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**The Meaning of the word σωσαί (save) in
the Gospel of Mark**

(A Semiotic Analysis Approach)

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**The Meaning of the word σωσαι (save) in the Gospel of Mark
(A Semiotic Analysis Approach)**

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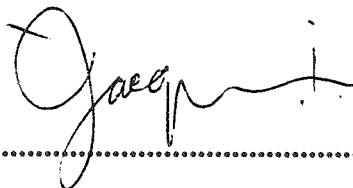
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Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacquin', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Vivian Daniel Jacquin

Brisbane this 29th day of January 1999

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Abstract

The verb σωσαι “save” is used fifteen times in the Gospel of Mark. However no explanation is given of the meaning of the word by the evangelist, Jesus or any person using it. This thesis studies the various instances where the word is used and proposes a definition of the word.

The method of investigation that is used throughout this research is the Semiotic Analysis. Of the numerous schools of semioticians, this research has opted for Walter Vogels’ method of analysis which provides a more systematic approach to narratives.

This study examines five specific episodes of the Gospel of Mark, selected because in each of them the word save is used in an encounter between Jesus and other participants.

The first episode refers to the cure of the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6). In this text, Jesus opposes “save” to “kill” (v 4). However from the study of this episode there emerge two observations: the failure of Jesus to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath and the incompatibility between Jesus and obstacles endangering life.

The second episode refers to the story of the cure of a woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34). In this story, Jesus uses the word σέσωκέν “save” (v 34) in his dialogue with the cured woman as a confirmation that her cure was the consequence of her faith in him.

The third episode tells of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5, 21-24; 35-43). The word σωθῆ "save" is used by Jairus as a request put to Jesus to come and cure his sick daughter (v 23). As the news of the death of the girl came, Jesus turned Jairus' request into a summons to believe in his capacity to be victorious over death (v 36). This context of "save" emerges as the consequence of Jairus' total trust in Jesus.

The fourth episode presents the story of the cure of Bartimaeus (10, 46-52). Once cured, the man was sent away (v 52). However Bartimaeus took the personal initiative of following Jesus (v 52). From this episode the word "save" appears as a possible step leading to discipleship.

The fifth episode refers to the scene of the crucifixion (15, 22--39). In this episode, the word "save" is used by Jesus' opponents requesting him to save himself by coming down from the cross (v 30-31). Jesus did not come down from the cross and for his opponents, his death illustrates his failure. However, a Roman centurion standing opposite to Jesus saw the way in which he died and confessed that Jesus was the son of God (v 39). Jesus' own salvation appears as the consequence of his total and unconditional surrender to the One he called "Father, Abba" (14,36).

This thesis concludes that σωσάι "save" has several meanings. The reader is led to believe that just as Jesus surrendered himself to the Father, the follower is invited to a total and unconditional surrender to Jesus.

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Introduction

Introduction

In the Gospel of Mark, the verb *σῶσαι* appears fifteen times (1), without any explanation given on the meaning of the word by either the evangelist, Jesus or any other individual using this word. It would appear from this observation that the word *σῶσαι* did not need to be explained. However, when the verb *σῶσαι* used by Mark is studied, it appears to have multiple meanings. In some narratives, the verb *σῶσαι* indicates curing someone (3,4; 5,23; 5,28; 5,34; 6,56; 10,52). In other accounts, *σῶσαι* means the elimination of the barriers of death (8,35) or a reward for the faithful ones (8,35b; 13,13; 13,20; 16,16). In another narrative, the verb save (*σωθῆναι*) is used by the disciples in a question to Jesus: “How can anyone ever be saved?” (10,26). In the episode of the crucifixion, the word *σῶσαι* is used as a mockery by Jesus’ enemies who requested him to come down from the cross (15,30; 15,31; 15,31b).

The subject of salvation (save) appears to be one which Mark addresses with comparative frequency. With the use of the word *σῶσαι* and its numerous applications, one question arises: Is it possible to define the meaning of the word *save* (σῶσαι) in the Gospel of Mark through all these different structural contexts?

In his comments on the Book of Genesis, Saint Augustine argues that the words of the Scriptures are “signs pointing to a variety of meanings for the readers by providing an abundance of the truest interpretations” (2). Reflecting on this statement of Saint Augustine, Father Y. Congar proposes a definition of the Scriptures as being a “disclosure of God’s identity through created signs” (3). Following the evolution of biblical interpretation brought by Vatican II, Raymond Brown stated in 1989: “Since men and women are created in God’s image, their language is not inappropriate for expressing heavenly realities, once they detect its sign language” (4). It is this statement by Raymond Brown that initiated my interest in a research on sign language, especially the meaning of the word *σῶσαι* (save, cure, heal) in the Gospel of Mark.

The Objective

The objective of this thesis is to explore the various episodes of Mark's Gospel where the word *σῶσαι* (save) or its derivatives are used. To achieve this objective, the study will follow the development of the action in the episodes where the word *σῶσαι* is used in an encounter between Jesus and others by using the Semiotic Analysis method (5). The permanent question leading this research will be: What does the word *σῶσαι* mean?

A Linguistic observation

A preliminary study of the word *σῶσαι* in Mark's Gospel, according to its users, shows that the word is used only once by the narrator for the healing of people ("as many as touched his garments and were cured", 6,56). In other narratives, the word *σῶσαι* is used by those who expected a transformation ("Come and lay your hands on her, so that she

may be made well and live”, 5,23; “If I touch even his garment, I will be healed”, 5,28). The word is also used by Jesus, either before a transformation (“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?”, 3,4) or by confirming a cure (“Your faith has healed you”, 5,34; “Go in peace, your faith has healed you”, 10,52). At the cross, Jesus’ opponents used the word *σῶσαι* as a reminder of his capacity to save (“He saved others”, 15,31) and a call for him to come down from the cross (“Save yourself and come down from the cross”, 15,30;). They also used the word as mockery (“He cannot save himself”, 15,31).

In most cases, save (*σῶσαι*) refers to a cure (5,23; 5,28; 6,56) or to a healing experience (3,4; 5,34; 10,52). However, the word *σῶσαι* is not limited to curing experiences only. In some cases, *σῶσαι* is used as an opposite to the verb kill (3,4) or is connected to the experience of escaping from death (5, 23; 15,30; 15,31).

As the word *σῶσαι* is used with various meanings, this study will intentionally examine five selected episodes which, because of their structural contexts, allow an analysis of the word. These selected episodes are: the cure of the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6), the raising of the daughter of Jairus (5, 21-24; 35-43), the cure of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34), the cure of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho (10, 46-52) and the episode of the crucifixion (15, 22-39).

In the conclusion of this thesis, the other instances where the word *σῶσαι* is used will be integrated in the research.

Classifications of the word (*σῶσαι*) save in Mark's Gospel.

The verb *σῶσαι* (save) is used by three types of participants:

- (A) By the evangelist in either the active or passive voice. In the active voice *σῶσαι* refers to the transformation of one person from one state to another by Jesus (3,4; 15,31). However it also means a request made to Jesus to transform himself (15,30,

15,31) or to the transformation of others by themselves because of their faith in Jesus (8,35a; 8,35b).

In the passive voice (be saved), the transformation of a person always implies the participation of Jesus (5,23; 6,56; 10,26; 13,13; 13,20; 16,16).

- (B) By a beneficiary (or the one saved). It always refers to a single individual except in two cases (6,56; 15,31) where the beneficiaries are sets of individuals.
- (C) By Jesus. He uses the word *σῶσαι* in the context of saving or losing someone's life (αὐτοῦ ψυχὴν), (8,35; 8,35b), of saving a life (ψυχὴν σῶσαι), (3,4) or even regarding the salvation of all flesh (ἐσώθη πάντα σὰρξ), (13,20).

These primary linguistic remarks, above, illustrate the importance of presenting a methodological study of the episodes where the word *σῶσαι* is used in order to explore the relationship between the various actors.

The use of the word σωσαί (save) by the evangelist is always related to the person of Jesus or God. It never has a profane meaning (even if it refers to saving or killing someone on a Sabbath as in 3, 4). Furthermore there is a distinction between an immediate corporeal salvation by cure (3,4; 5,23; 5,28) and a future eschatological salvation (8,35, 10,26). Nevertheless, such a classification of the use of the word σωσαί does not answer our fundamental question: “What does σωσαί mean?”. To achieve a possible answer, there is a need to delimit and study the literary units where σωσαί (save) or its derivatives are used. However, these units should be significant and long enough in order to be treated as autonomous from the whole Gospel. They should be either stories or speeches which have their own semantic autonomy and have been integrated by the author in the whole Gospel.

The Methodology

The method chosen for the analysis of the selected episodes of Mark’s Gospel is the Semiotic Analysis method. This method will be developed

in chapter one. Semiotic Analysis method is an application of Structural Analysis. Its objectives are to observe and measure the interrelationship between the different characters in order to uncover the significance of texts.

