as historical-critical; however, his focus on the literary aspects of the text exhibits

some of the same characteristics as Hagstrom (1988), who uses literary criticism.

Stansell's *Micah and Isaiah* (1988) uses form criticism and tradition history to compare Micah and Isaiah. He does not attempt to present the structure of either, but rather to compare the themes and motifs of what he calls the 'critically assured minimum', namely, Micah 1–3 and Isaiah 1–39 (1988: 7). Unlike Cuffey (1987: 136-41), who proposes that the arrangement of the units within the whole affects their meaning and relationship within the whole, Stansell's diachronic reading of the text leads to the conclusion that the traditions within Micah 1–3 are unaffected by their place within the book (1988: 5). Yet, one is aware that he values the roots of these traditions and the prophetic reuse of them.

In discussing Yahweh's judgment on Zion, Stansell uses Isa. 5.14, 17; 32.9-14 and Mic. 1.8, 16; 3.9-12. The texts share the same form and vocabulary: they both speak of the abandonment of the city (i.e., Micah of exile, and Isaiah of imminent abandonment of the palace), and of the total destruction of the city (Stansell 1988: 63, 110; cf. Jacobs 2001).

Stansell contributes to the discussion of coherence by identifying the unity of the traditions within the book of Micah, and their inter-textual relationship with Isaiah. While he does not discuss it in this way, it is possible to conclude that the use of traditions within the prophetic literature attests to a coherence within those traditions that encompasses the particularity of their occurrences, or what Hagstrom would refer to as 'dissonance' (1988: 4).

Feminist and Womanist Approaches

The concerns about the representation of the female image in the pro-phetic literature of the Hebrew Bible have received much discussion over the years (Kessler 1999: 64-66; cf. Ortland 1996; Wischnowsky 2001). With reference to the female images, one may note that the discussion in itself does not constitute a favorable stance toward feminist concerns. Notably, it is possible to identify with images in the text without being aware of the implications of those images. Thus, the identification of the female images or characterization within the book of Micah are noted by several scholars who do not necessarily identify their methods as feminist in approach (e.g., Luker 1985, 1987; Shaw 1993; Wischnowsky 2001). Each of these scholars discusses the female images within the book, noting that the city is portrayed as female, while the deity is portrayed as male.

Wischnowsky looks more broadly at the origins of the tradition, and thus is able to identify the various female images, for example: bride, mother, wife, adulteress. The concern has been how the female image as the accused, *vis-à-vis* the male image of the deity, has affected views of women and the understanding of the prophetic message. Kessler (1999: 64-66), in his discussion of the text, notes the place of female imagery in the characterization of the sins of the people and God's response in judgment. With all of these presentations, it is evident that the female image is either one of passive victim who has been corrupted, or of the sufferer who awaits merited judgment and deliverance (cf. Wischnowsky 2001). While these representations are accurate to some segments of the text, the female image is not as uniform as it may otherwise have been presented (cf. Luker 1987; Micah 4–5). Thus, Runions argues (2001: 183) that the interpretation of the female images may be the result of homogenization, and in this respect may be a misrepresentation of the differences within the text.

Davis's dissertation 'A Womanist Reading of the Book of Micah' (2002), also examines issues of the text's portrayal of the female imagery and the place of that imagery in the discussion about power, class, gender, and survival. Like Runions's (2001), Davis's analysis reconsiders the basis for understanding the interplay among the variables being analyzed. The womanist approach also acknowledges the methodological starting place of its questions of the text, and seeks to dialogue with other methodological results. In this analysis, the concern of the method defines the examination of the text, as is also evident with others, such as Green (1997), who examines power and class differentiations. Clearly, the book of Micah depicts the distinctions between the classes in its characterizations of the wrongdoers, in ch. 2, and of the leaders, in ch. 3 (cf. Ben Zvi 1999b). The text portrays a strained relationship between the prophet, the advocate of the people, and the leaders, who are the oppressors of the people (cf. Wessels 1997; 1999a). Within this portrayal, the power differentiations constitute the basis of the abuse, yet hold the hope for change. That change will come about through the deity, who will bring judgment on all who practice injustice.

