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The Symbolism and Structure of the Marcan Redaction

by David J. Hawkin

Professor Hawkin made his début as a contributor to the QUARTERLY with his paper on orthodoxy and heresy in the Gospel of John in our issue of October-December 1975. He now turns to one of the Synoptic Gospels and deals with some issues in the redaction criticism of Mark.

THE purpose of this inquiry is to examine the structure and symbolism of Mark's Gospel. The importance of such an undertaking can scarcely be over-estimated, especially in view of the current emphasis in New Testament circles on redaction criticism.¹ Our conclusions will be somewhat limited, but it is to be hoped that they will prepare the way for more fruitful avenues of approach to Mark's Gospel.

Ultimately, of course, examination of the symbolism and structure of the Marcan redaction will shed light on Mark's purposes in writing. We need therefore to try to ascertain how Mark stands in relationship to his readers, i.e., what kinds of responses he wishes to elicit from them. At the outset two sets of relationships should be distinguished: the relationships within the story-line (e.g., Jesus and the disciples) and the relationship of writer to reader. We should remember, however, that the two sets of relations are themselves related—how, for example, does the writer wish the reader to relate to characters and groups within the story?

Since the brilliant inquiry of Wrede² scholarship has generally agreed that Mark's story-line is not simply controlled by the historical reminiscence of Jesus. In seeking other controlling factors we must bear in mind that the Evangelist's story-line is functional to religious purposes, to what Mark wishes to inculcate in and elicit from his readership.

Redaction criticism seeks to locate critical themes and motifs and to penetrate their functional significance. This inquiry, by its

¹ See esp. N. Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) and R. H. Stein, "What is *Redaktionsgeschichte*?" *JBL* 88 (1969), 45-56.

² W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Marcusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

very nature, is only the first step in such a process, but it is hoped that it will indicate avenues of approach for further study.³

The short examination of esotericism with which we begin is meant to show that Mark presupposed certain links with his readership which modern man may have difficulty in spontaneously recognizing. Certainly the symbolism of Mark has often been overlooked. Granted that there is a difference between symbolism and esotericism, still often enough the symbolic is functionally esoteric. In other words, there is a symbolism meant for the initiated. It belongs to the writer-reader relation. Further, symbolism and esotericism may function *within* the story-line—and let us not forget that the story-line and the writer-reader relation are themselves connected.

The present inquiry will attempt to justify the proposition that esotericism belongs part and parcel to the early Christian outlook. We hope to uncover its symbolic aspect, with a view to clarifying the character of the writer-reader relation implicit in Mark's Gospel.

Modern technological man, his *Weltanschauung* governed by the scientific method, has lost his sense of symbolism. It is poignantly demonstrated by the inability of the average man to capture the ethos of poets like Milton and John Donne, and his frequent lack of sympathy for such film producers as Godard and Pasolini. Peter Gay has said that this loss of the sense of symbolism began with the Enlightenment.⁴

Yet if modern man has lost his sense of symbolism, it was not so at the time of the Gospel writings. The esoteric and symbolic nature of religious awareness in the Hellenistic world and in Palestine at the time of Jesus has been adequately demonstrated by scholars—particularly Joachim Jeremias. In *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* Jeremias poses the question: Why does the Fourth Evangelist omit any account of the institution of the Eucharist? Jeremias's answer is simple: The Evangelist "consciously omitted the account of the Lord's Supper because he did not want to reveal the sacred formula to the general public".⁵

Jeremias proceeds to show how the whole environment of primitive Christianity knew the element of the esoteric. Instances in the Hellenistic world were in the teachings of Gnosticism, the esoteric

³ See, for example, J. B. Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark," *JBL* 80 (1961) 261-268; T. J. Weedon, "The Heresy that Necessitated Mark's Gospel," *ZNW* 59 (1968) 145-158; and my own article, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples in the Marcan Redaction," *JBL* 91 (1972), 491-500.

⁴ P. Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (Vol. I; New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1966), 239.