The Semiotic Analysis method respects a text while rebuilding the story by using a linguistic approach. This method claims that every text of the Scriptures follows a pattern of structures (Begin-State, Manipulation, Competence, Performance, Sanction and End-State) (6). When applied to Old Testament texts, made up of discourses, narratives, hymns, oracles, laments and other literary forms, this method can focus the attention of the reader on Yahweh. When applied to the New Testament, it can turn the attention of the reader to Jesus, the Savior.

The Literary Units

Literary units in the Gospel of Mark include pauses, repeats, change of location, actors and themes. Once these elements are detected, the

literary units can be divided into two categories: (a) the stories about Jesus and (b) the speeches of Jesus.

- (a) The stories about Jesus are always told in the past tense. They follow the movement of Jesus from the beginning of an action to its end. The literary units also include the progression of the stories which often end with the acknowledgment of what Jesus has done.
- (b) In his speeches, Jesus himself talks of eschatological salvation (8,35, 8,35b; 13,13; 13,20; 16,16). He never explains how salvation would come, but only suggests it as a programmed event.

The literary units in Mark's Gospel which are of interest for this study are those which express transformation from one state to another as a consequence of an interaction between at least two identities: (a) Jesus, the operating agent and (b) the recipient or recipients, those who were cured by Jesus.

An Outline of this Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis will give an account of Semiotic Analysis method, its origin with linguists Ferdinand de Saussure and C.S.Pierce. The chapter will also give a report on how a number of scholars, using the work of these two scholars, have built a linguistic structure for the study of signs in languages. This chapter will also illustrate the various mechanisms of the method. It will outline how a systematic analysis, as the Semiotic Analysis method, can explore the organisational patterns of relationship within the Scriptures with rewarding results.

The second chapter will study the episode of the cure of the man with the withered hand (Mk 3,1-6). It will explore the tension which appeared between Jesus and the Pharisees because Jesus wanted to cure (σωσαι) someone on a Sabbath.

The third chapter will examine two stories. The first one will be the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter, a girl of twelve years (5, 21-24;

35-43). This chapter will investigate Jairus' request to Jesus to heal his daughter (σωθῆ) and how he is brought to believe in Jesus' capacity to defy death (5,42). This chapter will also study the story of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34). It will examine her movement towards Jesus and how her confession of faith in Jesus is considered as the element responsible for her own healing (σέσωκέν).

The fourth chapter will study the story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho (10, 46-52) who, once cured (σέσωκέν), became a disciple and followed Jesus in the way (v 52).

The fifth chapter will examine the episode of the crucifixion of Jesus (15, 22-39) where the verb save is used by the passers-by (σῶσον) 15,30; then by the chief priests and the scribes (ἔσωσεν, σῶσαι), 15,31 as a means to mock the dying Jesus.

The conclusion of this thesis will try to answer the following question while taking into account all the applications of the word *σῶσαι* by

Mark: What does *σῶσαι* mean? Does it mean curing a person (3, 1-6), transforming someone from a state of sickness to a state of health (5,34), raising someone from death (5,22-24; 35-43), a consequence of someone's faith in Jesus leading to discipleship (10,52) or is *σῶσαι* an expression of Jesus' opponents to show his incapacity to be victorious over death (15,30-31)? Finally, is *save* the act of rewarding the faithful ones by Jesus (8,35; 16,16) at the end of times (13,13)? This is the task that this research has given itself.

End-Notes

- 1 List of the fifteen instances where the verb *σωσαι* appears in the Gospel of Mark:

3,4, 5,23, 5,28, 5,34, 6,56, 8,35a, 8,35b, 10,26,

10,52, 13,13, 13,20, 15,30, 15,31a, 15,31b, 16,16.
- 2 E.B.Pussey, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (London: J.M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1956), 278-289.
- 3 Y.Congar, *Tradition and traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 238.
- 4 R.Brown, *The Johannine World for Preachers* (New York: Interpretation 43, 1989), 58-61.
- 5 The Semiotic Analysis method will be developed in chapter one, with reference to the main semioticians. The following are the

names of some scholars who applied the Semiotic Analysis method to either Biblical or non-Biblical texts:

L.Panier, "Lecture Sémiotique et Projet Théologique,"
Recherches de Science Religieuse (Paris) 78/2, (1989):
199-220.

J.Calloud, A Few Comments on Structural Semiotics,
Semeia 15 (1979): 51-83.

T.F. Berg, Reading in/to Mark, *Semeia* 48 (1989).

R.T. De George, "An Introduction to Pierce's Theory of Signs"
University of Kansas Humanities Studies 53 (1981).

J.Deely, *Introducing Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

W. Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible* (Willington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1986).

Bas Van Iersel, *Reading Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).

6 Vogels, *Reading and Preaching*, 47-57

Chapter One

The Semiotic Analysis Method

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The Semiotic Analysis Method

Introduction

This chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will give an account of the history and evolution of the Semiotic Analysis method. This means presenting the method from its inception till its development in the work of Vogels, whose method will be used throughout this thesis. In the second part of this chapter, the mechanism and the principal semiotic terms which will be used in the analysis of the selected texts will be developed (1). To conclude this chapter, the choice for using this method of analysis for study of the selected texts from the Gospel of Mark will be explained.

Part 1: A Presentation of the History of the Semiotic Analysis method and its evolution through time till Vogels.

The origin of semiotics goes back to the stoic school founded by Zeno of Citium (300 B.C), (2). Sextus Empiricus, a Greek-speaking

philosopher, quoting from the stoic philosophy work entitled: “Adversus Mathematicos” (*Against the Professors*) mentioned three elements which are normally linked together in any writing (3). They are the Signified, the Signifier and the Referent. Sextus Empiricus indicates that every word pronounced in a speech is dependant on: (a) the Signifier, the person who says the word with the intention of expressing something, (b) the Referent, the person who hears the word, and (c) the Signified, the meaning which the Referent wants to give to the word pronounced by the Signifier. For example, in the sentence: “I have discovered a new band today!” the word “band” may have a different meaning when expressed by an impresario, by a nurse who puts a bandage on a patient or by a radio operator.

The complex question of signs depending on the interpretation of the people using the words and those hearing them has provided numerous disciplines. One of these disciplines is Semiotic Analysis. It is an application of Structuralism (4). Structuralism is concerned with synchronic structures. It focuses upon relations *across a moment in time*,

rather than *through time*. This means that in an exchange of words, or in a relationship, there exists a “*Law of Transformation*” (5). This law, according to structuralists stipulates that when two people meet, an observer can notice a change or transformation in one of the two persons involved in the meeting irrespective of time, space or culture. The first scholar to present structural analysis as a method based on the Law of Transformation was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).

Ferdinand de Saussure’s contribution to structural analysis was to separate the concept of language from that of speech (6). For him language is not a function of the speaker, but rather, it is a product assimilated by an individual. Speaking, on the contrary, is an individual act. It is wilful and intellectual. It is a combination of the speaker’s use of the language code for expressing a thought as well as the psychophysical mechanism which allows the speaker to exteriorize that thought. He called the study of speech: Semiology (from the Greek *semeion* “*sign*”).

De Saussure introduced *four* important concepts which one has to take into account when studying a discourse (7). They are:

- A: Language is a social system which is coherent, orderly, and allows an understanding and explaining of the whole.
- B: Unless one knows what an author means when using a word, one cannot totally understand the meaning of the word being used.
- C: Language allows one to understand and to be understood (“In a country, there is a natural convention which agrees that everyone should speak a language understandable to others”), while a word is a specific expression of an individual (“I believe in the word he uses, and the meaning he puts into it”).
- D: The elements of language never exist in isolation, but they are always in relation to one another, hence the importance of diachronic structuring. The diachronic structure means that, in a sentence, there is at least a subject, a verb and an object.

It is the fourth concept (D) presented above which generated the six fundamental terms in semiotics which will be developed later.

During the same period (1907-1911), in the United States, the philosopher Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) was working on a similar structural method (8). He introduced a complementary concept which he called: *the triadic concept* (the sign, the object and the interpretant). Peirce defines a sign as the impression created by somebody in a receiver's mind as in the expression: "You are a bull ". But the expression (a bull) is dependent of the receiver's understanding. For a bull fighting enthusiast, it can mean sending someone on a suicidal mission as a bull is sent to the arena to be slaughtered. But for a Cambodian rice planter, a bull may mean the recognition of a person's courage and strength.

Another example: If someone says: "I am feeling cold," it may mean for someone from Siberia that the temperature is around -50 degrees. For an African it can mean a temperature of 20 degrees. Hence, suggests

Pierce, to understand a text, one must be aware of the “world of the text”. This comprises a study of what the author wants to say and to discover his program behind the words.

Despite Pierce’s important research and contribution, it was Ferdinand de Saussure’s work which influenced the majority of European scholars. Amongst those scholars are Claude Levi-Strauss who applied the notion of “*Language*” and “*Parole*” to the field of anthropology; the psychologist Jean Lacan, the philosopher Merleau-Ponty; and literary theorists Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva and biblical scholar Jean Delorme.

