

The Understanding and Evaluation of Authorial Audience Criticism and Its Pros and Cons: A Case Study of Warren Cater's Works

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Introduction

Authorial audience (audience-oriented) criticism is generally categorized as reader-response criticism. The reader-response critical approach is first concerned with who the reader is and what the reader experiences while reading.¹⁾ The meanings of a text are determined in terms of how the reader reads the text. In addition, because the way of receiving the text depends on the reader's situations in relation to his or her social class, gender, ethnicity, culture, psychology, and so on, the production of the meanings of the text is deeply concerned with the reader's experience. On the other side, many kinds of the readers (or the readers' communities) may be made according to the reader-response critics' definitions of who the reader is, consequently producing infinite readers with infinite meanings of the text.

In order to avoid producing infinite readers that make

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1) Robert M. Fowler, "Reader-response Criticism: Figuring Mark's Reader," Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, eds., *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 61-4.

impossible to determine the meanings in the text, many of reader-response critics try to narrow down to define identity of the reader within the text. This approach, however, is still limited to the reader's way of reading which is irrelevant to author—the meanings of the text depart from the author. Authorial audience criticism not only presents the reader's way of reading the text and involves the author in determining the meanings of the text. Here, the authorial audience is not the one who simply reads the text, but the one whom the author keeps in mind when writing. The authorial audience, therefore, implies the reader in the author's mind, and the authorial audience criticism refers to the way of reading as this audience reads.²⁾ The authorial audience also presuppose the historical contexts at the author's period: "the internal historical context (the interrelations of the text with other texts) and the external historical context (the broader societal/cultural situation of the text)."³⁾ Authorial audience criticism may compensate the defect of excluding the author in reader-response criticism, and help to determine the more accurate meanings of the text by participating in both the reader and the author.

In this study, as a case study of authorial audience criticism, I will introduce the ideas and works of Warren Carter⁴⁾ who

2) Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, rev. ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 4.

3) Sharyn Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience," *JBL* 125 (2006), 272. Refer also to Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Text and Contexts: Interpreting the Disciples in Mark," *Semeia* 62 (1993), 81-102; Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977), 121-42.

4) Warren Carter (1955-) is currently a professor of Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, TX. He is a biblical scholar who specialized in the Gospel of Matthew, dealing with all the New Testament books in general. Carter received a Ph.D. of the New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. His earlier education is a B.D., Th.M. at Melbourne College of Divinity, Australia; a B.A. Hons

is a scholar of the New Testament (NT) theology, interpreting the NT mainly using authorial audience criticism with socio-political and religious perspective. He states that his studies deal with three worlds: “*the world behind the text*” relates with situations of the early Christian communities; “*the world of the text*” is concerned with interpreting and analyzing the texts while studying plots, characters, themes, etc.; and “*the world in front of the text*” connects the meaning of the texts with the contemporary readers.⁵⁾ He insists that Christians’ understanding of scripture can be expressed through restating the message of the author, and what they understand will be determined by their reading strategies.⁶⁾ One of his strategies to read the NT texts (especially Matthew) is mainly to see the texts through the lens of the authorial audience that “the author has in mind when he or she writes.”⁷⁾ Another reading perspective, especially in Matthew, is to read the text as a counter-narrative.⁸⁾ Carter believes that reading is “an active process” through which “the world of the center” is exposed and “the alternative world of God’s empire or reign” is disclosed.⁹⁾ His reading method is as follows:

I read Matthew’s gospel as a counternarrative. It is a work of resistance, written for a largely Jewish religious group. It “stands and/or speaks over against” the status quo dominated by Roman imperial power and synagogal control. It resists

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5) Refer to the introduction of Warren Carter and Army-Jill Levine, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

6) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 1.

7) *Ibid.*, 248.

8) Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading* (JSNTSup 204; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), xvii.

9) *Ibid.*, 1.

these cultural structures.

But it is also a work of advocacy and of hope. The gospel constructs an alternative worldview and community. It affirms a way of life marginal to the dominant structures. It challenges its audience to live this resistant way of life faithfully in its present circumstances. And it promises that Jesus will return to establish God's empire and salvation in full.¹⁰⁾

Carter reads Matthew as a message given to a Jewish Christian community which was confronted with the oppression of Roman Empire and the rejection of Jewish synagogue. Assuming that the audience, whom the author of Matthew kept in mind, was under the situation of severe persecutions, Carter re-describes the Gospel in a socio-political, economic, and cultural structure of that time. As such, his understanding drives him to read the text as a counter-narrative.

In this paper, Carter's methodologies of reading the Gospels will be examined, focusing specifically on authorial audience criticism, while being accompanied by historical and redaction criticism, socio-political approaches in the situation of the Roman Empire, and reading Matthew from marginality. As an additional note because the major field of Carter's scholarship is the Gospel of Matthew,¹¹⁾ this investigation will examine his methodology

10) Ibid.

11) His doctoral dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary was published as a revised form, *Household and Discipleship: A Study of Matthew 19-20*: Warren Carter, *Household and Discipleship: A Study of Matthew 19-20* (JSNTSup 103; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 9-10; and idem, "Recalling the Lord's Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew's Prayer," *CBQ* 57 (1995), 514-30. He published two books about the Gospel of John which are also related to the Roman empire: Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Exploration* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008); and idem, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006). Refer also to his recently published book, *Telling Tales about Jesus: An Introduction to the New Testament Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016).

by focusing on his works of interpreting Matthew.

1. The Meaning of Authorial Audience in Carter's Methodology

Carter wrote two main books on Matthew: one is an exegetical commentary book, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading*, and the other is a guide book about how to read it, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. In the second book, he clarifies his reading strategy as employing the concept of “an authorial audience.”¹²⁾ In order to understand Carter's methodology, people must know who “an authorial audience” is.

To begin with, he classifies four different types to define who “the reader” is.¹³⁾ First, there is “the original reader,” who reads the original text at its written time. Understanding the text in this way has the positive aspect of being able to show the reality of the circumstances at its written period, but it also has limitations in attempting a historical reconstruction.¹⁴⁾ Second, texts may be read by “the contemporary reader.” Even though this manner reflects the experiences, conditions, rights and arguments of today's readers, it can also fall into arbitrary interpretation and disregard the original situation of the text.¹⁵⁾ Third, “the implied reader” is possible. According to Carter, “this term assumes a model of communication, which distinguishes the following entities in the communication process”:¹⁶⁾

12) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 3.

13) *Ibid.*, 247-9.

14) *Ibid.*, 247.