⁵ J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: S.C.M., 1966), 125.

teaching of the philosophic schools and the world of magic. "Although it has been generally recognized that this is true of the Hellenistic world, it has for a long time been little known that we find an arcane discipline in Palestine in New Testament times. But the newly discovered Essene texts have disposed of the last doubt concerning this".⁶ Jeremias concludes that within the apocalyptic tradition, (e.g., Daniel 12: 4; 4 Ezra 14: 44-46), and outside of it within late Judaism, there is an esoteric element. In another work, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Jeremias argues that the influence of the Scribes was due to the fact that they were bearers of a secret knowledge—the decisive reason for the dominance of the Scribes over the rest of the people was that they were "guardians of a secret knowledge, an esoteric tradition".⁷

He concludes:

The apocalyptic writings of late Judaism thus contained the esoteric teaching of the Scribes, and knowing this fact, we can immediately perceive the extent of such teaching and the value that was set upon it. Esoteric teachings were not isolated theological writings, but great theological systems, great doctrinal constructions, whose content was attributed to divine inspiration.⁸

The implications of such a contention for our present project are obvious. If it is true that esoteric teaching was an integral part of the theological and philosophical systems of the time of Jesus, then it may be that these elements are to be found in the Gospel tradition. It would be a mistake to assume that they are *of necessity* there: we must examine the tradition in the light of this background and see if the text can support such a hypothesis.

There would certainly seem to be an esoteric element in the teaching of Jesus. After Caesarea Philippi, Jesus' Messiahship is known to the disciples but they are expressly told not to divulge it to anyone (Mark 8: 30; 9: 9). Indeed, most of Mark after 8: 27 seems to be esoteric teaching given to the disciples. The eschatological discourse in Mark 13 is given to four disciples only. We are explicitly told in Mark 4: 34 "privately he explained everything to his disciples".

Paul also refers to esoteric wisdom reserved for "the mature" (see especially 1 Cor. 2: 1, 6, 13; 3: 2), and he alludes to himself and his companions as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4: 1).

We can distinguish three basic categories of esoteric teaching in early Christianity⁹:

- (1) eschatological teaching, e.g., Rev. 13: 18; Mark 13: 4;

⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁷ J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: S.C.M., 1969), 237.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁹ *Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 134.

- (2) secrets of Christology, e.g., Hebrews 5: 11-6: 8 and the reserve of the Gospels concerning the how of the Resurrection;
- (3) secrets of divine nature, e.g., 2 Cor. 12: 4.

Such evidence authorizes the expectation of esoteric elements in the Synoptic tradition. Many are reluctant to acknowledge this, fearing it gives licence to make extravagant and unsubstantiated interpretations. This commendable caution merely accents the need to be critical.

The Old Testament provides one important key to the symbolism of the New Testament. The prophets sought to convey teachings or warnings by "signs" or symbolic actions (e.g., Isaiah 20: 21; Jeremiah 27: 2 ff.; Ezekiel 37: 15 ff.). Jesus himself used symbolic actions to illustrate his teaching (e.g., Mark 9: 36; 11: 1 ff.; and see the instructions to the disciples in 6: 11).

The biblical background, the historical background and the evidence of the New Testament itself all support the antecedent probability of esoteric symbolism in the Gospel tradition.

Let us examine some of the miracles recorded in Mark in the light of this premiss. Consideration of the thematic and theological unity and significance of the miracles will be a good test for our hypothesis in view of the suggestions of the form critics. For a long time it was thought that the miracles were merely inserted into the Gospel tradition as evidence of the supernatural status of Jesus. The form critics in particular saw the miracles of Jesus as emphasizing the superiority of Jesus as "wonder-worker". However, Matthew 12: 27 and Luke 11: 19 show that in New Testament times not all miracles were regarded as proof of divinity. Bultmann, after examining the resemblance of the Gospels to Hellenistic miracle narratives, concludes that the Gospel miracle stories "arise in the same atmosphere as the Jewish and Hellenistic miracle stories. Their object is simply to present Jesus as a mighty wonder-worker".¹⁰

A. Richardson disagrees with both Bultmann and Dibelius on the grounds that they have difficulty in maintaining a sharp distinction between paradigms (Dibelius' usage; Bultmann calls them Apophthegms) and miracles because both are concerned with preaching and instruction. He concludes: "Is anything proved by the discovery that the Gospel miracle stories bear the same form as Jewish and pagan miracle stories of the ancient world?"¹¹

In short, in the miracles—as in the whole of the Gospel tradition—we must seek for and recognize the theological and symbolic sig-

¹⁰ R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition* (1931) ET *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (1968) quoted by A. Richardson, *Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London: S.C.M., 1963), 23.