It was Ferdinand de Saussure’s method of analysis which motivated Italian researcher Umberto Eco to investigate a wide range of writers, such as Saint Augustine, Dante, Descartes and Rousseau. He even studied ancient treatises on cabbalism, magic and the history of language in order to demonstrate the important relationship between *language* (the expression of the people) and *identity* (the situation of the people at the

time of their writings). He showed that writers during the time of wars would use a set of words to express a reality, the same words would express a different reality during the time of peace. For example: the word “soap” used by Jews during the Second World War expressed the odour of death and concentration camps. The same word “soap” after the war expressed good odour and cleanliness.

The link between the intuitions of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Pierce was made possible by the work of Roland Barthes (1915-1980). Barthes was an essayist, semiotician and literary and cultural critic (9). He helped to promote the Semiotic Analysis method in the United States. In his publication “Elements of Semiology” (1967), Barthes clearly defined the intuitions of his predecessors De Saussure and Pierce. He made a significant contribution for better understanding of de Saussure’s expression “the life of signs within society”. This motivated him to start a compendium on Semiotics. His work led him to the definition of *Language* as: “*a collective contract which one must accept in its entirety if one wishes to communicate*”. Barthes applied this definition to

various fields, such as cinematography, poetry, painting, mythology and biblical texts.

The compendium started by Barthes was completed by A.J.Greimas (1917-1992) in conjunction with J.Courtes and was published in 1982 as an analytical dictionary on Semiotics and language (10).

One semiotician to follow in the path of Barthes is biblical scholar Jean Delorme. Professor Delorme is the co-founder of the Centre for the Analysis of Religious Discourses (*CADIR*) and lecturer at the Catholic Faculty of Lyons (France). Father Delorme believes that every story related in the Gospel has been carefully chosen by the author. For him, all the characters of the Gospel as well as the teachings of Jesus and the replies given to him are all linguistic elements chosen carefully with the specific objective: to arouse faith in Jesus (11).

Delorme's opinion echoed Roland Barthes' belief that the Scriptures are a privileged document for the application of the Semiotic Analysis method. Commenting on the New Testament, Barthes says: "The Gospel

contains all the necessary ingredients to show the evolutionary composition of a text. Every act of Jesus leads to a result, either positive or negative. No one meets Jesus without going through a change. This change can be identified and named if someone applies the Semiotic Analysis method to these texts.” (12)

While Delorme uses the Semiotic Analysis method in the restricted circle of semioticians, another semiotician, Walter Vogels, proposes the Semiotic Analysis method as “*a study tool*” for preachers and pastors (13). Vogels, a professor of Sacred Scriptures at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, applies this method in the biblical study groups over which he presides in Canada, with positive results. In accordance with the French school of semiotic, the CADIR, Vogels agrees that a text follows an evolution in six steps, from the “Begin-State” to the “End-State”.

There are numerous schools of semioticians. For the purpose of this thesis, I have opted for Walter Vogels’ method. This method integrates the work of previous structural analysts and provides a simple and

systematic approach to the gospel text that yields new insights. His approach includes the following pattern:

- a: The Cutting of the text
- b: The Narrative analysis
- c: The Discursive analysis
- d: The Semiotic square

Vogels' method relates to the history of Semiotic Analysis with its capacity to apply the following literary mechanism to texts: (*Begin-State, Manipulation, Competence, Performance, Sanction and End-State*).

Part 2: The technical terms used in Semiotic Analysis.

The presentation of the main terms presented in this section are based on the research presented by Walter Vogels in his book entitled: *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (13). Other definitions are taken from A.J. Greimas' and J.Courtes' book entitled: *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary* (14) and from the

Glossary of Semiotics published by Vincent Calopietro (15). The minor terms used in Semiotic Analysis and applied in this thesis are defined in the end notes of this chapter.

The Cutting of a text (16)

In order to analyse a specific text, one must know where it starts and where it ends. The cutting of a text is an exercise performed by the semiotician who selects and determines the delimitation of a text. This delimitation can be based either on the topography of the story or on the time factor.

The Narrative Analysis (17)

The Narrative Analysis is the study of the evolution of a story from its beginning to its end. It is divided into *six* steps:

1 The Begin-State (18)

Any story starts with a begin-state. This state is often a negative one with one person who has a “lack”. The “lack” is always reflected in the use of the verbs of state (to be, to have). The story begins with the search of the following elements:

Who has a “lack”? What is the person “lacking” and who is going to fill the “lack”? Who is related to the person?

During the course of the story, the text will show a transformation from the “begin-state” to the “end-state”.

2 The Manipulation (19)

Manipulation is defined by A.J Greimas in the following term:

It is the persuasive action of humans over others with the specific intention of having them carry out a program. It consists in influencing the “*subject-operator*” or main actor to get interested in the object to assure that the person is going to act.

Manipulation (20) is the first step leading to the performance of an act. It can happen under different forms: *invitation, temptation, command, provocation or seduction*. Whatever form it takes, the manipulation is always a persuasive operation. It has three cognitive dimensions. It can be informative (a person advises the subject-operator or main actor of a need). It can be persuasive or dissuasive (a person communicates knowledge to the main actor and wants to influence and convince the main actor to act). It can also be interpretative (someone advises the subject-operator or main actor of a situation but gives a personal interpretation of the situation while communicating the information).

3 The Competence (21)

In Saussurian language, Competence is a “*knowing-how-to-do*”. It is “that something” which makes doing possible. If an act can be defined as a “causing to be”, competence is “that which causes to be”, encompassing all the prerequisites and presuppositions which make action possible. Vogels explains the term Competence in the following way:

In order for a text to move, the subject-operator must accept the contract offered to him by the sender. He needs three modalities: wanting to act, being able to act and knowing how to act.

Wanting to act: If this modality does not happen, if the operator refuses the contract to act, the text cannot move.

Being able to act: If a person wants to act, but does not have the power to do so, the text cannot proceed.

Knowing how to act: A person who wants to act and who also is able to act, still needs the knowledge of how to perform the action (22).

The subject-operator who is able to perform the three modalities defined above is considered as a competent subject. Competence is also known as the qualifying test through which each major actor of a story goes.

To encourage the subject-operator to act, there are sometimes helpers or opponents who hinder. Their role is to create the atmosphere for the action. However, despite their presence in the story, the decision to act is always the prerogative of the subject-operator.

4 The Performance (23)

Vogels defines the word “performance” as the action of the subject-operator to bring about a transformation from one state to another.

By this action, the main object of the program is obtained. The subject-operator gives the person what is lacking, and in return, receives from the person the confirmation that an action has been completed.

For the Sausserian school, performance forms a counterpart to competence. It is the step which leads from competence to action. However, the action should be classified in a twofold category: *deprivation and acquisition*. In a deprivation, the performer of an act loses an asset for the benefit of someone else. For example: A person who sells a house renounces any rights to it and as such is dispossessed of its use. On the other hand, the person who buys the house acquires the right to use it. Nevertheless this definition does not apply to the communication of “spiritual objects” as it will be illustrated in the later chapters.

5 The Sanction (24)

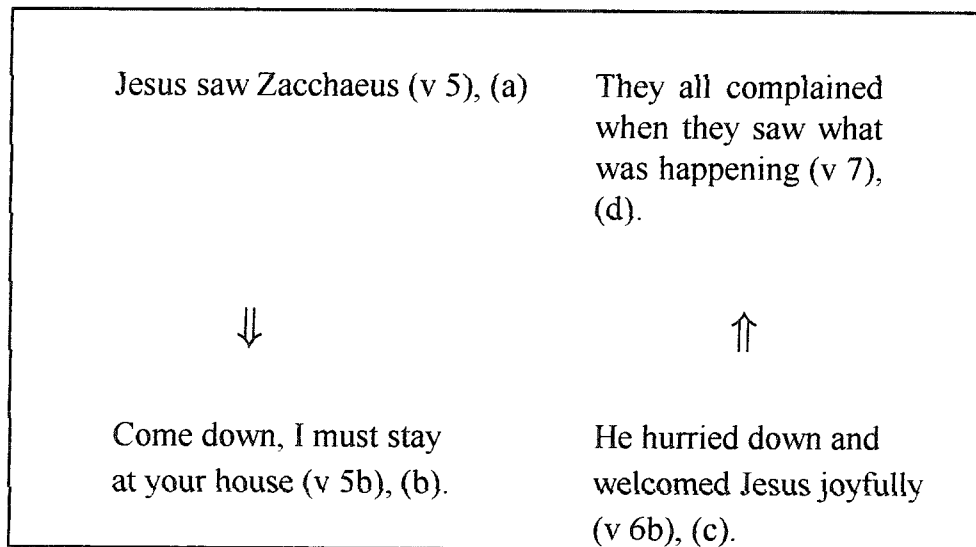
Greimas defines Sanction as a correlative to Manipulation. For him, Sanction is *a judgement* exercised by a person who originally asked something from a subject-operator or main actor.

The judgement can either be positive, the recognition of the subject-operator as a hero, or negative, when the main actor is considered as a villain. Sanction is *an evaluation or verification* of the new state of the person.