15) *Ibid.*

real author → implied author → text → implied reader → real reader

- Real Author: the historical person who created the gospel
- Implied author: a literary version of the real author. Readers of the gospel gain a sense of an author who shaped the content and point of view of the text.
- Implied Reader: this is an imaginary person. It is a reader created by the text, the reader who responds “to the text at every point with whatever emotion, understanding, or knowledge the text ideally calls for . . . the imagery person in whom the intention of the text is to be thought of as always reaching its fulfillment.”¹⁷⁾ In Matthew this person exists between the resurrection and the return of Jesus (24:15; 27:8; 28:15) and is a disciple.
- Real Reader: any “flesh-and-bones” reader.¹⁸⁾

The implied reader focuses on depicting “the fulfillment of the text in the implied reader.”¹⁹⁾ Carter, however, points out the weakness of reading as “the implied reader” in that it is “essentially unrealistic.”²⁰⁾ It is difficult for any reader to gain “the complex interrelationships that may occur within a text.”²¹⁾ In addition, he argues that the reader becomes passive during reading because “the text determines the reader’s response without recognizing what the reader brings to the text (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, and so forth) or the reader’s active role in determining the text’s meaning.”²²⁾

Fourth, there is “the authorial audience,” which means “the

16) Ibid.

17) Carter quotes Kingsbury: J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 38-9.

18) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 247-8.

19) Ibid., 248.

20) Ibid.

21) Ibid.

22) Ibid.

readers that the author has ‘in mind’ in writing the gospel.”²³⁾ The authorial audience, while it is an assumed audience, is historically closer to a real audience²⁴⁾ than the implied audience. By setting the authorial audience, people can read the text as the author intended. However, it does not mean to find only the authors’ inner intentions,²⁵⁾ but rather “to try and identify with and read along with the readers that the author has in mind in writing.”²⁶⁾

The author images an audience that is able to respond appropriately to and understand everything in the text. The writing itself reveals an author’s assumption about or image of this audience. The choice of words, the simple or complex style adopted, the inclusion or omission of difficult concepts, the level of familiarity with the subject matter, the choice of figures of speech, allusions to places or events or figures, explanations of material, items that are ridiculed or held to be sacred, and the advocacy of certain beliefs and values, indicates assumptions an author is making about the audience. By narrating actions, for instances, that display certain personal characteristics, the author will expect the audience to adopt certain attitudes toward these values.²⁷⁾

Carter insists that the authorial audience should be explicated and proved by the text,²⁸⁾ and reversely the text be restated

23) *Ibid.*, 4.

24) *Ibid.*

25) *Ibid.*, 3-4. Carter, however, does not insist that “reading as the author intended” indicates to discover the author’s inner intentions”: “These are lost to us forever. We could speculate on them, but since Matthew is not among us to adjudicate on our varied guesses, our efforts are futile. Moreover, we know from conversation and other forms of communication that what we intend does not and cannot control the response of others.”

26) *Ibid.*, 4.

27) *Ibid.*

28) *Ibid.*, 4-5.

through the eyes of the authorial audience. In addition, the audience who is in the author's mind, is understood in relation to the circumstances of the reading community and so become the "contextualized implied audience" assumed by the author.²⁹⁾ An effort, therefore, is required to study the experience and knowledge in which the authorial audience might undergo.³⁰⁾ Citing P. J. Rabinowitz, Carter states that to be an authorial audience is to join a "particular social/interpretive community . . . [and] to accept an author's invitation to read in a particular socially constituted way that is shared by the author and his or her expected readers."³¹⁾ The authorial audience emphasizes the stage of "before reading," namely historical backgrounds, and uses historical criticism and redaction criticisms in order to interpret the text while considering social, political, economical, and cultural relationships in its written period.³²⁾

Carter asks people to keep in mind of two important aspects when reading a text as the authorial audience. The first is the role of the actual (or modern) audience.³³⁾ Though reading as the authorial audience is a requirement to be advocated by the text, "understanding the roles and knowledge of the authorial audience" consequently depends on "our work, our construction, our selections"; meaning "an actual audience is actively engaged in identifying and reconstructing them."³⁴⁾ The second aspect is that this reading presents the ground of "the actual audience's

29) Ibid., 248.

30) Ibid.

31) Ibid., 5 Carter quotes P. J. Rabinowitz: P. J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 22.

32) Carter states that his main methodologies in authorial audience criticism are historical criticism and redaction criticism. Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 5.

33) Ibid., 249.

34) Ibid.

reflection on the text.”³⁵⁾ The meaning in the text is formulated in the process of interaction between “the view of the author as expressed in the text” and “the view(s) of the actual audience .”³⁶⁾ Consequently, Carter urges people to find the meaning from the text while considering the historical setting in its written time. At the same time, this meaning is re-described by today’s readers who can actively participate in and determine the meaning of the text, while reflecting their present situations.

2. Knowing Who the Authorial Audience is in Matthew’s Gospel by Using Historical Criticism and Redaction Criticism³⁷⁾

Carter’s book, *Matthew: storyteller, interpreter, evangelist*, consists of three parts: “Before Reading,” “Reading Matthew,” and “After Reading.” This composition shows the style of his approach about how to read a text. In the “Before Reading,” he sets up his hermeneutic suppositions and historical backgrounds, which make it possible to assume who the authorial audience is in the Gospel of Matthew.³⁸⁾ In part two “Reading Matthew,” this Gospel is interpreted as being guided by the first part’s assumptions.³⁹⁾ Finally, in the “After Reading” he explains how to fill the gap “between the role of the authorial audience and the values and experiences of the actual readers.”⁴⁰⁾

35) Ibid.

36) Ibid.

37) The reason that I refer to other scholars in footnotes is to show that Carter shares similar assumptions and ideas with them, namely socio-political approaches.

38) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 5-7.

39) Ibid., 7.

40) Ibid., 7-8.

Focusing on authorial audience, Carter attempts to show who Matthew's authorial audience is in five categories, through: (1) "A sense of the gospel's author, time, and place of origin," (2) "The gospel's genre and the expectations that its genre creates," (3) "The audience's religious traditions, its knowledge about and experience of Jesus," (4) "The audience's social and religious experiences as disciples of Jesus," and (5) "The audience's reading skill."⁴¹⁾ The authorial audience is based on the groundwork of historical and redaction criticisms, and he defines them as followings: "Historical criticism investigates the historical circumstances, social patterns, and cultural values of Matthew's world. Redaction criticism, a subset of historical criticism, investigates the author's theological point of view, as indicated by changes made to his sources and in relation to the community or audience being addressed"⁴²⁾

From the studies of historical data on first century literature and internal evidence in the Gospel of Matthew, Carter conjectures that this Gospel was written by an unidentifiable, educated, Jewish Christian author. This is because there is no explicit proof that the author of Matthew is one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.⁴³⁾ As some modern scholars suppose it was written in the 80s or 90s due to the conflict between Matthew's community and Jewish synagogue, and so Carter states that the written date of the Gospel of Matthew may be sometime in the 80s.⁴⁴⁾ The most plausible place it was written is Syria, possibly in the large, culturally and ethnically diverse city of Antioch-on-the-Orontes.⁴⁵⁾ Matthew's community was under the situation of an "in-between time of difficult circumstances,

41) Ibid., 8-9.