¹¹ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 28.

nificance inherent in their use and retention by the Evangelist. The miracle stories are an essential part of the Gospel tradition; they are retained because they help to illuminate the mystery of the Person of Jesus. This retention and employment in the early Church was not merely to ratify the notion of Jesus as Christ, but rather fulfilled an instructive function: they were instruments of missionary pedagogy.¹²

The miracles are, of course, inextricably bound up with the *dunamis* of God, and it is pertinent to note that the meaning of *dunamis* in the New Testament can only be understood within the general concept of the veiling of God's power. This concept, derived from Apocalyptic, is a most important one in New Testament theology. "There is a certain *hiddenness* about the activity of God which is as yet known only by faith, although it is truly present and effectual in its working. . . . It is only to the disciples that it is given to know the mystery of the *basileia* of God (Mark 4: 11)."¹³

St. John never refers to the miracles as *dunameis*, "mighty works", but as *sēmeia*, i.e., it is as signs they are to be received. The miracles are not included in the tradition to show Jesus as a "wonder-worker", nor because of interest by the Evangelist in the motives of Jesus (e.g., his "compassion"—in Mark *splanchnizomai* occurs only three times, in 6: 34; 8: 2 and 1: 41, the latter being a doubtful reading¹⁴). Nor can the problem of the miraculous be resolved by a Ritschlean type of approach—an inquiry on historical grounds. The miracles cannot be detached from their theological background. Any such attempt misses the fundamental presupposition of Gospel writers: the power of God (cf. Mark 12: 24). They are not mere literary devices to arouse credulous astonishment at a *theios anēr* but rather an integral part of the presentation of the revelation of God's power in history.

It is significant that miracles are an integral and not an accidental part of the Gospel tradition. In Mark some 209 out of 666 verses (up to 16: 8) deal directly or indirectly with miracles—that is, over 31 per cent. If we ask ourselves why this is, we must look to the Old Testament for an answer. The Old Testament was seen as bearing testimony to Jesus' messiahship (cf. Luke 24: 27); it is only against the background of the Old Testament that the miracles of Mark become meaningful. Note, for example, the following: Isaiah 29: 18: "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see"; Isaiah 32: 3f.: "Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will hearken, the mind of the

¹² Richardson, *op. cit.*, 1.

¹³ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 11.

¹⁴ Some important authorities read *orgistheis* which, as the more difficult reading, is probably to be preferred.

rash will have good judgement, and the tongue of the stammerers will speak readily and distinctly"; Isaiah 35: 5: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy"; Ezekiel 24: 27: "On that day your mouth shall be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and be no longer dumb. So you will be a sign to them; and they will know that I am the LORD."¹⁵

If the healing of the deaf mute (7: 31-37), the blind man of Bethsaida (7: 22-26) and blind Bartimaeus (10: 46-52) are seen against such a biblical background, they take on a meaning which is not at first apparent, but which is discernible to the initiated eye. Moreover, the *strategic placement* of miracles in the Gospel redactions may indicate the redactor's own purposes in re-shaping the legacy of tradition.

Let us set a few miracles in context and see if they do elucidate Mark's intentions. The cure of the deaf mute comes after the feeding of the five thousand and the disciples' incomprehension of that miracle, and immediately before the feeding of the four thousand. Whether the two feeding miracles constitute a doublet is debated but the question is irrelevant to the redaction as such.

The feeding narratives symbolize the offering of salvation "to the Jew first, but also to the Greek" (Romans 1: 16). The idea that the feeding of the five thousand represents Christ's communication to the Gentiles is not new: it dates from the time of Augustine.

A careful examination of both stories adds considerable weight to the theory. The scene of the feeding of the five thousand is placed in the framework of the Galilean ministry—the feeding of the four thousand in the framework of travel (cf. Mark 7: 24). Jesus gives the five thousand five loaves (corresponding to the five books of the Law) and to the four thousand seven (probably a number connected with Gentiles—cf. the seven deacons in Acts 6: 3). In the former story twelve baskets of scraps are collected (12 tribes of Israel) and in the latter seven (again). Also significant, perhaps, are the words for "basket". In the scene of the five thousand *kophinos* is used (Mark 6: 43), indicating the size of basket commonly used by Jews, and in that of the four thousand the word is *sphuris*, a more ordinary and common basket.