In reading Davis (2002), one may be compelled to consider the theme of the remnant as one of the fundamental concepts in the book of Micah. The 'remnant' may be viewed as an indication of hope to the extent that it signals survival (Davis 2002: 74, 113-15, 133-34). Even so, it is the survival of a few *vis-à-vis* the whole; and the divine intention to preserve

the remnant does not distinguish between the sinner and the righteous. In this way, the remnant is like the judgment, indiscriminate in its scope; and facilitates conceptual dissonance. The dissonance between judgment as doom, and the remnant as hope, raises questions about the nature, character and possibility of survival within violent and oppression-driven contexts (cf. Hentschel 1996; Kriener 1996; Schwendemann 1996; Jacobs 2001). Within Davis's perspective, the book of Micah is illuminated *vis-à-vis* the parameters set by other scholarly approaches (Davis 2002: 133-34, 140; cf. Mosala 1989; 1991). Likewise, her contribution is her questions addressed to the text, highlighting issues that are typically identified, but usually de-emphasized in view of the theological prioritization of the message (cf. Kriener 1996; Runions 2001).

Text Criticism

The attention to the text-critical aspects of the text is a standard part of many commentaries (e.g., Waltke 1993; Andersen and Freedman 2000). Andersen and Freedman's analysis is extensive, and offers comparative information on the text; however, this text-critical work is part of a larger historical-critical and redactional study. Their work is another example of a multi-critical approach to the text. The inclusion of the LXX translation is helpful as a comparative tool for understanding the conceptual variation between the MT and the LXX. A full comparative examination of the LXX and the Targum of Micah may be found in Carbone and Rizzi (1996).

Garcia's *Ethiopian Biblical Commentaries on the Prophet Micah* (1999) is a linguistic and exegetical study of these commentaries, aimed at creating further access to these texts, which, although important to the Orthodox Ethiopian Church, are little known outside that arena. Garcia presents a critical commentary and explores the methodological issues affecting the nature of the manuscripts included in the critical edition and translation. With the work of translation completed, Garcia undertakes a comparative analysis using his translation and the works of other scholars. The value of this work is its witness to the concerns of its interpretive community, as these concerns are manifested in the theological aspects of the text. On Mic. 3.1-4, for example, the reading of the Ethiopian Commentaries attests to significant variants from the MT. Garcia's commentary explains various aspects of the text of Micah in an effort to illuminate the use of these texts in their interpretive communities.

According to Garcia's translation (1999), the *Ethiopian Manuscript Or.* 986 reads: 'He says: "Listen to this, high officials of the House of

Jacob and remnant of the House of Israel! Have you no knowledge or judgment, you who hate goodness and do evil…" ' (1999: 255). The commentary on 3.1-2 reads as follows: 'And he says: "Listen to this, high officials of the House of Jacob and remnant of the House of Israel. Listen, high officials and humble people: heavy is the vengeance that comes to you. Have you no knowledge or judgment, you who hate goodness and do evil" ' (1999: 259). Another commentary on 3.1 shows other variations: 'Listen, high officials of the tribe of Jacob! And remnant of the House of Israel! After the ten tribes were taken captive, you, the two remaining tribes, listen' (1999: 87).

Another text-critical work is Magary's 'Translation Technique in the Peshitta of the Book of Micah' (1995), which also uses linguistic analysis. It presents an analysis of the Syriac translation technique, including selected clause-by-clause translation and commentary. Its significance for text-critical studies is that it identifies the tendencies of the Peshitta of Micah, namely, its affinity with the MT and independence from the LXX (Magary 1995: 468-69). Like Carbone and Rizzi (1996), Magary's work is a comparative study that examines the tendencies of various versions. Magary's focus is quite different from Garcia's, which treats one textual tradition with the goal of understanding its particularities and interpretive challenges.

While all of these contribute to the understanding of the book of Micah in different ways, they maintain the scholarly consensus for favoring the MT. Thus, the MT reading is usually accepted with little concern about the possibility of significant readings from the other witnesses that might affect the overall message of the book. Garcia's analysis of the Ethiopian commentaries (1999) thus provides another avenue into the text, and again raises questions concerning the dynamic relationship between text and reader—intended and unintended.

Redaction Criticism

There is much duplication of thought among the various scholars who approach the text to reconstruct its composition history. This presentation describes both the similarities and the differences among scholars.