The evaluation or verification is at the interpretative level and leads to the “End-State” of a story. It shows how the characters judge the event. The evaluation or verification is also known as the “square of veridiction”. To illustrate the “square of veridiction”, here is an example presented by W. Vogels in his study of the story of Zacchaeus, the senior tax collector (Luke 19, 1-10), (25):

Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus when he passed by Jericho (v 4). When Jesus looked up and spoke to Zacchaeus, he told the tax

collector to come down because he must stay at his home (v 5). The sanction of Jesus' action was positively seen by Zacchaeus who hurried down and welcomed him joyfully (v 6). The same action by Jesus was negatively judged by others (v 7). They complained when they saw what was happening, that Jesus had gone to stay at a sinner's house.



The above square shows how the movement of Jesus was judged. Jesus saw Zacchaeus (a). Zacchaeus is given an order by Jesus (b). The

recipient, Zacchaeus obeyed Jesus joyfully (c). However, this joy was not shared by others. Instead of rejoicing with Zacchaeus, “they” complained (d). This square illustrates that the same event seen by different individuals can produce different evaluations.

6 The “End-State” (26)

The “End-State” indicates that the story is over. The transformation from one state to another is done and the “lack” felt at the beginning of the story has been fulfilled and has disappeared. The “End-State” describes *the final state of the text* and often prepares for the next story by a change in scenario.

Here is how Vogels summarises the narrative structures of a text:

The begin-state expresses a lack. A sender manipulates a subject-operator to act. This subject-operator is only competent to act if he has the three modalities: having to/ wanting to-being able to-knowing how to act. In the acquisition of these modalities which is the qualifying test, the subject may need helpers and has to overcome opponents. He can then go to the decisive test by performing the action. The text moves next to the glorifying test in the sanction which verifies the result of the performance. The end-state is the positive state in which the lack has disappeared (27).

The Discursive Analysis (28)

The objective of the Discursive Analysis is to study the semantic values of a text and the laws which govern the relationship between them. This means looking for the theme of a story, *the oppositions and coherence* between the different actors and the elements which can affect the story. These elements can either be *the time, the space or the culture* factor.

Conclusion

After having presented the history of the Semiotic Analysis method, its integration by Walter Vogels, I shall now indicate how my research relates to my predecessors.

I was first exposed to the Semiotic Analysis method during my studies with Professor Jean Delorme at the Catholic Faculty of Lyons (France). I was impressed by the simplicity of this method and its ability to uncover the world of a text by studying the actors, the relationship

between them and, most importantly, by investigating the meaning the sacred writer intended to express.

My interest became stronger when I discovered the work of Walter Vogels on Semiotic Analysis. His book explained in a clear way how to apply the method, by using the six steps, for the analysis of any text and how this method can be used by “pastors” and biblical study groups. But Vogels never applied this method to any specific Gospel as a whole in order to unveil a common theme such as faith or salvation. My intention, in this thesis, is to illustrate how, through the Gospel of Mark, the author shows that Jesus has a permanent program which he always carries to its “end-state”. *His program is to show that he is the Saviour, sent by God.* To achieve this aim, Jesus used the only means accessible to him: teachings and healings. This assertion will be explored in the following chapters through the application of the Semiotic Analysis method to four texts of the Gospel of Mark. I have chosen four texts where the word $\sigma\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ (save) appears in an encounter between Jesus and other participants.

These four texts are:

- (1) 3,1-6: The story of the cure of the man with the withered hand.
In this text, the word σώσαι (save) appears in a reply by Jesus to the Pharisees regarding the interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath.
- (2) 5, 21-43: This text includes two stories. The first story refers to the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (vv 25-34). In this text, the word σέσωκέν (healed) appears as a confirmation of the woman's cure by Jesus. The second story refers to the rising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (vv 21-24; 35-43). In this episode, σωθή (be healed) is used by Jairus in a request put to Jesus to come and save his daughter.
- (3) 10, 46-52: This text tells of the cure of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho, who, once cured, followed Jesus to Jerusalem. In this story, the word σέσωκέν (has healed) is used by Jesus to confirm to Bartimaeus that the man's program has been successful.

- (4) 15, 22-39: The episode of the death of Jesus on the cross, which is part of the unity of 1-47 tells of the different use of the word save. The word save was used by Jesus' opponents as an ironic provocation to get him to come down from the cross. They failed in their provocation, Jesus did not come down from the cross. In their eyes Jesus died as someone abandoned by God while the centurion, standing opposite to Jesus saw the way in which he died and confessed that Jesus was the son of God.

End-Notes

- 1 The selected texts of Mark's Gospel which I intend to study in this thesis are the following:
 - a 3, 1-6: The story of the cure of the man with the withered hand.
 - b 5, 21-43: The story of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years and the rising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead.
 - c 10, 46-52: The story of the cure of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho.
 - d 15, 22-39: The episode of Jesus on the cross.

- 2 "Semiotics, the study Guide and Source", in *Murdoch University Notes*, (Brisbane: Murdoch University, 1987), 26-147.

3. Sextus Empiricus: *Adversus Mathematicos VIII.11*. Translation by Bochenski (London: Athlone Press, 1971) 110.

4 Michael Lane, *The Structuralist Method: Introduction to Structuralism* (Cape: Michael Lane Publication, 1970), 53-63.

5 Lane, *Structuralist*, 65-70.

6 R.E. Innis, *Semiotics: An Introductory Reader* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1986) viii.

See also the following publication:

J.Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

7 Innis, *Semiotics*, 28-42.

8 C.S.Pierce, 'Logic as Semiotics,' in R.E.Innis, ed. *Semiotics*, (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1986), 4-8.

"Pierce divided a "relation" into three classes:

(a): the indexes which embodied and actuated in gestures, demonstratives, personal pronouns connected with their objects, (b): the icons or expressions based on the resemblance between a sign and the objects and, (c): the symbols or characters of the sign"

- 9 “One important influential aspect of Roland Barthes’ thought is the distinction between **readerly** (*lisible*) and **writerly** (*scriptible*) texts. Readerly texts are ones which leave the reader with “no more than the poor freedom either to accept or to reject the text”: They are objects to be consumed rather than fabrics to be woven. In contrast, writerly texts are ones that clearly or effectively invite the reader to assume the role of authorship or -co-authorship. Parallel to this distinction between writerly and readerly texts is Barthes’s distinction between the writer (*scripteur, ecrivain*) and the author (*ecrivain*)”.

Vincent M.Colapietro, *Glossary of Semiotics* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 47-48.

- 10 A.J.Greimas and Joseph Courtes, *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

- 11 Jean Delorme, *Au Risque de la Parole* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1971), 9-13

As the author’s publications form a compendium regarding Semiotic Analysis, see also:

L’Analyse Sémiotique des Textes, Introduction, Théories et Pratique (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1979).

Parole, Figure et Parabole (Lyon: Les Presses d'Université, 1987).

Structural Analysis of Narrative (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

12 This is the translation of a quotation of Roland Barthes given by J. Delorme to the International Colloquia on Semiotics at the Convent Le Corbusier de L'Arbresle on the 14th of June 1986. It is part of a recorded speech for internal use and has not been published in any form.

13 Walter Vogels, *Reading & Preaching the Bible, New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1986), 30.

14 Greimas and Courtes, *Semiotics and Language*.

15 Calopietro, *Glossary of Semiotics*.

- 16 Vogels, *Reading*, 45-47.
- 17 Vogels, *Reading*, 47-49.
- 18 Vogels, *Reading*, 49-51.
- 19 Vogels, *Reading*, 50-51.
- 20 Vogels, *Reading*, 50.
- 21 Vogels, *Reading*, 51-53.
- 22 Vogels, *Reading*, 52.
- 23 Vogels, *Reading*, 53-54.
- 24 Vogels, *Reading*, 54-55.

- 25 Vogels, *Reading*, 154.
- 26 Vogels, *Reading*, 56,57.
- 27 Vogels, *Reading*, 57.
- 28 Vogels, *Reading*, 57-64.

Definition of minor terms which will be used through the thesis.

Actant: The actant is an actor who *performs a specific task in a story*. Its role is normally one of minor importance. (Colapietro, 5-6)

Context: It is the circumstance or situation in which a message is transmitted and received. Context is one of the four most basic factors in any process of communication. The other factors are: *addresser, addressee, code*. (Colapietro, 73).

Discourse: It is a term used to translate *parole* (more usually rendered “speech”). While *language* conveys to many the notion of system (a resource upon which speakers can draw), discourse and speech suggest process, engagement, and entanglement, the struggles in which historically situated agents engage. (Copalietro, 91-92).

Lack: It is a term used by Jacques Lacan to designate a felt, animating absence or deprivation. His usage carries echoes of Hegel (1770-1831),

a philosopher who highlighted the “portentous power of the negative”. This power is manifest in desire: *a felt lack, an urgent sense of not having something or being someone other than the one who actually is*, exerts an inescapable and often tyrannical power over human beings. This lack underlies all striving. Desire implies the absence of satisfaction and, in turn, satisfaction is the fulfilment of desire. (Colapietro, 127).