In Mark 8: 14-21 we have what appears to be a cryptic story about the disciples and Jesus in a discussion following the discovery that they had only one loaf in their boat. Jesus questions them concerning their understanding of the feeding miracles and the section ends with the pointed question: *oupō suniete?* "Do you not yet understand?"

¹⁵ R.S.V. translations.

(Mark 8: 21). It would seem a reasonable conjecture, given the context in which the story is set, that what the disciples do not understand is that Jesus is the Bread of Life for Jews and Gentiles alike. He is the one loaf for all men. Immediately following this is the cure of the blind man of Bethsaida (8: 22-26) and this story precedes the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi (8: 27-32a).

The story of blind Bartimaeus (10: 46b-52) comes after the section dealing with Jesus' predictions of his own Passion and immediately before the ministry in Jerusalem. Apart from the account of the cursing of the fig-tree, this is the last miracle recorded in Mark's Gospel.

These miracles have a symbolic, as well as structural and literary, connection with another important motif in the Gospel—the incomprehension of the disciples. Richardson maintains that the cure of the deaf mute symbolizes the “gradual process of the unstopping of the disciples' ears and the true opening of their eyes.”¹⁶ He cites the details of Jesus leading both the blind man of Bethsaida and the deaf mute “aside from the multitude” or “out of the village” just as he leads the disciples away from the crowds and into the desert.

The healing of the blind man of Bethsaida is also symbolic to Richardson. The distinctive feature about this miracle is that it is a healing which takes place in two stages: there is a “progressive character” about it. The story follows 8: 21 *ou pō suniete*? and according to St. John Peter's home was Bethsaida. The remarkable structural similarity between this story and Peter's confession (8: 27-30) has been ably demonstrated by R. H. Lightfoot.¹⁷ The blind man of

¹⁶ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 84.

¹⁷ R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 90 f.:

And he took hold of the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou anything?

And he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking.

Then he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked steadfastly and was restored, and saw all things clearly.

And he sent him away to his home saying, Tell it to no one in the village.

(Mark 8: 22-26)

And Jesus went forth and his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and in the way he asked his disciples, saying to them, Who do men say that I am?

And they told him saying, John the Baptist; and others Elijah; but others, one of the prophets. And he asked them But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

(Mark 8: 27-30)

Bethsaida is a symbolic figure, a type of the disciple of Christ (concretely, Peter himself, whose eyes were opened at Caesarea Philippi).¹⁸

As for the story of blind Bartimaeus, Richardson comments: "From the standpoint of Christian faith the interpretation of this miracle is obvious: men sit helpless in blindness and poverty until Jesus draws near and they learn to call upon him".¹⁹

Though Richardson has grasped the symbolic nature of these miracles, his interpretation does not go far enough. The touching of the tongue of the deaf mute recalls Isaiah 6: 6-9, where Isaiah is commissioned to preach to the people. It is not merely that the story symbolizes the disciple's gradual realization of Jesus' messiahship, rather it is the commissioning of the disciples to take the news to all. The feeding of the four thousand—Jesus the Bread of Life for Gentiles—*immediately* follows. The miracle symbolizes, as we have said, that Jesus is somehow universal: his rôle in God's plan transcends Judaism. It is more than significant that this story has symbolic affinities with the baptismal rite: in the Western Church the use of saliva and the word *ephphatha* formed part of the baptismal ceremony. The frescoes in the catacombs specifically indicate the cure of the blind man as symbolic of baptism.²⁰

Richardson's perspicacious interpretation of the blind man of Bethsaida is probably correct. However, he languishes somewhat in the becalmed ocean of homiletics when it comes to the miracle of blind Bartimaeus. It is not just that men are blind and helpless until Christ calls. Bartimaeus makes Jesus' messiahship public and refuses to be silenced by the rabble. Jesus' response is to call him. The man flings off his coat and runs to Jesus. He is "saved", "made whole" (*hē pistis sou sesōken se*). He then follows Jesus *in the way* (*en tē hodō*).