Wolff (1990: 14-15) proposes that the material authentic to Micah was first transmitted orally. This material consists of chs. 1–3, to which the inauthentic material in chs. 4–7 was later added, to contemporize the message by addressing issues left unaddressed by previous redactors. The authentic materials focus on judgment, and are distinct from the later

materials' view of hope. Wolff argues that chs. 1–3 contain six interpolations added to clarify the significance of the material for the exilic community. These interpolations include: (a) expanding the view of guilt to include cultic (1.5, 7) and military guilt (1.13-14); (b) a liturgical element (1.3); (c) literary transmission elements (1.1; 3.8); (d) oracles of salvation (2.12-13); (e) the addition of the list of the nations (1.2), which subsequently forged a link with 5.14; and (f) temporal transitions (2.3a, 4c) used to link this unit to a neo-Babylonian era (1990: 18-19).

According to Wolff, the book exhibits a four-part structure: 1–3; 4–5; 6.1–7.7; and 7.8-20. He proposes three units for chs. 4–5, namely: 4.1-8; 4.9–5.5; and 5.6-14. He identifies the conceptual unity of these segments, as well as the literary features—namely, that all of these are marked by temporal transitions meant to contemporize 3.12 (1990: 20). Wolff proposes that 6.1–7.7 is basically liturgical and leads into 7.8-20. Micah 6.2-8 is of post-exilic origin, showing no literary connection to chs. 4–5, but picking up some themes from chs. 1–3. By contrast, 6.9-16 exhibits conceptual continuity with the judgment prophecies in chs. 1–3, in that both present indictment and announcement of disaster. Wolff also uses form-critical classifications to identify the textual units. He labels 7.1-7 as a lament over the injustices of the land that focuses on the leaders as those responsible for the injustices. The unit 7.8-20 consists of three psalms: vv. 8-10, 14-17, 18-20, and a bracket in vv. 11-13, all of which he distinguishes on the basis of style (1990: 18-20).

Wolff draws several conclusions concerning the redactional history of the book. First, the book itself grew from three sketches of scenes in which Micah proclaimed his sayings: 1.6, 7b-13a, 14-16 (the first sketch); 2.1-3, 6-11 (the second); and 3.1-12 (the third) (Wolff 1990: 18-20; cf. Wood 2000). Second, Wolff finds deuteronomistic additions and changes in chs. 1–3. Third, the materials in chs. 4–5 were accumulated during the early post-exilic era. Fourth, the final redaction was to prepare chs. 1–3, 4–5, and 6.2–7.7 for liturgical use. For this reason, 7.8-20 was also added (1990: 18-20). The final stage of the composition history is responsible for the connection between chs. 1–5 and 6–7 (cf. Otto 1991). Otto proposes that the oracles spoken by Micah in ch. 3 were expanded in the exilic time to include 1.10-13 and 2.1-4, 8-10; and that they were further expanded in the post-exilic period to include 2.12-13 and 4.6–5.4 (1991: 128-44).

Wolff argues that the resulting structure of the book is a purposeful effort to shape the book for liturgical use (cf. Lescow 1997). Like him,

Otto also posits a redactional intention of each stage of the composition history to make the text relevant to the concerns of the community in the various periods (Otto 1991).

In his 1987 study, Renaud maintains that purposeful redaction of the book took place in at least three stages. The first stage took place in the pre-exilic period, and consisted of an original Mican core (chs. 1–3 and 6.9-15). Of this original material, 1.2-7 was addressed to Samaria, while 1.8–3.12 was addressed to Jerusalem. The second stage is formed by the exilic additions (6.2-8; 7.1-6), concerned with the denunciation of sins. The intent at this stage is to indicate the connection between the people's sin and God's judgment. The third stage is formed by the post-exilic additions to 1.1-2; chs. 1–3; and 6.1–7.7. To neutralize the threats from chs. 2–3, chs. 4–5 and 7.8-20 were also added. The resulting whole consists of two primary units: chs. 1–5, and 6–7, with the transposition of 2.12-13 to its current position. The result is the extant arrangement: chs. 1–2; 3–5; and chs. 6–7. The A-B-A pattern exhibits the alternation between judgment and hope in each section (cf. Hunziker-Rodewald 2001; *contra* Wolff 1990; Jeremias 2000).