Sender: One who sends or conveys a message, thus a synonym for addresser. It is a name for one of the six essential features of any communication. (Colapietro, 179).

Triadic: Having three parts, aspects or levels. Charles S. Pierce’s defines a sign as a correlation of sign vehicle, object, interpretant, hence *triadic*, whereas Ferdinand de Saussure defines a sign as a *correlation between Signifier and Signified* or *dyadic*. (Colapietro, 199).

Chapter Two

How a positive program produces a negative result.

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How a positive program produces a negative result.

A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 3, 1-6

Introduction

One can never say that one has exhausted the meaning of a written text. Even after having read it several times, one can suddenly discover something that has been hidden until that moment. This applies in a very special way to the biblical texts, which seem continually to call us into question. One often thinks to know these texts, but to one's great surprise these old texts can always be renewed. The use of a different method of analysis may help one to see these texts in a new light. One of these methods in biblical studies, semiotics (1), is the method chosen for this study of Mark 3, 1-6.

This study will proceed in four steps. They are the steps followed by semioticians in the analysis of biblical texts. These steps are: (A) the cutting of the text, (B) the narrative and (C) the discursive analysis.

This study will finish with (D) the conclusion which will verify how the operations, discovered through the narrative analysis, move the semantic values, discovered through the discursive analysis.

(A) The Cutting of the Text (3, 1-6)

v 1 *And he entered again in a synagogue.*

And there was there a man with a withered hand;

v 2 *and they watched him carefully to see whether he would
heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.*

v 3 *And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here."*

v 4 *And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good
or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"*

But they were silent.

v 5 *And he looked around at them with anger,*

grieved at their hardness of heart,

and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."

He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

v 6 *The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel*

with the Herodians against him,

how to destroy him. (4)

Although cutting a micro-text (5) out of a macro-text (6), such as the whole Gospel of Mark, may at times cause problems (7), there are no real difficulties in the case of Mark 3, 1-6.

Three criteria will be used for the cutting of the text. They are (1) the criterion based on the movement of Jesus, the main actor, (2) the criterion of time and (3) the criterion of action.

(1) The criterion of the movement of Jesus, the main actor.

The criterion of movement often indicates that something new is starting or is about to start. Chapter 3 opens with the following words: “And he entered *again* in a synagogue” (v 1). After this, there is the mention of the man with the withered hand (v 1a). This presentation is followed by an address to the Pharisees by Jesus: “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?” (v 4). The Pharisees stayed silent and Jesus looked

around at them with anger (v 5a). Jesus then ordered the man to stretch out his hand (v 5b). At the beginning of verse seven, it appears that the desired act of curing the man is completed when Jesus and his disciples departed to the sea. This departure of the main actor, Jesus, from the synagogue and the area indicates the end of the literary unit. This departure does not break the unity of the story. On the contrary, it reinforces the opposition between Jesus and the Pharisees and prepares for further confrontations between them.

(2) The criterion of time.

The criterion of time in the cutting of a text indicates the moment when an action begins and when the same action ends. In the case of 3, 1-6, the use of the expression: "And there was there" (v 1b) provides, in a sense, the beginning of the action. This macro-text (3, 1-6) provides both a day and a time. The action happens on a Sabbath, the day when the community gathers together in the morning to celebrate more specifically the goodness of the Lord. It is on that day and at that specific time of gathering that Jesus decided to act.

(3) The criterion of action.

Different from the criterion of movement of the main actor, Jesus, this criterion of action delimits the text by taking into account the interaction between actors. In this episode, it means following the evolution of the action from verse 1 to verse 6 when the Pharisees decided to destroy Jesus.

Conclusion

The above delimitation of the text shows that the text stands on its own and forms a literary unit. This cutting of the text does not exclude that there are connections between this story and the rest of the Gospel. The Pharisees' decision to destroy Jesus will find its realisation in the death of Jesus on the cross. The delimitation of the text will be confirmed by the semiotic analysis of the text.

(B) The Narrative Analysis of 3, 1-6.

The Narrative Analysis of 3, 1-6 shows the state of the actors from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. The Narrative Analysis

also shows how the transformation of the man with the withered hand came about and what was its consequence.

In this section the six steps (Begin-State, Manipulation, Competence, Performance, Sanction and End-State) which constitute the Narrative Analysis of a text will be applied to the episode of the cure of the man with the withered hand.

1 The Begin State.

At the beginning of this episode Jesus appears to have a specific program: He wants to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath. The Pharisees believe that they were in the right without any “lack”, as defined by the Semiotic Analysis method, and Jesus wants to show them that they were in the wrong and that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, to save life (v 4).

The Pharisees too have a program. They refuse Jesus’ interpretation of the Sabbath and they want to see whether he would heal the man with the

withered hand on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him of breaking the Law (v 2).

The man with the withered hand has no program. "He was there" (v 1b). Contrary to the possessed man (1, 21-28) who dominated the scene by his presence, this man, despite his lack asks nothing. He simply plays a supporting role in the conflict which exists between Jesus and the Pharisees.

2 The Manipulation.

In order to move from the Begin State to the End State of his program which is to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath, Jesus calls the man with the withered hand: "Come here" (v 3b). In doing so, he manipulates the man. He presents himself as a Subject-Operator. His original program was not to cure the man but he takes the initiation to cure the man with the intention of touching the hearts of the Pharisees (v 5a).

The Pharisees succeed in manipulating Jesus, the Subject-Operator. This manipulation comes in the form of a *silent provocation*: “They watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath” (v 2a). It was their attitude which influenced Jesus to act.

3 The Competence.

As a consequence of his call to the man to come in front (v 3), Jesus establishes a contact with him. This contact becomes a contract between these two men and Jesus agrees to honour his part. He wants to act, he knows how to act and his action will be recognised by his enemies (v 2). The Pharisees reveal themselves incompetent in curing the man. Furthermore, they refuse to answer Jesus’ question (v 4).

4 The Performance.

As the Pharisees stayed silent (v 4b), Jesus looked at them with anger (v 5a). He grieved at their hardness of heart (v 5a) and ordered the man to stretch out his hand (v 5b). The man obeyed Jesus and had his hand restored (v 5b). As for the Pharisees, they went out (v 6a).

5 The Sanction.

Jesus cures the man with the withered hand expecting that this event would act as the final catalyst in the changing of the Pharisees' attitude. He failed.

The sanction of Jesus' action regarding the event which happened in the synagogue of Capharnaum came from the Pharisees. They recognised that the man has been cured and yet the performance of this action on the Sabbath, made them angrier. They went out and held counsel with the Herodians against Jesus (v 6). They succeeded in their program. Their sanction against him was death because they could accuse him of breaking the Law (v 2).

6 The End-State.

For Jesus, this program is a failure. The scene finishes with him being rejected by his opponents. He did not succeed in curing the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the law of the Sabbath.

For the Pharisees, this program was a success. They managed to get Jesus to heal someone on the Sabbath (v 2a), giving them the reason to condemn him to death (v 6).

Conclusion

The Narrative Analysis of the story of the cure of the man with the withered hand has enlightened two specific programs. The first program, by Jesus, refers to his attempt to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath. This attempt finished in a failure. The second program refers to the Pharisees. They wanted to see whether Jesus would heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath in order to accuse him (v 2a). They succeeded and as a consequence of their success, they moved to the next step of their program which was to destroy Jesus (v 6b).

(C) The Discursive Analysis of 3, 1-6.

In the Narrative Analysis there was a discovery of the operations of the text. The text was followed step by step and this allowed the narrative to unfold itself. But a text is not held together only by narrative operations; it is also a network of relations between the semantic values. This is why this section will move on to a search for (1) the *themes*, (2) the *oppositions in the themes* and (3) the *coherence between the possible themes*. This section will also involve the study of (4) the actors, (5) the spaces and (6) the time.

(1) The Themes

A: The Sabbath and its interpretations.

Jesus and the Pharisees appear to be permanently in opposition. The reason for this opposition lies in their different interpretation of the Law relating to the Sabbath. For Jesus, it is lawful to do good and to save life on a Sabbath (v 4). Nothing is said of the Pharisees' interpretation because they chose to stay silent (v 4b), nevertheless this attitude suggests that they were in opposition to Jesus.

B: *The Pharisees' negative evolutionary attitude towards Jesus.*

Already at the beginning of the episode, the Pharisees are presented as Jesus' opponents who anticipated his action (v 2), as if they had knowledge of similar healing on the Sabbath, as the cure of a man with an unclean spirit (1,21-27); the cure of Simon's mother-in-law who was sick with a fever (1,30). With this episode, their attitude became harder. They refused the dialogue (v 4b), they expressed their hardness of heart, an attitude observed by Jesus (v 5a) and finally they decided to destroy him (v 6).