What is strikingly evident is the sharp distinction between Bartimaeus, who hails Jesus as messiah, refuses to be silenced and runs to Jesus, and the crowd. Bartimaeus is symbolic of the believer. Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem to force the inevitable and ultimate conflict. The die is cast: Jesus is rejected by his own. It is now left to the believers such as Bartimaeus, who follow Jesus "in the way", to form the new Israel and fearlessly proclaim the messiahship of Jesus.

At this point, having observed that symbolism does play a part in Mark and that a recognition of this is essential in understanding the structure of this Gospel, let us examine some of the suggested structural analyses of it.

¹⁸ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 86.

¹⁹ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 89.

²⁰ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 88.

Chalmer E. Faw makes the observation that previously attempted structural analyses of Mark have always suffered from the attempt to find a chronological or geographical orientation by the Evangelist.²¹

This presses the structure of Mark into moulds which are quite minor in the Gospel.²² In fact, the outline of Mark "should be one which, as nearly as can be determined, the author himself, consciously or unconsciously, has followed in the writing of his book".²³

This would indeed seem the most sensible premiss on which to proceed. The purpose of examining the symbolic orientation of writers in New Testament times has been to try to capture some of the presuppositions Mark would bring to structuring his Gospel. Any structural analysis of Mark which ignores that he would be influenced by symbolic esoteric motifs seems, on the basis of the discussion so far, ill-informed.

Perhaps because Papias discerned no order in Mark, many scholars have taken the view that Mark is only loosely structured. But what Papias meant by "order" is not clear. Did he mean the catechetical order observable in Matthew?²⁴ Papias's view in any case does not settle the matter. Mark may well have been following a structure integral to his own purposes and every bit as conscious and sophisticated in its own way as Matthew or Luke's.

The structural analyses presented by such as Grant²⁵ and Taylor²⁶ loosely divide Mark into "Ministry in Galilee" and "Ministry in Jerusalem", and ignore the cohesive motifs of 6: 34-8: 26 and 8: 22-10: 52. They seem to regard Mark as a very loosely grouped series of stories.

The tack taken by Faw fixes on four characteristics for determining the outline of Mark:

1. The narrative and sayings material collected together express a particular emphasis or mood.
2. The section as such is held together by repeated structural forms.
3. Each section ends with a climaxing statement.

²¹ Chalmer E. Faw, "The Outline of Mark," *JBR* 25 (1957), 19-23.

²² Note M. S. Enslin, *Christian Beginnings* (London: Harper, 1938) 374, who points out that Mark begins with baptism of Jesus and ends with his death, and that there is a shift in locale from Galilee to Jerusalem. But this is about as far as we can press the chronology or geography of Mark.

²³ Faw, *art. cit.*, 19.

²⁴ Cf. B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), who observed the "five great sections of Matthew".

²⁵ F. C. Grant, *The Earliest Gospel* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), 62, 74, 84.

²⁶ V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 107-111.

4. At the beginning of each section there is a sudden or unexplained shift in locale.²⁷

Accordingly, he sees the structure of Mark as developing along the following lines:

1. Jesus begins a successful and popular ministry (chp 1).
2. Opposition arises culminating in the foreshadowing of his death (2: 1-3: 6).
3. He appoints the disciple band, the true family of Christ (3: 7-35).
4. He teaches in parables both to reveal and conceal (4: 1-35).
5. He engages in vigorous wonder-working, evoking an amazed response (4: 35-8: 26).
6. He announces the way of the cross and resurrection for both Master and disciples (8: 27-10: 45).
7. In Jerusalem he is again met with popularity and opposition and teaches with a parable (10: 46-12: 44).
8. He teaches alertness to the signs of the end (chap. 13).
9. He is then arrested, tried and killed (14: 1-15: 41).
10. He is carefully buried but startlingly rises again (15: 42-16: 8).²⁸

Such an outline, however, although it breaks away from the traditional orientation to geography or chronology, fails to take into account important Marcan motifs. Faw's initial insight is good, but not thorough-going in application. He fails, for example, to acknowledge the unity of 6: 34-8: 21, the section concerning the feeding narratives. He sees the end of one section at 7: 37 saying:

Chapter 8 begins very lamely and is quite anti-climactic, containing the doublet on the feeding of the multitude and subsequent moralizing on the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, and the equally tame healing of the blind man of Bethsaida by degrees, one of the few Marcan materials later Gospel writers did not choose to use in any form.²⁹

But if our observation concerning the symbolism of Mark is correct, the feeding of the four thousand and the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida are structurally significant!