The redactional approach of Renaud is also evident in Lescow's *Wörte und Wirkungen des Propheten Micha* (1997). As in his earlier writings on Micah 1–5 and 6–7 (1972a and b), Lescow asserts that chs. 1–3 is the unit to which elements were added until the final redactional layer was added in the fourth century BCE. The redactional efforts at times coincided with historical events that these efforts were intended to reflect. As such, the completion of chs. 1–5, with the addition of 6–7, may have been intended to reflect an anti-Samaritan sentiment. The completion both of chs. 1–5 and of chs. 6–7 is seen to be intentionally aimed at the liturgical expression of anti-Samaritan sentiments. There are distinctive units in each of these sections, including chs. 3, 4–5 and 6–7, each with its own composition history. For Zapff (1997), the original Micah material is to be found in 1.3-16; 2.1-11; and 3.1-10, 12. To this collection various materials were added during the exilic (4.10) and post-exilic periods (e.g., 2.12-13; 3.11; 4.1-4; 5.6-7). The A-B-A-B pattern of doom and hope (1–3; 4–5; 6.1–7.7; 7.8-20) was achieved during the post-exilic period (1997). Zapff readily acknowledges the deuteronomistic additions and influence on the shape of the book, as, for example, the addition of 4.9-10 and 5.9-12 during the exilic period (1997: 124-27).

The deuteronomistic influence on the book of Micah is also part of the larger discussion about the redactional accretions of the book (Zapff

1999; cf. Barredo 1993; Cook 1999; Cuffey 2000). Jones's *Formation of the Book of the Twelve* (1994) is mentioned here to note its discussion about the place of Micah in the canonical arrangement, that is, in the MT of the Book of the Twelve. It is seen as a part of the eighth-century grouping—Hosea, Amos, and Micah—into which Joel, Obadiah and Jonah were introduced (cf. House 1990). Ben Zvi has noted that while Micah is part of the Book of the Twelve, it shows an independence within that corpus. Ben Zvi claims that 'the language of the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah does not support the idea that they were composed or redacted by members of a deuteronomistic group or of a dtr movement' (1999a: 253; cf. 2000).

Cook (1999) is in line with other scholars who have investigated the redactional layers of the prophetic books. He identifies the deuteronomistic redactional layers of the book, including the superscription and 5.9-14 [Eng. 5.10-15]; 7.14-17, 18-20. The central materials of the book are contained in chs. 3–5; and the intent of the redactional additions was to give a counter-perspective to the other materials. Thus, 5.9-14 [Eng. 5.10-15] counters the royal ideology of ch. 4, and the need for purification from the foreign influences and practices (1999: 218). In addition, 7.14-17 is the deuteronomistic perspective of the ideal Israel *vis-à-vis* the sinful Israel (Cook 1999: 221-23; cf. Wolff 1990). Cook also asserts that the deuteronomistic redactional materials are incorporated in such a way as to produce a coherence of that material consistent with its tradition history. This material also contributes to the discernible deuteronomistic identity, which is a product of the post-exilic community, most likely of the Levites (Cook 1999: 229; cf. Ben Zvi 1999a).

In *Judgement and Salvation* (2001), Wagenaar addresses the composition and redaction of Micah 2–5. He discusses the limitations of several models that examine the alternation of oracles of doom with oracles of hope (i.e., the compositional model, the dialogue model, and the redactional model). The influence of the 1980s is evident in his discussion of Hagstrom's 1988 contribution to the question. Analyzing the compositional model, which examines the alternation between doom and hope as a 'purposeful pattern each of its alternative elements (doom and hope) being mutually exclusive', Wagenaar concludes that the model fails to reveal the 'purposeful pattern of alternating sections' (2001: 15).

The dialogue model proposes that the alternation reflects a dispute, wherein chs. 2–5 is a continuous dialogue between the prophet and the audience. Wagenaar notes that the application of flawed formal criteria in

discerning the alternation (e.g., 2.6; 3.11) may have led previous scholars to erroneous conclusions (2001: 16, 20-22).

The redactional model proposes that the alternation (between doom and hope) ensues from a long literary history—each element representing a different group of people. In this model, the oracles of salvation are later modifications of the proclamation of judgment. Wagenaar makes proposals about the methods and priority in applying them, namely: (a) that proponents of a method clarify the method, because they appear to employ a conglomeration of literary-, form-, and redaction-critical analysis (e.g., Renaud 1987; Wolff 1990; Zapff 1997); and, (b) that a literary analysis must precede any decision about the authenticity of the text. Wagenaar is concerned that the use of the multi-critical approach within efforts to discern the composition history has resulted in the lack of methodological clarity. Consequently, Wagenaar is suspicious about the validity of the results of any multi-critical approach.