C: *Good should be done at all times*

Even though this theme is not directly mentioned by either Jesus or the Pharisees, it appears that Jesus used this cure to stipulate that whoever is in need and whatever the need may be, help should be given irrespective of time and place.

(2) The Oppositions

This episode enlightens the following oppositions between Jesus and the Pharisees:

- a: Jesus tried to dialogue with the Pharisees in an effort to cure them of their false interpretation of the Sabbath's Law (v 4a), but they stayed silent (v 4b).
- b: They met in a synagogue, a religious place where the community meets in unity in order to pray and to celebrate the goodness of the Lord. Jesus' attitude reflects one of goodness towards the man with the withered hand. The Pharisees used this synagogue as a place of disunity as they decide to kill the operator of a good deed.
- c: The text does not mention any dialogue between the man with the withered hand and Jesus. The man stayed silent, but his silence was one of collaboration and submission to Jesus. The Pharisees also stayed silent, but their silence was one of hardness of heart (v 5a).

(3) The Coherence

Both Jesus and the Pharisees appear to be coherent with themselves.

Jesus had a program regarding the Pharisees and he followed it till the end. He failed, and yet he demonstrated that for him good should be done on any day and anywhere. The Pharisees had a program at the beginning of the episode (v 2), they followed it and they obtained the expected result (v 6).

(4) The Actors.

1. The Man with the withered hand:

The man with the withered hand was one of these “supporting actors” used by Jesus in order to give a new interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath. Prior to the scene in the synagogue of Capharnaum, Jesus “used” the disciples’ action of plucking ears of grain to explain to the Pharisees that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (2, 23-28).

This handicapped anonymous person was not a possessed man and his life was not in any danger. Physically, he could have been no worse off if he had been left until the next day. He asked nothing from Jesus and had no program which could allow the story to continue. He was a “passive” actor.

The handicapped man became an “active” actor however when asked to participate in his cure. He could have refused to obey Jesus’ order to stretch his hand (v 5) but he obeyed (v 5b). By acting in this way, the man became a “collaborator” of Jesus.

2 The Pharisees:

The author did not even mention the name “Pharisees” at the beginning of the episode, but used the word “they”. At the beginning of the scene, the Pharisees were already known for their provocative attitude (3,2) and opposition to Jesus (2, 18-28). They were already in the synagogue and had their own program: “They watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him” (v 2). Already

at the beginning of the episode, the presence of the Pharisees created a climate of dramatic tension.

3 The Herodians:

The Herodians were presented at the end of the episode as the allies of the Pharisees for the destruction of Jesus. The mention of the Herodians indicated that both the religious and political forces got together in order to destroy a common enemy: Jesus.

(5) The Spaces

Spaces play an important role in this episode. The story started with Jesus entering the synagogue of Capharnaum (v 1). After the cure of the man with the withered hand and his disagreement with the Pharisees, Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea (v 7).

The Synagogue (9)

The mention of this place was important. Apart from being a building, the synagogue referred primarily to the organised community. It was only much later in history that it was referred to as a building where the community assembled. At the time of Jesus, the synagogue had become a well-established institution. It was considered as a very political, liturgical, educational and financial institution as well as being quite ethnic in its membership.

The synagogue was also devised as a system of assessing, collecting, sequestering and transmitting funds for the levies of the Temple. Healing sessions were held during the working days of the week. So when Jesus deliberately went to the synagogue and performed the cure of the man with the withered hand on a Sabbath, he knew that he was exposing himself to criticism and attack from the Pharisees.

(6) The Time.

The Sabbath

The cure of the man with the withered hand happened on the Sabbath, a day considered by Jesus' opponents, the Pharisees, as inappropriate for curing activities. Furthermore the cure happened at the time when the community was gathered together in the synagogue for the celebration of the Sabbath. Jesus chose that day and that time in order to illustrate in action what he said previously: "The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (2, 27b). By curing the man, Jesus reassessed the value of the Sabbath and presented himself as "the Son of Man, Lord of the Sabbath" (2,28).

Conclusion

What this Discursive Analysis illustrates is the strong opposition of two interpretations of the Law of the Sabbath. During this episode, the opposition widened between Jesus and the Pharisees. If the Pharisees had entered into dialogue with Jesus, they would have hardly disagreed with him. However this hypothetical dialogue would have made them

lose face. Hence for them their best mode to communicate their disapproval of Jesus' action was silence (v 4).

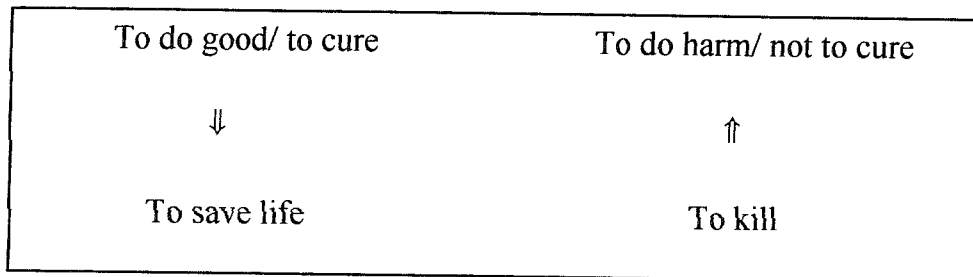
The Semiotic Square

The Narrative Analysis has discovered the succession of the different states which led to the cure of the man with the withered hand. These states were: the Begin-State, the Manipulation, the Competence, the Performance, the Sanction and the End-State.

The Discursive Analysis of 3, 1-6 has illustrated the difference in the interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath by Jesus and by the Pharisees. This difference in the interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath produces the following Semiotic Square in relation to the opposition between Jesus and his opponents.

- (1) To do good and to do harm (v 4),
- (2) To save life and to kill (v 4).

In Jesus' judgement, to do harm and not to save means to kill, whilst to do good and to cure, means to save life.



The purpose of the above diagram is to illustrate how Jesus uses the case of the man with the withered hand in his argument with the Pharisees. Jesus makes the cure of the man a matter of life and death. He demonstrates that a cure could be done at any time because life is more important than any interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath. Jesus failed in his attempt. The Pharisees apply the same semiotic square, this time by reversing the values. They decide to kill Jesus because he has done good; he cured a man. In their eyes, there is no difference between “save a life” and “kill” when it comes to the Sabbath’s Law.

D: Conclusion

The story of the cure of the man with the withered hand illustrates two programs. One program finished as a total failure for Jesus. He cured the man of his withered hand (v 5b), but he did not succeed in curing the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath. The second program was a success for the Pharisees. They caught Jesus in the act of curing someone on the Sabbath. Furthermore this even helped to unite the Herodians, who represented the political authority and the Pharisees, who represented the religious authority against Jesus.

This analysis of Mark 3, 1-6 suggests that the text speaks of something much deeper than just the curing of a man. It shows the confrontation of two worlds, separated from each other by the gate of silence (v 4b). The Pharisees were inside a system which they would not change. Nothing could move them, not even the handicap of a man.

At the end of this chapter one can conclude that this episode, which happened in a synagogue is not simply another miracle story reported to

the reader. It is a well constructed narrative in order to inform the reader of the obstacles faced by Jesus from the Pharisees. They were the real sick but refused to open their hearts to Jesus. Finally, this episode reveals the incompatibility between Jesus and any form of obstacle which would restrain life. This incompatibility will appear in the immediate episode which follows Jesus' return to his home (v19b-20). There Jesus meets opposition from his relatives (v 21), the scribes (v 22), and members of his family (v 31).

End-Notes

1. No explanation of the theory concerning the Semiotic Analysis method will be given in this chapter. There will only be an application of the method to the chosen text of Mark 3, 1-6. For a presentation of the method one can consult: Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, Delaware: M.Glazier, 1986) where this method is offered with some practical exercises. The method is that of the school of Algirdas J. Greimas.
2. Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1986), 47-57, 70-71.
3. Vogels, *Reading*, 57-64, 71-72.
4. The analysis of Mark 3, 1-6 is based upon the Greek text. The English text used in the study is basically the translation of

Reverend Alfred Marshall: *The Revised Standard Version; Interlinear Greek-English New Testament with the literal English Translation* (Oxford: Marshall Pickering, 1988). At times, there has been modification of this text in order to be closer to the Greek translation by using the Jerusalem Bible. Reverend Marshall's translation has been chosen because of the way in which the author presents the movement of the text as a succession of waves. For example:

And he entered again in the synagogue...

And there was a man...

And they watched him...

And he said to the man...

5 Vogels, *Reading*, 45

6 Vogels, *Reading*, 45

7 The problems which are referred to are linked to the way in which some stories are presented by the author. In the case of Mk 3, 1-6, the whole text tells of one simple story which is easy to follow from the beginning to the end. This is not the case for some other texts. For example 5, 21-42 is made of the interaction of two stories, the story of Jairus and the story of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years. Furthermore, in 7, 24-31, the author says that Jesus went to Tyre and Sidon for a secret reason. One would expect to know more about the secret reason at the end of the story and yet nothing is divulged. The story finishes with the cure of the daughter of a Greek woman and the return of Jesus to Galilee.