Let us, then, make a rapid survey of Mark to see if we can discover any cohesive structure in the light of our inquiries so far. If we do find a well-organized, closely-knit structure in Mark, it may well open up new avenues of approach in penetrating the functional role of Marcan motifs.

²⁷ Faw, *art. cit.*, 20.

²⁸ Faw, *art. cit.*, 23.

²⁹ Faw, *art. cit.*, 21.

1: 1-13 forms the introduction to the Gospel.³⁰ 1: 14f. gives a summary statement of the preaching of Jesus which, although astonishing the crowds, culminates in a plot against his life (3: 6). 3: 7-12 is a summary statement of this early activity.

3: 13 begins a new section. In the face of opposition, Jesus withdraws from the crowds (3: 13). A new phase in the ministry of Jesus is initiated by the appointment of "the Twelve"—symbolic for the new Israel.³¹ Rejected by his own (1: 14-3: 12) this section shows the increasing emphasis of Jesus on a new beginning, with the disciples being special beneficiaries of private explanations (4: 34).

After the rejection at Nazareth (6: 1-6a), the Twelve are commissioned. The recurring theme of Jesus' destiny is prominent once again in the story of John the Baptist's death (6: 14-29), after which the Twelve return (6: 30-34).

This whole section (1: 14-6: 34) has a double thrust: the rejection of Jesus by his own and a subsequent new beginning—the new eschatological community symbolized by the twelve disciples.

The next section of the Gospel is easily discernible—6: 35-8: 21. The symbolic motif running throughout this section has already been mentioned. The key to the whole section is found in the concluding pericope 8: 14-21. The section ends with the question "Do you not yet understand?" What they do not understand (as discussed above) is that Jesus is the one loaf for Jews and Gentiles.

The next section is generally known as "the Way of the Cross" and is usually held to begin at 8: 22 and end at 10: 45. However, if our previous observations are correct concerning the symbolism of the blind man of Bethsaida and blind Bartimaeus, the pericope 8: 22-27 better serves as an introduction to this section and 10: 46-52 as a conclusion. That is, we would argue that the section begins at 8: 22 and runs through to 10: 52.

There is an obvious unity to the section 11: 1-16: 8 in that it concerns the events in Jerusalem. However, within this section we have the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13 which requires special treatment and falls outside the purview of this inquiry.

So then, our analysis of Mark's Gospel would proceed along the following lines:

³⁰ See the brilliant demonstration of this in J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: S.C.M., 1957).

³¹ For an interesting comment on this symbolism see H. Sawyerr, "The Marcan Framework," *SJT* 14 (1961), 287.

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Interlude	15: 40-47
Empty tomb	16: 1-8

What we have in Mark are two distinct sections: the first (1: 14-8: 21) dominated by the question "Who is Jesus?" and the secret of his identity, the second (8: 22-16: 8) by the answer to that question. However, the mysterious destiny of Jesus is totally uncomprehended by the disciples. Indeed, the above outline suggests that the recurring theme of the incomprehension of the disciples is integral to the Gospel. (There are whole complexes of material built round this motif, especially 6: 34-8: 21 and 8: 22-10: 52. Elsewhere I have suggested that the incomprehension of the disciples is the key to the understanding of Mark's Gospel.³²)

Certainly, a re-examination of the structure and symbolism of Mark is required. No longer will it suffice to think of Mark as an artless (if faithful) recorder of chronological and geographical data. Mark is no mere chronicler; he is a theologian, and a theologian from whom we can learn much about the true nature of our faith.

An analysis of the structure of Mark's Gospel is only the first step in discovering the writer-reader relation. Nevertheless, it is an important step. It is obvious, even from our limited inquiry, that Mark does intend his readers to be aware of a progression in his Gospel. The question of how Mark wishes the reader to identify with characters within the story-line (for example, the disciples) is thrown into sharper relief when one realizes how intricate and skilfully devised the structure of the Gospel is. I believe that Mark's Gospel, if properly opened up, can be the most rewarding of all to study.

Memorial University of Newfoundland

³² *Art. cit.* (n. 3).