In an effort to clarify the focus on chs. 2–5, Wagenaar argues for the choice of texts based on the provenance of chs. 6–7, that is, Northern Israel. Regarding Micah 1, he notes that '1.2-7 cannot be considered a literary unit', and offers several reasons for the assertion. Among them is the contention that 1.3-4 comprises a classic example of a theophanic description, which is not originally connected to 1.5b-7. The stylistic variation leads him to the conclusion that vv. 1.5b-7 comprise later additions exhibiting Northern Israelite orientation, and are 'reminiscent of the book of Hosea' in their language (2001: 54).

Wagenaar also acknowledges the combination of literary-, form- and redaction-criticism in his effort to reconstruct the growth of the text, as opposed to the literary-critical analysis of the individual pericopes. He deems the literary analysis necessary, but it must be preceded by a form-critical analysis designed to delineate the units, and their specific genre and literary features (2001: 202). While he critiques redaction critics such as Renaud (1987) and Zapff (1997) for their lack of methodological clarity, he appears to duplicate their pattern of employing the various methods, and aligns with their methodological weaknesses (Wagenaar 2001: 27-45).

This survey of the redactional approach shows that there is some agreement that the various redactional layers can be discerned, and can be identified with the historical periods in which they were added to the text. It is also generally accepted that the redaction was structured with specific foci for each community. Alongside this trend is another that focuses on

the synchronic aspects of the text, and denies the validity of the dia-chronic approach. Mason (1991; 1998) therefore identifies the usefulness of literary criticism for addressing questions of authorship, and the useful-ness of form- and redaction-criticism in accounting for the extant arrange-ment of the text. Even so, he notes that there are challenges presented by form- and redaction-criticism, due to their imprecision, which fails to produce uniform results. He focuses on the extant text, and thus proposes a three-part structure (1–3; 4–5; and 6–7). He endorses the conclusion that the book is a post-exilic text that was compiled over a period of time (cf. Andersen and Freedman 2000).

Rhetorical Criticism

Miller (1991) uses rhetorical criticism to investigate the MT of the book. He recognizes at least two methodological tendencies within rhetorical criticism that influence his investigation: 'listening to the text' and quanti-fication of the data. Miller utilizes both of these methodological ten-dencies in his two-part focus. The first part of his focus is the structural analysis of the text. He concludes that the macro-structure of the book consists of three parts—chs. 1–3; 4.1–5.8; and 5.9–7.20—and notes the internal movement within each of these parts (1991: 51, 110, 139). Even so, he denies any discernible pattern such as the A-B-A pattern proposed by earlier scholars (Miller 1991: 41-50; cf. Willis 1966).

The second focus of his rhetorical analysis is the thematic examination, wherein he notes the movement within the macro-units between judgment and renewal. He asserts that the thematic elements are the products of older traditions, revisited via the structure. Miller further proposes that the coherence of the work is achieved by its 'intermix' between theme and structure (1991: 110-20, 139-44, 202-203). In its historical context, the work stands alongside Hagstrom (1988) and Cuffey (1987). Miller's work is hence a revisiting of issues of coherence, and the question of what constitutes the coherence of the whole. In his conclusion, he acknowl-edges the inextricable connection between structure and theme.

Another rhetorical analysis is Shaw's dissertation (published in 1993). Shaw's analysis focuses on the authorial intentionality of the text. Shaw proposes a three-stage process of analysis: determining the units; identify-ing their 'rhetorical situation'; and exploring the material to determine how the sub-units work together toward a unified purpose (1993: 23). Shaw presupposes that it is possible to accurately reconstruct the 'rhetori-cal situation'—namely, the historical moment in which the speech was

given (1993: 19-20). Unlike Ben Zvi, who proposes that the material was originally written (2000), Shaw proposes that the material was originally oral. This orality governed the form and functioned within the intention of the author. The two assumptions he identifies are that: the prophets did not speak in short sayings, but in lengthy discourses; and what scholars have usually identified as independent sayings are building blocks of the larger discourse (1993: 19-20). Shaw further presupposes that the individual units of the book of Micah are distinct speeches addressed to particular situations for particular purposes: 1.2-16; 2.1-13; 3.1–4.8; 4.9–5.14; 6.1–7.7; 7.8-20. These units are delineated based on their theme, rhetorical situation, and date (Shaw 1993: 222). In contrast to Shaw, Ben Zvi does not think that it is possible, for example, to locate the wrongdoers within a specific historical setting or moment (1999b: 98-99).