8 Vogels, *Reading*, 47-48.

Here is how Vogels explains the literary mechanism of the Narrative

Analysis:

In a text only two things can be said about a person. A person is in a state which is expressed by verbs of the type

“to be”, “to have” (he is rich, he has a car). Or a person acts, he does something, he plays a function, which is expressed by verbs of the type “to do”. If one follows the evolution of a person in a text, the text appears as a succession of that person’s different states.

To have a story something must happen. If a person only “is”, i.e. remains in the same state, there is no story. I can repeat “you are beautiful”, as often as I like but it still remains only a description, there is no action. To make a story move, a verb of the type “to do” is needed, which causes one state to be transformed into another. We now have two important elements of the narrative analysis: *state* and *transformation*.

But how does a transformation come about? Before a subject operator will act, he must be stimulated somehow or persuaded that it would be good to act: *manipulation*. The subject must then want to do it, be able to do it, and know how to do it; in other words, he must have the *competence*. Only if he is competent can he move to the *performance*. After an action is over one often finds in a text an appreciation of what has happened, the *sanction*.

- 9 Louis Finkelstein, *The Origins of the Synagogue - Archaeology and Architecture* (New York: Joseph Gutum, 1975), 3-58.
- 10 Vogels, *Reading*, 64-65.
- 11 Vogels, *Reading*, 65.

Chapter Three

**Jesus reveals his identity by taking control of two independent programs and bringing them to their terms.
A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 5, 21-43.**

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Jesus reveals his identity by taking control of two independent programs and bringing them to their terms.

A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 5, 21-43.

Introduction

The previous chapter studied the story of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3, 1-6). It illustrated the incompatibility between Jesus and any form of obstacle which would restrain life. This incompatibility ran through two parallel programs. The first program showed Jesus' failure in his attempt to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the Sabbath Law (3,6). The second program portrayed the Pharisees' success in catching Jesus performing a cure on the day of the Sabbath (3,2). His action brought him a condemnation of death (3,6).

This chapter will look at two stories. One is the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter (5, 21-24; 35-43). In this story, the word σωθῆναι (be saved) is used by Jairus in a request put to Jesus to come and cure his

daughter. The other story refers to the cure of the woman suffering of a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34). In this story, the word *σέσωκέν* (has saved) is used by Jesus in a confirmation to the woman that she had been cured. These two stories will be studied using the Semiotic Analysis method in order to explore the meaning of the word *σώσαι* as it appears in them. This study will have two objectives. The first objective will be to show how Jesus, faithful to his program which is to teach (4,1-2) and to heal the sick (1, 32-34), brought Jairus' program to new fulfilment. Jairus' original program was a request put to Jesus to cure his dying daughter. However Jesus brought this program further by raising her from the dead. The second objective of this study will be to illustrate how, in the case of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years, Jesus took over her apparent completed program: she was cured. Furthermore Jesus gave her program a new perspective. He reinstated her to her dignity by calling her "Daughter" (*θυγάτηρ*),(v 34a).

The study will follow the four steps used by Semioticians in the analysis of biblical texts (1). These steps are: (A) the cutting of the text, (B) the narrative and (C) the discursive analysis, and (D) the conclusion, which verifies whether the operations discovered through both analyses move the semantic values of the text (2).

(A) The Cutting of the Text (5, 21-43)

- v 21 *And when Jesus has crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd was assembled about him. He was by the sea.*
- v 22 *Then came one of the synagogue chiefs, Jairus by name; and seeing him, falls at his feet,*
- v 23 *and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be healed and may live."*
- v 24 *And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and pressed upon him.*

- v 25 *And there was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years,*
- v 26 *and had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.*
- v 27 *She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.*
- v 28 *For she said, "If I touch even his garment, I shall be healed."*
- v 29 *And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.*
- v 30 *And Jesus, knowing in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?"*
- v 31 *And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, "Who touched me?"*
- v 32 *And he looked around to see who had done it.*

- v 33 *But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.*
- v 34 *And he said to her, "daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*
- v 35 *While he was still speaking, there came from the synagogue chief's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead, why trouble the teacher any further?"*
- v 36 *But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue chief: "Do not fear, only believe."*
- v 37 *And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.*
- v 38 *When they came to the house of the synagogue chief, he saw the tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly.*
- v 39 *And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."*
- v 40 *And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and*

took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.

v 41 *Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."*

v 42 *And immediately the girl got up and walked; for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were overcome with amazement.*

v 43 *And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. (3)*

While the story of the cure of the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6) followed one action from the beginning to the end, revealing its consequence, the micro-text of 5, 21-43 presents an intercalation of one story within another. The story starts with the intervention of Jairus (v 21-24). It moves with the action of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (v 25-34), and finishes with the follow-up by Jesus of Jairus' original program. Because of this narrative structure, the cutting of the text may appear complex and yet it is easy to follow.

As for the study of the cure of the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6), three criteria will be used for the cutting of the text. They are (1) the criterion based on the movement of Jesus, the main actor, (2) the criterion of time, and (3) the criterion of action.

(1) The criterion of the movement of Jesus, the main actor.

This episode opens with the following words: “And when Jesus has crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd was assembled about him; and he was by the sea” (v 21). This introduction indicates that something was about to happen. Faithful to his program, Jesus was either going to teach (4, 1-2) or going to heal the sick (1,34). In this case, the program proposed to Jesus was one of healing. It came from Jairus, who, seeing him, fell at his feet, besought him, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her” (v 23b). Jesus went with him (v 24). The journey of Jesus from the sea to Jairus’ house was interrupted by someone who touched him without his knowledge (v 31b). Jesus turned about in the crowd (v 30b) and confronted the person, a frightened woman (v 33). Instead of rebuking

the woman for her action, he confirmed her in her faith (v 34) and gave her assurance of her healing.

After the cure of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years, a “counter-program” was suggested to Jairus with the objective of stopping the movement of Jesus: “Your daughter is dead, why trouble the teacher any further?” (v 35b). Jairus did not react to this suggestion. However Jesus, overhearing what they said, took control of Jairus’ program (v 36) and went with him to his house (v 37).

When Jesus arrived at the house, another counter-program was presented to him. This time it came in the form of irony. Before the arrival of Jesus, the mourners were weeping and wailing loudly (v 38b). When Jesus told them that the girl was not dead but sleeping, their weeping and wailing changed to derisive laughter (v 40), in an expression of disbelief. Jesus put them all outside (v 40b) and continued his journey to the place where the girl was and he raised her from the dead. To confirm that his program had been successful, Jesus told those around him to give the girl

something to eat. After this event, he went away from there and continued his program of teaching (6,2).

The criterion of action analysed above shows one important point: Jesus never left a program incomplete. He always carried his program to its end despite whatever obstacles he met. Neither the emissaries (v 35b) nor the mourners (v 40) succeeded in stopping Jesus.

(2) The criterion of time.

Even though there is no specific indication of time, it appears that time plays an important role in the creation of the dramatic tension which exists in this episode. The real action began with Jairus who came to Jesus with an urgent request: “Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be healed and may live” (v 23b). This call appeared urgent, and Jesus went with him. But Jesus seemed to take his time on his way to Jairus’ house. He stopped and talked to the cured woman (v 34). This “delay” helped to provide a dramatic tension and suggests the following hypothetical question: “If Jesus spends so much time with this woman,

will he arrive on time to cure Jairus' daughter?" The answer to this question came when the emissaries from Jairus' house advised him that it was too late, that the girl was dead.

Jesus rejected the emissaries' suggestion and continued on his journey. When he arrived at Jairus' house, he met the mourners whose presence in the house confirmed that the girl was really dead and that no one would be able to bring her back to life (4). Jesus rejected this atmosphere of death. He took a selected group with him and went to the place where the girl was. There he took her by the hand and ordered her to rise. Immediately the girl got up and walked.

The above analysis illustrates how the element of time helps to provide the necessary dramatic tension for these two stories. The time factor also shows the strong contrast between Jesus' "slow tempo" (he spent time with the cured woman who suffered from a flow of blood, v 30-34) and the urgent action expected of him in order to save someone's life (v 23).

(3) The criterion of action.

The criterion of action delimits a text by taking into account the interaction between the actors involved. In this episode, it means following the action from the moment Jairus asked Jesus to come and cure his daughter (v 22) to the time Jesus asked those who were present with him, at Jairus' house, to give the girl something to eat (v 43b).

Conclusion

The delimitation of the text by cutting it in the suggested way will be confirmed by the semiotic analysis of the story of Jairus' daughter (v 22-24, 35-43) and the story of the cure of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (v 25-34). For the purpose of this study, each story will be treated as an independent entity in the section covering the Narrative Analysis. However, they will be studied together as a unity in the section covering the Discursive Analysis, the Semiotic Square and the Conclusion.

(B) The Narrative Analysis of 5, 21-43.

The Narrative Analysis of the above episode will be based on W. Vogels' (5) method of analysis of biblical texts. This means, applying the six steps (Begin-State, Manipulation, Competence, Performance, Sanction and End-State) to each of the two stories.