42) Ibid., 5.

43) Ibid., 13-21.

44) Ibid., 21.

45) Ibid., 22-3.

opposition, division, and wickedness,” as a persecuted marginal group in a Roman Empire urban city.⁴⁶⁾

Establishing the historical background is an important task to interpreting the Gospel of Matthew because the characteristics of its community, namely the authorial audience, can be identified from these settings, and the interpretation of the text starts from its historical contexts (historical criticism). In addition, finding the traits of the authorial audience from a text helps to reconstruct a social context of Matthew’s community, which comes from discovering the composition strategy concealed in the Gospel (redaction criticism).⁴⁷⁾ Therefore, from the historical and redaction criticisms, people can determine who the authorial audience is.

Carter sets up the situation of Matthew’s community in the urban city Antioch, within the Roman Empire.⁴⁸⁾ Antioch was an important city, due to the centrality of its geographical location of “political, military and commercial communication between Rome and the Persian frontier and between Palestine and Asia Minor,”⁴⁹⁾ and was possibly the third largest city of the Roman Empire at that time.⁵⁰⁾ Special attention is required for Antioch because there, the Christian movement dynamically

46) Ibid., 23; and idem, *Matthew and the Margins*, 17-24.

47) L. Michael White argues that redaction criticism is “to focus attention on the editorial process of literary composition,” L. Michael White, “Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance: The Social Location of the Matthean Community,” David L. Balch, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 212.

48) Carter agrees with the following description of the situation of Antioch in the Roman Empire. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 17-29.

49) Wayne Meek, *The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 10.

50) “Antioch was the capital city of the Roman province of Syria” and the third largest city behind Rome and Alexandria. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 17.

occurred and influential Christian communities predominantly existed.⁵¹⁾ Though Jesus' life took place in rural communities and a village lifestyle, "the New Testament was set down by urbanites."⁵²⁾ Carter insists that "the empire's urban and rural areas were deeply embedded in these sociopolitical structures," which were "hierarchical and exploitative."⁵³⁾ This social structure largely consisted of two groups: The small elite group, "perhaps up to 5 to 10 percent of the population," who controlled and governed the other large group "for their own advantage."⁵⁴⁾ The lower level group was oppressed by the elite group and "a large group of involuntary marginals comprises the bottom level of society."⁵⁵⁾ Matthew's community belonged to the marginal group. Carter argues that though this Gospel shows rural backgrounds, it also reflects urban situations because all the regions of the Roman Empire, whether urban or rural, were dominated by the same system of Roman Imperialism.⁵⁶⁾ For example, "they [the urban elites] hire day laborers from a city or village marketplace to work in a vineyard (Matt 20:1-16), or they rely on the labor of their sons (Matt 21:28-32)."⁵⁷⁾ Therefore, since the urban and rural situations were interrelated, the Gospel of Matthew in a rural background may also mirror the urban conditions with which Matthew's community was

51) Rodney Stark, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel," David L. Balch, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 189.

52) *Ibid.*, 189.

53) Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 45.

54) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 18-9.

55) *Ibid.*, 20.

56) "Throughout the empire, the small governing group . . . often urban based, controlled most of the land and its production." Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament*, 45-6.

57) *Ibid.*, 46.

confronted.

Matthew's community was placed in the urbanity of Antioch and influenced by the physical and social environment of that city.⁵⁸⁾ Antioch suffered from urban problems which were usually prevalent in large cities of the Roman Empire. That is to say, it was in a miserable state, on account of urbanization and natural disasters. Carter follows Rodney Stark's diagnosis:

Any accurate portrait of Antioch in New Testament times must depict a city filled with misery, danger, fear, despair, and hatred. A city where the average family lived a squalid life in filthy and cramped quarters, where at least half of the children died at birth or during infancy, and where most of the children who lived lost at least one parent before reaching maturity. A city filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers. A city so lacking in stable networks of attachments that petty incidents could prompt mob violence. A city where crime flourished and the streets were dangerous at night. And perhaps above all, a city repeatedly smashed by cataclysmic catastrophes.⁵⁹⁾

Matthew's community consisted of marginal people in Antioch who could not escape from these urban evils and problems. They endured many sufferings. For example, filthy sanitation, illness, crime, and a lack of food, water, and housing due to human density. Foreigners were also ignored by the Romans and isolated to the edges of society, and this tendency was due more to cultural factors than racial.⁶⁰⁾

58) Urban problems are a general phenomenon that Greco-Roman large cities had suffered.

59) Carter quotes Stark; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 24; Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: a Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 160-1.

60) John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*

However, “Matthew’s audience probably did not consist predominantly of ‘involuntarily marginals’ from the lowest social level, but of a cross-section of urban society.”⁶¹⁾ In Matthew, while Jesus’ mission commands his disciples to involuntary marginals (10:7-8, 25:31-45), it is not right to assume that Matthew’s community was only comprised of the involuntary marginal group.⁶²⁾ Though the Gospel of Matthew shows deep concerns for the marginal, Matthew’s community could not be said as “involuntary marginals” because they had mission responsibilities to the involuntarily marginal people.⁶³⁾ Therefore, Carter concludes that though Matthew’s community or audience contained marginal people, they ultimately represented “a cross-section of their society.”⁶⁴⁾

Carter believes that Matthew’s community might be “small in number, a minority community within the larger dominant society” and several images may demonstrate its smallness and vulnerability: “little ones” (10: 42; 18:6, 10, 14), “infants” (11:25), and “children” (18:1-5; 19:13-15). Carter regards Matthew’s audience as a “socioeconomic cross-section of this society” and “a small group” living “its discipleship in the tough, rural-urban, hierarchical environment of Antioch.”⁶⁵⁾ He assumes

(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 113.

61) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 25.

62) Ibid.

63) Ibid.

64) Ibid., 26-7. Carter states as follows: “Matthew’s audience, then was probably not constituted predominantly by ‘involuntary marginals.’ We cannot of course assume their absence either, especially since the Gospel narrates Jesus’ extensive mission among them. And given the common experience of indebtedness, loss of land, and loss of status and kinship networks as rural people moved to the city seeking some means of staying alive, it is likely that some such people comprised Matthew’s audience. But the older view that early Christian communities comprised almost exclusively the economically and socially wretched does not seem sustainable. Rather, the audience seems to represent a cross-section of their society.”

that the audience must have refused to accept “the value, commitments, and agendas of the Roman empire”⁶⁶⁾ and found their identity in the situation of conflicts with Jewish synagogue e.⁶⁷⁾

65) Ibid., 2.

66) Ibid.