Wood (2000), among others, sees the rhetorical dimension of the text, and proposes that the book be viewed as a drama, with its scenes, settings, and characters. While acknowledging the lack of evidence of theatres and stages in Jerusalem, she asserts that the reading of poetry did not require the theatre, and thus posits that Micah was read in the city gate as poetry during the autumn festival. She designates Micah as a poet who presented drama comprised of three parts (1.1-16; 2.1–3.12; and 6.1–7.9), each with two scenes. Like Shaw, she proposes the oral communication of the material, and compares the delivery to the style of the Greek poets. According to Wood, the central scene is 6.1-8—the court scene featuring God's case against Israel (2000; cf. Schooling 1998; Utzschneider 1999). Like the other approaches, the rhetorical approach shows little uniformity in its results; however, most within this approach acknowledge the orality of the material as being decisive to its form and style.

Canonical and Inter-textual Approaches
In *Canons in Conflict: Negotiating Texts in True and False Prophecy* (1997), Brenneman uses canonical criticism as his main methodological approach in his analysis of Isa. 2.2-4 and Mic. 4.1-4, which he compares with Joel 4.9-12. His choice of text also indicates his attention to the inter-textual aspects of the canonical approach. Notably, the use of the inter-textual approach does not necessarily reveal a canonical approach. Within this inter-textual approach, the juxtaposition of texts may lead to competing perspectives. Such is the case with Mic. 4.1-4 *vis-à-vis* Joel 4.9-12. Another example of the inter-textual approach is seen in Durken's examination of the shepherd and sheep imagery of Micah 7, as compared

with Zechariah 10–11 and Ezekiel 34 (2000). Harrelson's discussion (1997) of the 'universalist and particularist' views about Zion also juxtaposes texts, and inquires about their inter-relationship. Thus, Brenneman concludes that while Mic. 4.1-4 // Isa. 2.2-4 share a particularistic focus, Micah 5 and Isaiah 11 are universalistic in their perspective (cf. Stansell 1988; Limburg 1997; Rudman 2001; Sweeney 2001). Given the place of these texts within the canon, there are some questions regarding how to deal responsibly with the plurality of perspectives.

In addressing the challenges of the juxtaposed and conflicting ideologies, Brenneman (1997) also employs the reader-response perspective in an attempt to meet his goal—namely, to understand the text's plurality of language in light of the community's role in shaping the texts. An important part of his work is his discussion of truth and falsehood in prophecy, and the ethical implications of such a discussion for the interpretive community. While he acknowledges the challenges of proposing an ethic of canon, he nonetheless understands the demands of the interpretive community (textual and contemporary) in choosing among texts and their conflicting perspectives (cf. Chapman 1998; Runions 2001).

Inter-disciplinary Approaches

Shoemaker (1992) examines the prophetic discourses in the book of Micah by attempting to identify the speaker and audience in the various discourses. Methodologically, Shoemaker acknowledges a multi-disciplinary approach that consists of rhetorical, discourse, and linguistic analyses. His basic methodological assumption is the 'trustworthiness' of the MT to sustain the discourse analysis, and to demonstrate its integrity when subjected to linguistic scrutiny. Like Miller (1991) and his predecessors, Shoemaker's concern is to discern the text's 'cohesion' or lack thereof (Shoemaker 1992: 222-29, 424-31).

For Shoemaker, cohesion is discerned via the consistency or continuity of a discourse or topic. The switch from one speaker or topic to another signals the end of a unit (cf. Runions 2001). He identifies three divisions of the book as the parameters within which to discern the discourse elements—chs. 1–2; 3–5; and 6–7. Within these divisions, the monologue, dialogue and tandem address are further defined by distinguishing between speaker and audience, and between human and divine participants (Shoemaker 1992: 19-24). Shoemaker is aware of the methodological challenges of his analysis as these relate to the possible and inherent difficulties of distinguishing between participants—especially where nar-

rative markers are absent (cf. Dempsey 1999). Fundamental to his study is his adherence to the notion of the varying extent of coherence and cohesion. Shoemaker's study is part of the trend wherein issues of cohesion and coherence constitute the investigational agenda (cf. Hagstrom 1988; Jacobs 2001).

Green presents another multi-disciplinary approach (1997), which includes the book of Micah with two other eighth-century prophets, Amos and Isaiah, as texts that portray elements of class differentiation and power. His method incorporates elements from archaeology, ideology, and socio-historical analysis. His discussion of the text enhances the methodological perspective, on which it builds. He presupposes the integrity of the text—its conceptual framework—to accurately portray the groups in such a way as to make class distinctions and power differentiations discernible. Others would most likely challenge his assumption about the validity of the text's portrayal, noting that the ideological positioning of the authors may have skewed their understanding of the message (cf. Runions 2001).