67) In general, “the cities of the Roman Empire accommodated people of different races, cultures, and class.” Romans regard Greeks as corrupted and unreliable persons, and Greeks likewise thought Romans cruel and haughty. Romans and Greeks were suspicious of Jewish customs and so persecuted them occasionally. Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 113. Matthew’s community was regarded as a deviant group from Jewish community, a deviant sect from Judaism and was socially shown to be a fragile minority by others in Antioch. This community could be classified into foreign minority group, because they seemed to be one of Jewish communities by others in Antioch. Anthony J. Saldarini, “The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Conflict,” David L. Balch, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 38-9. Carter explains the conflicts between Matthew’s community and Jewish synagogue as follows: “Crucial to understanding the situation of Matthew’s (largely) Jewish community committed to Jesus, is the recognition that it is involved in a local fight within a synagogue over its place in a common tradition. They share the same scriptural tradition. . . . Yet along with this common history, tradition, relationships, and practices is ground which divides – namely, the claims that Jesus occupies a central role in those tradition. . . . Matthew’s audience is thus a Jewish group in tension with a synagogue community yet shaped by and committed to shared Jewish tradition.” Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 36. See also Carter’s notes on the bitter separation from a Jewish synagogue, and post-70 debates in *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 66-80.

3. The Roman Empire and Counter-Narrative Reading⁶⁸⁾

Carter states that his methodological approach to interpreting the Gospel of Matthew is related to the experience of the Roman imperial world, which is a new field in the study of Matthew.⁶⁹⁾ Since religion at that time was not separated from socio-political and economic structures, it is necessary to read Matthew in the circumstances of Roman imperialism. Matthew's community was placed under the oppression of the Roman Empire and was being challenged by imperialism. From physical and spiritual aspects, the community had to resist the Roman imperial system and its ideals in order to keep their identity and progress the Christian movement.⁷⁰⁾ The Gospel of Matthew confirmed the identity of the community and helped them to expand their influence in Roman society.

According to Carter, the Gospel of Matthew has an antipathy against Roman imperialism.⁷¹⁾ In the social structure of the Roman Empire, a small number of elites ruled the greater parts of the weak, poor, and ignorant populace, through political, economic, and military power. This ruling system only protected the security of the minority elites and expanded their interests at the expense of the labor of the people of lower classes. However,

68) Carter divides Matthew into six parts and summarizes and explains each part through an anti-imperial/imperial reading: Warren Carter, "Matthew's Gospel: An Anti-Imperial/Imperial Reading," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 34 (2007), 424-33.

69) In NT scholarship, the studies of the Gospel of Matthew have been performed mainly in Jewish or Hellenistic contexts. I think, therefore, Carter regards the studies of the Gospel of Matthew in relation to the Roman Empire as a new field in the NT scholarship.

70) Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 9-34.

71) *Ibid.*, 10.

the society which the Gospel seeks is not sustained by physical power, but by love and charity. The way of reign in the Gospel is to serve others and to promote their welfare.

When Matthew's Jesus says to his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them," he is describing this system in which the elite values power, wealth, and status above all else. But Jesus also evaluates it and rejects it. "It will not be so among you." In its place he proposes an alternative: "but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant" (Matt 20:25-27). He calls the community of disciples to form an alternative society in which the quest for power and wealth as the goal of human existence and makers of a person's status is renounced. Instead, the only valued status is to be a marginal slave, an outsider, on the edge, at the bottom, one who lives to secure the well-being of others. He calls his followers to form a community that is antithetical to everything the Empire's ruling elite or aristocracy holds to be important.⁷²⁾

Matthew's community was also confronted with the theology of the Roman Empire. In the Roman world, the religious and the political were closely connected with each other to sustain the system of the Empire.⁷³⁾ Imperial cults performed by the cities of Asia minor were purposed to present the ruling power of Roman emperors in the first three centuries.⁷⁴⁾ Temples, statues, and coins also showed the emperors' religious status. Religion served as propaganda for imperialism, and political power was reinforced by religion. Religion was transformed into

72) Ibid.

73) Ibid.

74) S. R. F. Price, "Rituals and Power," Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 47-9.

politics and politics disguised itself as religion. The forceful and potential power of imperial cults could be used for the political purpose of legitimizing rulers or diplomatic approaches.⁷⁵⁾ Imperial theology, therefore, was necessary for the reign of the Empire and its main point of the theological task was divinization of the emperor. As the agent of gods, the emperor could be the object of worship and have the ability and legitimacy to announce rules which all the people under the Roman Empire must submit.⁷⁶⁾

Imperial theology, however, was completely opposite to the Gospel. As Christians who were willing to establish their identity in the Gospel, they desperately needed to separate themselves from “the standard religious institutions of their social environment.”⁷⁷⁾ In light of the resistance against imperialism, Christianity, as Richard Hosley says, might be inversely considered as a product of empire.⁷⁸⁾

Considering that the ideas of Roman imperialism were prevalent at that time, Carter argues that “the audience quickly discovers that resistance plays a prominent role in this narrative .”⁷⁹⁾ They will find the conflicts of powers between the Roman Empire and the Kingdom of God and come to know what values and perspectives the gospel supports.⁸⁰⁾ The counter-narrative reading process discloses the evilness of political power and evaluates this center with a negative view point.⁸¹⁾ At the same time, it also exposes “an alternative world of the

75) Ibid., 65-71.

76) Warren Carter, “Proclaiming (in/against) Empire Then and Now,” *Word & World* 25 (2005), 153-4.

77) Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 138.

78) Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 1.

79) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 2.

80) Ibid., 3.

81) Ibid.

margins.”⁸²⁾

The gospel reveals God’s empire to be breaking in to challenge the center, to liberate, and to offer life (4:17, 23; 5:5, 10). It creates alternatively systems and ways of being; non-hierarchical structures; “one-flesh” male-female existence; communal sufficiency in shared economic resources; the reversal of inequities; the inclusion of ethnically different groups; and practices of worship, compassion, mutual service, and nonviolent resolution of conflict. One of the effects of reading this story of Jesus is to see God’s reign or empire at work, to notice it in unlikely places, to understand its goals and methods, to hear its call to live in and for a just and compassionate world, and to participate in its final triumph over all.⁸³⁾

Carter states that the counter-narrative in the Gospel of Matthew will disclose to people the new world of God, which is against secular and evil value systems, and they can participate in the mission of God and reform the social irregularities with an alternative world perspective of margins.

4. Reading Matthew from a Perspective of Marginality

According to Carter, Matthew’s community lived in an existence which was voluntarily, not involuntarily, in the margins.⁸⁴⁾ Matthew’s audience was the marginal because they were separated from the Jewish synagogue, oppressed under Roman

82) Ibid.

83) Ibid.

84) Though Carter recognizes the existence of the involuntary margins in Matthew’s community, he insists that this community might be characterized by voluntary marginality. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 46-9.