Green's analysis (1997) is similar to Mosala's (1991) in the representation of socio-historical analysis. In both works, justice is a concern that is understood in relationship to concrete social groups and challenges. One may thus conclude that the portrayal of the oppressor and the oppressed in chs. 2–3 is consistent with an understanding of the ideological commitments of the authors of the text (cf. Wessels 1999a, 2000). Along this line, Davis's analysis (2002: 53-59, 64, 95-100) also raises questions about the text's portrayal of the class and gender dynamics, and echoes the concerns voiced by others about groups portrayed in the text and the hermeneutical challenges generated at the intersection of texts and modern communities (cf. Schwendemann 1996; Ben Zvi 2000; Wessels 2000).

Some Conceptual and Ideological Trends

Justice

The concept of justice emerges as a main concern among scholars. Many see this concept as the controlling aspect of the book of Micah (Alfaro 1989; Dempsey 1994, 1999). Bosman (1994), 'Justice in the Book of Micah', builds on at least two assertions about justice. First, justice is a multi-faceted concept, social and theological as well as dynamic rather than static. Second, the role of the concept of justice in the formation of the book has been ignored. In this traditional-historical study, he identifies

chs. 1–3 as foundational elements of the book with their pre-exilic his-
torical context. He also discusses the exilic context out of which chs. 4–5
emerged, with their distinctive stance.

   Justice is presented in the book of Micah as a requirement of God for
Israel (6.8; cf. 3.1-12). Notably, the concept of justice occurs on various
conceptual levels. First, the leaders are portrayed as practicing injustice,
the result of which is the oppression of the people who are under their
authority. God's judgment comes as a response to this injustice, and like-
wise introduces questions about divine justice's participation in the
injustice toward the people. By virtue of the extent of the judgment on all
the people, the judgment does not distinguish between those who sinned
and are punished and those who may not have committed the sins identi-
fied in the accusation (Jacobs 2001: 206-16; cf. Stansell 1988). Others
investigate 6.8 to better understand justice as one of God's requirements
(Scoggin 1985; Dawes 1988; Dumermuth 1994).

Class and Power Differentiation
Several studies have addressed the book of Micah from the social analysis
perspective, and in particular with questions about class and power differ-
entiation within the book (Green 1997; Mosala 1991; Runions 2001;
Davis 2002). Mosala notes that there are various readings of the text that
display the power structures within the Israelite community. His approach
is mainly hermeneutical, with an effort to understand the significance of
social structures within South Africa. Runions's work encourages the re-
examination of the text to see better how the ideological commitments
of the reader influence the representation of the text's concerns. Both of
these works challenge the reader to see texts as dynamic in their ability
to depict social constraints and promote change.

Preaching and Missions
Alongside the academic inquiries into the book of Micah, concerns about
its hermeneutical significance also form a decisive trend in the history of
research. Micah 6.8, as well as understanding God's requirements (cf.
Scoggin 1985; Dumermuth 1994; Gilmore 1994), are popular in this area.
Koyama (1988) examines 4.1-7 in light of 3.9-10 and 12, and compares it
with Deut. 30.19. In line with his concern for missions and the interna-
tional perspective, he asserts that Jerusalem is an example, not because of
its obedience, but because of its struggle. Others (cf. Alfaro 1989; Mosala
1991) use the text to discuss justice in God's imperative for humanity.

These conceptual trends in the church and the academy attest to the significance of the book of Micah in contemporary dialogue.

Conclusion

The trends in Micah studies since 1985 are both methodological and thematic. Among the various methods, literary criticism has emerged alongside redaction-critical approaches to assert itself in the history of research. Redaction-criticism persists in its attempts to discern the compositional history of the text, even with its varied results. The main insights gained from the redactional approach center on the representation of a dynamic process, within which the text and the community remain in dialogue to produce the extant text.

The questions asked in various manifestations of the literary approach have encouraged both multi-critical and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the book. These approaches have brought along concerns about gender, class, and power differentiations within the text, and the hermeneutical implications for understanding and using the text among a diverse group of readers. While these questions may have emerged in literary criticism, their influence is apparent in the other critical approaches, and will continue to shape the investigational questions and methodological configuration of Micah studies.

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