Empire and suffered from urban problems in Antioch. In the Roman world, they were located on the edge, but they chose this marginal manner of life as a way of resisting the dominant values of the Roman imperial system.⁸⁵⁾ They sought alternative lifestyle in following Jesus' words and deeds.⁸⁶⁾

Carter presents the marginality of Matthew's community in his exegesis of that Gospel. He argues that in Matthew there are several images which identify the character of the community as the marginal people. The representative expression describing these margins, which especially indicates disciples, is "little ones" (10:42; 18:6, 10).⁸⁷⁾ The term "little ones" itself shows smallness of their community. Jesus' admonition to help "little ones" by giving them a cup of cold water (10:42) implies their poverty. Jesus' command not to make "little ones" stumble and not to despise one of them shows their vulnerability and treatment in contempt (18:6, 10).

The image of infants or children (11:25; 18:2-5; 19:13-15) also shows the characteristic of Matthew's community as the marginal people. Jesus' concern for the marginal people is highlighted in his teaching of "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (18:1-10). After Jesus says that those who become like little children can enter the kingdom of heaven and are the greatest in heaven (vv. 2-4), he amazingly identifies himself with a little child (vv. 5-6): "Whoever welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me." The connection of disciples and children is made in vv. 3-4, and the children indicate "a metaphor of discipleship."⁸⁸⁾ The instruction to become like children is to show humbleness, which is the property of marginality: "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom

85) Ibid., 45.

86) Ibid.

87) Ibid., 27.

88) Ibid., 362.

of heaven” (v. 4). Therefore, the metaphor of children not only shows the characteristic of marginal people, but also indicates Matthew’s audience should seek the alternative values which were contrasted with those of Roman imperialism.

In addition, Carter explains the role of marginal people, that they are the receivers and revealers of God’s revelation. In 11:25-30 of Jesus prayer, the passage explicitly states that God wants to reveal his will to the marginal. Jesus praised God that he reveals his will not to the powerful people of the society but to the marginal who are despised in the society (vv. 25-26): “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.” “God reveals to the marginal people Jesus’ identity as God’s agent through his actions and words”⁸⁹⁾ and Jesus is the perfect receiver and revealer of God’s will (v. 27): “All things have been delivered to me by my Father.” Jesus invites the marginal into his discipleship, in order that they may receive and reveal the will of God (vv. 28-30): “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Jesus’ invitation does not just imply a promise of providing relaxation in their actual lives, but implies a request for discipleship⁹⁰⁾ which requires their discipline in order to receive and to reveal the will of God. Matthew’s community, therefore, plays a role to deliver God’s will to the Roman imperial world.

In addition, in 10:7-8 and 25:31-45, Carter claims that Jesus’ command to his disciples to go to the lost sheep of Israel, namely the sick, the poor, the unclean, the demon-possessed, and the persecuted may “sensitize a more privileged audience to mission responsibilities among this group (involuntary marginals).”⁹¹⁾ Matthew’s audience was challenged to be called for the voluntary

89) *Ibid.*, 258.

90) *Ibid.*, 259-61.

91) *Ibid.*, 25.

identification, participation, and devotion to the marginal people as a mission community.

5. The evaluation of authorial audience Criticism

5.1. The Location of Carter's Authorial Audience Criticism in Reader-Response Criticism

According to Kevin J. Vanhoozer, a recent movement of literary and biblical interpretation is to liberate a reader from a text.⁹²⁾ With freedom, the reader actively participates in constructing the meaning of the text and makes his own interpretative products out of the author's text: "Meaning is actualized not by the author at the point of the text's conception, but by the reader at the point of the text's reception."⁹³⁾ This contemporary approach is called "reader-response criticism."

Vanhoozer suggests two types of reader-response criticisms.⁹⁴⁾ The first is "conservative reader-response critics: reader-respect" which is to "let the author and the text manipulate the reader so that he or she gradually comes to experience and adopt the ideology (the worldview) of the text."⁹⁵⁾ The reader can show active participation in making meaning, but this meaning should be proved by the text.⁹⁶⁾ The second is "radical reader-response critics: reader-resistance" which is to read the text for the purpose

92) Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Reader in New Testament Interpretation," Joel B. Green, ed., *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 301.

93) Ibid., 301.

94) Ibid., 306-12.

95) Ibid., 307.

96) Ibid., 308-10.

of unfolding the reader's ideology or advocating his argument.⁹⁷⁾ This type is divided into two varieties: "post-structuralists" and "neo-pragmatists."⁹⁸⁾ Claiming the death of the Author and the birth of the Reader, post-structuralists argue that it is possible to produce "multiple readings/meanings."⁹⁹⁾ Neo-pragmatists, however, place an emphasis on "a useful reading" which exposes the interest of "the interpretive community" on the basis of the idea that the "interpretive authority" comes from the "interpretive community."¹⁰⁰⁾ A reader finds in the text "the function of the community to which he or she belongs."¹⁰¹⁾

Vanhoozer also describes four categories of reader-response criticisms in relation to methodological approaches.¹⁰²⁾ First, historical-critical approaches are "to reconstruct the history that lay behind the text and the history of the text's own composition."¹⁰³⁾ Second, literary-critical approaches are to discover "the text's conventions and formal features and the processes by which it conveys sense."¹⁰⁴⁾ Third, ideological approaches make a reader reestablish a text in order to be followed by the reader's ideology, so reading is finally "a matter of politics."¹⁰⁵⁾ Fourth, deconstructive approaches undo interpretations and in doing so they expose "the reader's interest."¹⁰⁶⁾

97) *Ibid.*, 311.

98) *Ibid.*, 310-2.

99) *Ibid.*, 311.

100) *Ibid.*

101) *Ibid.*

102) *Ibid.*, 312-4.

103) *Ibid.*, 312: It is, however, not possible to get the historical reality as it was from the texts because they are given to us as the interpreted sources: "History is always interpreted." These approaches let a reader to get "textual phenomena" by way of a historical reconstruction which is based on the reader's presuppositions.

104) *Ibid.*.

105) *Ibid.*, 313.

106) *Ibid.*, 313-4.

In the Vanhoozer's categories of reader-response criticism, I think Carter can be classified as a conservative reader-response critic because he argues like the followings: "These roles and knowledge [required of the authorial audience] are shaped to a significant degree by the text as we have seen, but an actual audience [a modern reader] is actively engaged in identifying and reconstructing them."¹⁰⁷⁾ Also, Carter mentions that "to read 'as the author intended' is to identify with and read along with this audience envisioned by the author."¹⁰⁸⁾ He shows reader-respect to the author which classify him as a conservative reader-response critic.

Early reader-response critics interpreted the text by "acknowledging the role of the reader in the process of making meaning but focusing on the dynamics and direction of the text, on the various ways in which the rhetorical strategies of the text itself invite the reader to participate in the production of meaning."¹⁰⁹⁾ I believe Carter follows these critics' tendency because he mainly focuses on interpreting the text in the context of the audience who is in author's mind and then lets the reader participate in creating the meaning. Carter also finds the rhetorical strategy of the text through a counter-narrative reading which means to discover in the text the resistance of Matthew's community against the social, economic, political, and cultural structures which were irregular and oppressive.¹¹⁰⁾ In so doing, Carter assumes that the authorial audience opens their eyes to find the alternative worldview and the actual reader also involves themselves in producing the meaning by reflecting their situations on the text with this worldview. The counter-narrative reading unveils "the alternative world of God's empire or reign" by

107) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 249.

108) *Ibid.*, 4.

109) Vanhoozer, "The Reader in New Testament Interpretation," 317.

110) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 1.

discovering the resistant elements against evil structure of the powers of vested rights.¹¹¹⁾

The goal of early reader-response critics is to make the reader experience and accept the ideology of the text. For Carter, the text contains the ideology of marginality. The reading Matthew from this ideology is based on the idea that the Gospel requires its readers to live a voluntarily marginal existence, as “an alternative to its dominant values and structures.”¹¹²⁾ Therefore, the ideology of marginality in the Gospel of Matthew is presented to the reader as an alternative way of life as the marginal.¹¹³⁾

Though Carter emphasizes a “particular social/interpretive community,” he still gives the role of the author great weight. This interpretive community is involved in a particular social circumstance which affects both the author and authorial audience.¹¹⁴⁾ In terms of “an author’s invitation to read in a particular socially constituted way that is shared by the author and his or her expected reader,”¹¹⁵⁾ Carter regards the authorial audience as the interpretive community, who is in author’s intention: this consequently means reader-respect to the author. I think he does not reach the extreme in terms of the authority of the interpretive community, for example, like the radical feminists who reject the authority of the scripture do.¹¹⁶⁾ Standing

111) Ibid.

112) Ibid., 45-6.

113) According to neo-pragmatic view, “meaning is rather a function of the reading strategy brought to a text”: Vanhoozer, “The Reader in New Testament Interpretation,” 311.

114) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 5.

115) Ibid. Carter quotes Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 22.

116) Pamela D. H. Cochran classifies this opinion as “feminist theology of rejection”: She suggests three categories of feminists: “feminist theologies of rejection,” “feminist theologies of revision,” and “feminist theologies of reformation”: Pamela D. H. Cochran, “Scripture, Feminism, and Sexuality,” Justin S. Holcomb, ed., *Christian Theologies of Scripture: A comparative Introduction* (New

on their authority of the interpretive community, the radical feminists reject the scripture, arguing that the scripture was written to establish “the perpetuation of patriarchy” or to be used as a “source for women’s oppression.”¹¹⁷⁾ Being different from such radical feminists, Carter does not arbitrarily interpret Matthew in order to justify the argument of the contemporary interpretive community while rejecting the authority of the scripture. He regards the authorial audience of Matthew’s community as the major interpretive community and then the contemporary interpretive community actively participates in the meaning which was already interpreted by the authorial audience. In his book, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading*, Carter interprets the Gospel of Matthew as a conservative reader-response critic.

Carter also uses modern critical methods such as historical-critical approaches in order to make a historical reconstruction, and literary-critical approaches while using a redaction criticism. In addition, he shows ideological approaches because he interprets Matthew in view of marginality. However, he does not seem to employ deconstructive approaches, which mean undoing interpretations because he suggests the logic of reading the text in which the Gospel of Matthew is interpreted, namely through the authorial audience approach.¹¹⁸⁾

In addition, I think Carter follows David H. Kelsey’s hermeneutic view (cultural-linguistic approach) on scripture in some aspects. Kelsey, a cultural-linguistic theologian,¹¹⁹⁾ insists

York: New York University Press, 2006), 266-8.

117) Ibid.

118) According to Vanhoozer, “deconstructive reading mercilessly exposes the reader’s interest by undoing interpretation and by exposing the rhetoric, not logic, behind interpretation.” Vanhoozer, “The Reader in New Testament Interpretation,” 314.

119) Vanhoozer regards Kelsey as “typical of cultural-linguistic theologians”: Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to*

that interpretation of the scripture means not a “translation” but a “redescription.”¹²⁰⁾ Carter mentions that “my aim in this book is to restate the story and concerns of Matthew’s gospel, to describe its contents and to express what I think its author is saying,” and he clarifies his understanding of the text as “restatement.”¹²¹⁾ Kelsey also insists that scripture is interpreted by a theological argument which is given as an argument to scripture¹²²⁾ and by a pattern which is formulated by a theological argument.¹²³⁾ Moreover, Carter develops his theological argument about marginality and interprets Matthew by following the pattern of Kelsey’s argument.

5.2. Positive Aspects

In positive aspects, first, Carter draws dynamic meanings from the text while connecting it with historical contexts, especially in a socio-political understanding. Stephen C. Barton states the advantage of the social-scientific approaches as follows:

[W]hile historical criticism focuses the interpreter’s attention on relations of cause and effect over time (often referred to as ‘diachronic’ relations) and the primary aim of the historian is to tell a story drawing on precedents and analogies, the social science focus attention on ‘synchronic’ relations, that is, on the way meaning is generated by social actors related to one another by a complex web of culturally-determined social systems and patterns of communication.¹²⁴⁾

Christian Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 11.

120) David H. Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 88.

121) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 1.

122) Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 122-3.

123) *Ibid.*, 101-2.

For example, in Matt 18:1-14, under the assumption of the social condition of Matthew's community, Carter explains the term "the little ones" (18:6, 10, 14) as indicating the smallness and powerlessness of the community.¹²⁵⁾ In 11:25-30, he explains two images in relation to the historical context: "the infants" (v. 25) and "those who are laboring and bearing burdens" (v. 28). The infant metaphor implies "the lowly and teachable," and it shows both "receptiveness to God's revelation and the marginal and vulnerable social locations in which the desperate live."¹²⁶⁾ The word *κοπιῶντες* (wearyed/labor) means "beatings, weariness, physical tiredness from work or heat or battle."¹²⁷⁾ This word means the human destiny under the "oppressive labor and sorrow," namely, the persecution of the Roman Empire and Jewish synagogue.¹²⁸⁾ The meaning is exposed in the text through the eyes of authorial audience, namely the social situation of Matthew's community. Carter, therefore, reconstructs Matthew's community and explains the Gospel of Matthew while reflecting the knowledge and experiences of Matthew's community in socio-political context. In the process of relating social and cultural elements with the text, the meaning is dynamically created.

Second, Carter provokes a reader's response by discussing the tension between the world of the Roman Empire and the world of God's empire (the kingdom of heaven which is a key to Matthew's theology) in the Gospel of Matthew. He focuses

124) Stephen C. Barton, "Historical Criticism and Social-Scientific Perspectives in New Testament Study," Joel B. Green, ed., *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 69.

125) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 66-77.

126) Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 257-8.

127) *Ibid.*, 259. The verb, has two meanings "to become weary/tired" and "to exert oneself physically, mentally, or spiritually to work hard, toil, strive, struggle." *κοπιῶω*, *BDAG*, 558.

128) Friedrich Hauck, "*κόπος, κοπιῶω*" *TDNT* 3:827-9.

on God's point of view and its prominence through this Gospel. He insists that the implied author "spends much energy establishing the point of view that the authorial audience must identify and adopt."¹²⁹⁾ God's point of view and the Roman Empire's opposing viewpoint appear in the whole text, and that conflict of different viewpoints elicits the audience's response. In his exegesis, Carter shows how these two view points come out in the plot, characters, and setting of the story.¹³⁰⁾

Finally, Carter clearly demonstrates that the Gospel of Matthew suggests the alternative world view of God's empire, which becomes a driving force to let the contemporary readers review, involve, and reform their real world with this perspective. The products of interpretation may sometimes become a void echo to the real life. Carter, however, provides a powerful perspective which can be applied to real life, culture, and society and requires people to seek the alternative world of God's empire. The command to "take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24), reveals resistance against imperialism and countercultural action.¹³¹⁾ It also requires disciples (and believers today) to identify themselves with the marginal, such as foreigners, criminals, and slaves.¹³²⁾ Jesus, as a marginal person, died on the cross, but God raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus proved his vindication by God who has the power to reign over the world.¹³³⁾ Jesus' resurrection legitimated his sayings, works, life and death, and as Walter Brueggemann says, it initiated "a new history open to all but peculiarly received by the marginal victims

129) Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 130.

130) Ibid.

131) Ibid., 344-5.

132) Ibid., 344.

133) Carter argues that "Resurrection evokes eschatological traditions (Dan 12:1-3; 2 Macc 6-7) whereby this act of justice vindicates faithful opponents of empires and reverses the damage inflicted by empires that act contrary to God's purpose." Carter, "Matthew's Gospel: An Anti-Imperial/Imperial Reading," 433.

of the old order.”¹³⁴⁾ Carter’s message, therefore, will be powerful, especially to those who think themselves as the marginal ones in society.

5.3. Negative Aspects

In negative aspects, first, Carter starts his interpretation from unidentifiable and insecure historical assumptions. He argues that the place and location of Matthew’s community is located in Antioch. Building upon that assumption, he describes the Christian community as a marginal group which was rejected and oppressed by Jewish synagogue and the Roman Empire. In addition, he insists that they suffered from urban problems, engaged themselves in these problems as the voluntary marginal ones, and tried to solve them by rejecting the social values and suggesting the alternative perspective of God’s empire.

Carter, however, artificially places too many characteristics onto that community with weak and unproved facts. There also exist several other possible places where the Gospel of Matthew could have been intended: “Alexandria, Caesarea Maritima, Edssa, … Phoenicia,” etc.¹³⁵⁾ No one can be convinced of which

134) According to Walter Brueggemann, in Matthew’s Gospel, resurrection has important political dimensions and the new history caused by resurrection provides “new identities (Matt 28:19) and a new ethics (28:20),” for persons. Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 113. Brueggemann notes that “the narrative of the Exodus is designed to show the radical criticism and radical delegitimizing of the Egyptian empire.” Like the exodus from Egyptian empire, the advent of Jesus really became good news for the Matthew’s community who were marginalized and oppressed under the Roman Empire. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 9.

135) D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 76.

city it actually was and therefore, Antioch remains as only a possibility.¹³⁶⁾ As such, Carter's historical reconstruction of the community, which is based upon Antioch and its social context, is built on fragile grounds. Therefore, the authorial audience which Carter historically reconstructs is merely made through his own theological argument.

Second, as Barton refers to the dangers of the socio-scientific approach, Carter also shows the "proneness to claim too much, the result of which is to reduce a particular historical-religious phenomenon to its purported sociological determinants."¹³⁷⁾ Jesus' death and resurrection are interpreted as the social functions in which his dying and rising indicates the resistance against social evils and the vindication of social justice for the marginal. Subsequently, there is no room for other theologies, such as the atonement. According to Vanhoozer, it is not possible "to reduce God's involvement with Scripture to one mode only" because an error of reductionism happens in the process of interpretation.¹³⁸⁾ Though Carter tries to explain the Gospel of Matthew in a mode of alternative perspective on marginality and wants to reveal the world of God's empire, he fixes the text excessively into the perspective of marginality during interpretation in order to deliver his ideology.

Finally, Carter does not discover the transcendent God in Matthew. Since the origin of sociological approaches, as Barton points out, lies in "Enlightenment epistemological atheism,"¹³⁹⁾

136) Ibid., 76.

137) Barton, "Historical Criticism and Social-Scientific Perspectives in New Testament Study," 75.

138) Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*, 29. Grant R. Osborne also refers to the danger of reductionism in reader-response criticism: "There is a reductionism in saying that the reader rather than the author or text produces meaning." Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dowers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 379.

Carter's socio-political and religious reading does not let people "meet with a face or a voice" of the transcendent God.¹⁴⁰⁾ He does not begin his argument from the "Christian understanding of God, language, and transcendence,"¹⁴¹⁾ but starts from the human existential state which is placed under social values and structures. The function of Matthew is to show an alternative worldview which is able to move human conditions from bondage to liberation. All things considered, Carter's methodological approach is not based on the "Christian assumption about reality, knowledge, and ethics,"¹⁴²⁾ but comes from the understanding of socio-political and religious relationships in society and culture.

Conclusion

Carter's authorial audience criticism provides a fresh hermeneutical lens to read texts in NT scholarship. The main focuses on his methodological approach to interpret a text are to define who the authorial audience of the text is and how to read it as a counter-narrative. Though he, I believe, shows a tendency of reader-response criticism by using the concept of authorial audience, he provides reliable controllers to interpret a text in contrast with radical reader-response critics. Considering historical, social, political, economic, and religious circumstances, he carefully investigates the community of a text and examines

139) Barton, "Historical Criticism and Social-Scientific Perspectives in New Testament Study," 76.

140) Kevin Vanhoozer, *In There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 459.

141) *Ibid.*, 199.

142) *Ibid.*, 199-200.

the audience whose author has in mind. It is not arbitrary but a well-balanced approach unlike radical reader-response criticism which emphasizes only on the readers' or their communities' perspectives and ideologies. In addition, a counter-narrative reading provides dynamics and vitality to those who read in his real-life world. Discovering the tension between the world of the Roman Empire and the world of God's empire in reading the NT may evoke people to understand their actual world in comparison with the kingdom of God and lead them to take actions for his kingdom.

Despite these positive features, I believe the interpretations produced by his approach still show limitations because Carter starts with uncertain historical assumptions. In the firmly fixed assumption that Matthew's community was placed in the urban city of Antioch and their community was situated in lowly, miserable, and marginal status, all the texts in the Gospel of Matthew are explained. Matthew's community, however, might be located in other areas and we cannot confirm their status as Carter suggested. Most of all, while emphasizing the resistance against the Roman Empire with counter-narrative reading, his socio-political and religious approach does not reveal the core meaning of Jesus' death as atonement in Matthew's Gospel. In my view, authorial audience approach is useful to interpret the texts in multi-dimensional aspects by connecting historical and social entities of the NT world to the NT texts. However, we must be careful not to impose too much meaning into the text with historical assumptions and keep in mind that Christian faith is based on the transcendence of God and his intervention into human history, not on the understanding of political, social, economic, and religious phenomenon and relationships.

<주제어>

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<초록>

저자의 청중 비평(Authorial Audience Criticism)에 대한 이해와 평가

—워렌 카터(Warren Carter)의 저서들에 대한 사례 연구—

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본 논문은 신약 신학자인 워렌 카터(Warren Carter)의 ‘저자의 청중 비평(authorial audience criticism)이란 방법론을 소개하고 이것의 장점과 단점을 연구, 평가하는 것이다. 카터는 로마 제국의 사회, 정치, 문화, 경제 및 종교의 가치 체계와 관련하여 신약 성경의 본문들을 주해하는 작업을 했다. 그는 ‘저자의 청중(authorial audience)이라는 개념을 도입해서 본문을 해석하는 작업을 시도했는데, 저자의 청중이란 저자가 글을 쓸 때 그가 염두에 놓은 독자를 의미한다. 이 방법론은 저자의 청중이 누구이며 어떤 신분과 상태에 놓여있는지를 상정한 후, 저자의 청중의 관점에 따라 본문의 의미를 파악해나가는 것이 저자의 청중 비평이라고 할 수 있다. 카터는 저자의 청중은 ‘실제 독자’(real [or flesh-and-bone] reader)나 ‘내재된 독자’(implied reader)와는 다른데, 전자는 역사적으로 실제 독자가 누구인지를 확실하게 밝힐 수 없고 후자는 역사성을 배제한 채 본문으로부터만 상정된 독자이기 때문에 한계가 있다고 본다. 저자의 청중이란 실제로 저자의 글을 읽는 역사적 인물(들)과 관련 있지만, 동시에 저자의 마음속에 있는 독자란 측면에서 본문이 그려내고 있는 독자이기도 하다. 카터는 이렇게 저자의 청중이란 독자를 설정하고 이에 근거해서 복음서의 본문들을 해석하는데, 필자는 그의 전공 분야인 마태복음에 관한 주석과 글들을 토대로 그가 이 방법론을 통해 어떻게

본문을 해석하는지를 연구하였다. 그는 저자의 청중으로서의 마태 공동체가 오론탄스 강에 위치한 수리아 안디옥이라는 거대한 도시의 하층 계급으로 있으며, 사회, 정치적으로 소외받고 비천한 상태에 놓여 있다고 주장한다. 카터는 이러한 저자의 청중을 상정한 후 ‘대항-서사 읽기’(counter-narrative reading)를 제시하는데, 이는 로마의 제국의 신학과 하나님 나라의 신학의 긴장 관계 속에서 마태복음을 읽어나가는 것이다. 이를 통해 마태복음은 소외받은 자들에게 로마 제국주의의 체제를 거부하고 새로운 대안의 세계로서의 하나님 나라를 갈망하게 만든다.

필자는 카터의 방법론을 독자 반응 비평의 한 갈래로 보지만, 그가 극단적 부류가 아닌 다소 온건한 부류에 속한다고 생각한다. 카터가 제시한 저자의 청중 비평은 극단적 독자 반응 비평가들처럼 현대의 해석 공동체나 독자의 시각으로 자신(들)의 상황에 맞게 단방향으로 해석하는 것이 아니라, 독자가 누구인지를 역사적인 증거들을 통해서 설정하며 그에 따른 본문 해석을 가한다. 하지만 필자는 카터가 확실하지 않은 역사적 가정들을 통해 저자의 청중을 설정하고, 그에 따라 과도한 해석상의 의미들을 본문 속에 주입시켰다고 본다. 다시 말해, 저자의 청중의 상태와 특징을 해석을 위한 하나의 틀로 설정한 후, 그 틀 안에서 모든 본문을 해석해 나가는 것이다. 그리고 그의 또 다른 해석 방법의 틀인 사회·과학적 접근 방법론은 예수의 사역의 핵심인 속죄 등의 의미를 보여주지 못하며, 그에 따른 기독교 신앙의 신학을 제시하고 있지 못하다. 필자는 본 연구의 마지막 부분에서 카터의 방법론의 장점과 단점을 구분하여 평가하였다.

<Abstract>

The Understanding and Evaluation of Authorial Audience Criticism and Its Pros and Cons: A Case Study of Warren Cater's Works

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This study has the purpose of understanding authorial audience criticism and evaluating its pros and cons with a case study of Warren Carter's works. Carter employs authorial audience criticism to interpret the writings of the New Testament (NT) with a counter-narrative reading against the social, political, cultural, economic, and religious value systems of the Roman Empire. He adopts the concept of "authorial audience" that refers to the reader whom the author keeps in mind. He first determines who the audience is and what situations they were placed under and experienced; and then the texts are read and interpreted along with this audience and their experiences. According to Carter, authorial audience indicates neither the real (or flesh-and-bone) reader nor the implied reader. As for the real reader, it is impossible to identify who this historical reader is; and as for the implied reader, there exists a limitation because this reader is only projected by the text with the exclusion of the historical contexts. Authorial audience, however, is not only the real reader who was actually reading the author's writing, but also the implied reader whom the text projects in that the authors bear in his mind. Carter first defines the identity of the authorial audience by examining both text and context, and then interprets the NT writings in view of authorial audience. In this study, I investigate and evaluate

Carter's works, especially in relation to the study of the Gospel of Matthew that is his major field in the NT. He argues that Matthean community (audience) was located in Antioch on the Orontes River in Syria, which was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire at that time. Matthean community, however, belonged to a lower class in this urban city and suffered under the opposition, contempt, and isolation, while living as a marginal group. Carter also suggests the counter-narrative reading which is to find the resistance of Matthew's community against the evils of social, economic, political, and cultural structures in the Roman Empire. In so doing, there happen tensions between the theology of the Roman Empire and the theology of the Kingdom of God, which lead to discover the alternative worldview of God's reign by rejecting the Roman imperialism.

I believe Carter's authorial audience criticism is one of the reader-response criticisms and his approach belongs to a moderate category, not radical. Though radical reader-response criticism performs interpretation as a one-way function by the ideology of the reader or the interpretive community, his approach has a mutual interaction between the author and the reader, in that it provides the reliable controllers to interpret the text by considering the audience who is in author's mind. In spite of its positive aspects, his approach has limitation because it begins with uncertain historical assumptions. After setting up the characteristics of the audience of Matthean community, he excessively put these characteristics into the text. In addition, his another approach of the socio-political criticism, which is useful to determine the nature of the audience, does not show the central meanings of the NT writings, such as the atonement of Jesus Christ, and so it is hard to provide the theology of the Christian faith. In the last part, I evaluate Carter's authorial audience criticism and suggest its pros and cons.