A: The story of Jairus (5, 21-24; 35-43).

1. The Begin-State

At the beginning of this episode, Jesus crosses again in the boat, to the other side (v 21), with the objective of continuing his permanent program of teaching (4, 1-2) and healing (1,34).

Then arrives Jairus, one of the synagogue chiefs. He has a specific program. He feels his powerlessness to help his daughter. As a consequence of this, he wants Jesus, whom he believes has the capacity to heal her, to come and lay his hands on her so that she may be healed

and live (v 23). Jairus recognises his powerlessness to help his daughter and he turns to someone whom he believes has the capacity to heal her.

2. The Manipulation

In order to move Jesus from beside the sea, another step (the manipulation) was required. It came in the form of a supplication from Jairus to Jesus. Jairus was no ordinary petitioner. He was a synagogue chief, an influential and respected member of the community with the special responsibility for the conduct of religious services and the practical observance of ceremonial law in the synagogue (6). Despite his social rank, Jairus did not send an emissary to Jesus. He came himself and pleaded his case with Jesus (v 22). In the presence of a great crowd, he fell at Jesus' feet. Jairus succeeded in persuading Jesus who followed him. (v 25).

3 The Competence

The decision by Jesus to follow Jairus expresses the three modalities needed for a story to move: Jesus wanted to act and he went with him (v

24a), he was able to act, and he knew how to act (“Come and lay your hands on her,” v 23b). However, Jesus’ competence was challenged by some opponents.

The first group of opponents were the emissaries from Jairus’ house. They advised him not to bother Jesus as the daughter was dead (v 35). They recognised Jesus’ capacity to cure and to teach but they denied him the capacity to defy death. The second group of opponents were the mourners present at Jairus’ house (v 38). As the emissaries, they did not recognise Jesus’ capacity to bring someone back to life.

4. The Performance

As the emissaries brought bad news to Jairus (v 35), the hope that his daughter would be spared from death was shattered. Jesus ignored the emissaries’ advice (v 36a) and called Jairus to believe (v 36b).

When the party arrived at the house, Jesus did not ignore the mourners as he did for the emissaries. He tried to converse with them (v 39) and failed. The mourners laughed at him (v 40a). So Jesus put them outside

(v 40a), and went to the place where the girl was, with a little group, and brought her back to life (v 42). To perform the act of bringing the girl back to life, Jesus took her by the hand and said to her: “Talitha cumi”, and the girl got up and walked (v 42a). As for the witnesses of his performance, Jesus called for their silence.

5. The Sanction

The sanction of Jesus’ action came in an expression of amazement from the witnesses present (Jairus, the mother of the child, Peter, James and John, the brother of James). They recognised that the girl had risen from the dead. Hence: What appeared impossible for the emissaries (v 35a) was possible for Jesus (v 36a). What appeared impossible for the mourners (v 40) was possible for Jesus (v 42).

6. The End-State

Jairus’ original program was successful. His daughter was alive and well again (v 23). As for Jesus, he left the house of Jairus and went to his own country (6,1).

Conclusion

The Narrative Analysis of the story of the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead has illustrated two programs. The first program, by Jairus, referred to his request put to Jesus to come and lay his hands on his daughter so that she might be made well, and live (v 23). However, this initial program was cut short by the news of his daughter's death. As a consequence of this information, Jairus lost courage (v 35). But Jesus took over Jairus' original program and gave it a new perspective: "Do not fear, just believe" (μη φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε), (v 36). In doing so, Jesus changed Jairus' program. Jesus no longer presented himself as a healer but as one capable of bringing a dead person back to life.

B: The story of the cure of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34).

1. The Begin-State

Three identities are in place at the beginning of this story. They are: Jesus, the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years and the crowd. At the beginning of this story, Jesus had a specific program: he was on his way to Jairus' house in order to lay his hands on Jairus' daughter so that she might be made well and live (v 23).

The woman with a flow of blood for twelve years who was in the crowd too had a program. Her program was her cure. She had spent all that she had, and was not better (v 26). Jesus was her last resort. And she said: "If I touch even his garments, I shall be healed" (v 28).

The crowd followed Jesus and thronged about him (v 24). It played an important role in this story as it acted as a catalyst between Jesus and the

woman. The crowd allowed the woman to move “incognito”, to come up behind Jesus and to touch his garment (v 27).

2 The Manipulation

In order to progress in her program, the woman acted. She came from behind in the crowd and touched Jesus’ garments (v 27). In doing so the woman “manipulated” Jesus without his apparent knowledge, certain that her program would succeed (v 28a).

3 The Competence

The woman acted with competence. She wanted to act after having heard the reports about Jesus (v 27a). She was able to act: she came up from behind in the crowd (v 27b). She knew how to act: she touched Jesus’ garments, (v 27b).

4 The Performance

The woman touched Jesus’ garments and was immediately cured (v 29). After her cure, she melted away into the crowd knowing that her

program had been successful, believing that her program would stay unknown to everyone, even to Jesus. Jesus, the subject-operator of the cure perceived in himself that power had gone forth from him. He immediately turned about in the crowd and said: “Who touched my garments?” (v 30).

The disciples performed in a “logical” way: “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say: Who touched me?” (v 31). This reaction was as logical as the advice given to Jairus by the emissaries: “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” (v 35). The disciples’ logical explanation was also in line with the mourners’ logical attitude. They laughed at Jesus because they knew that the girl was dead and not sleeping as claimed by Jesus (v 40). Jesus rejected the disciples’ “logical explanation” as he rejected the attitude of the emissaries from Jairus’ house and the mourners.

5 The Sanction

The woman knew what happened to her. She recognised that she had been cured but expected her cure to remain unknown. However, when Jesus asked for the person he cured, the woman could have stayed silent. She came in fear and trembling, fell down before him and told him the whole truth (v 33).

Instead of rebuking the woman for her action, Jesus entered into a dialogue with her. He made her cure a matter of faith (v 34). Furthermore, Jesus addressed the woman as “Daughter” (θυγάτηρ). This word has an important meaning in the context of the woman’s cure. Before her cure, the woman was considered impure and was restrained from participating in any community life. By calling her θυγάτηρ (Daughter), v 34, in front of everyone, Jesus acknowledged a link with her and as such reintegrated her to the community (6). Furthermore, this is the only situation (v 34a) either in Mark’s Gospel or in any other Gospel where Jesus addresses someone in such a familiar fashion.

6 The End-State

This program was a success for Jesus. The woman's cure revealed Jesus' power over sickness to the crowd, the disciples and the woman. After she acknowledged Jesus as the performer of her cure, the woman disappeared from the scene while Jesus continued on his journey to Jairus' house.

Conclusion

The Narrative Analysis of the story of the cure of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years has illustrated two successful programs. The woman obtained what she wanted: her cure and the possibility to return to a normal everyday life. As for Jesus, he obtained a public recognition of his capacity to cure.

(C) The Discursive Analysis of 5, 21-43.

The Narrative Analysis showed the operations of the text. It allowed one to follow the text step by step, from the time Jesus crossed to the Jewish

area to the moment he returned to his country after the cure of the woman with the flow of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead. However this text is not held together by the Narrative operations only. It is also held together by a network of relations between the various semantic values. For this reason, this section will search (1) the themes, (2) the oppositions and (3) the coherence between the possible themes. This section will also study (4) the actors, (5) the spaces and (6) the time in order to show how the text was organised.

(1) The Themes.

A: Jesus is more than a healer, he has the power over life and death

The story of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead expresses the ability of Jesus to be better than the physicians and healers of his time. In the previous episode (3, 1-6), the Pharisees recognised Jesus as a healer but they refused him the right to give a new interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to save life or to kill?" (3, 4). In the case of Jairus, the emissaries recognised Jesus as a teacher (v 35) but they refused him, as did the mourners (v 40), the right to raise

someone from the dead. By his intervention, Jesus revealed himself more than a healer. He was someone who had power over life and death.

The story of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood also expresses one important aspect of Jesus' identity. He could have left the woman in the crowd. His movement disclosed that he cared for the woman he cured and honoured her movement towards him. Jesus called the woman's attitude towards him: Faith.

B: Faith can be exercised on behalf of a third party.

The story of the raising of Jairus' daughter illustrates an example of faith being exercised on behalf of a third party (v 23). The daughter took no part in her father's program but by his faith, the daughter became the "recipient" of his program.

This was in contrast with the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years. She acted alone and wanted her program to stay secret.

C: *From a confident request for cure to a total trust in Jesus .*

1: Jairus

Jairus' story illustrates the itinerary of a man's faith in Jesus. Jairus was a dignitary. However his incapacity to cure his dying daughter forced him to adopt a humble posture (v 22) and to express publicly his confidence in someone else (v 23).

After having expressed his confidence in Jesus' capacity to cure his daughter, Jairus was exposed to three tests. The first one came from the delay caused by Jesus' determination to identify the person he cured (v 30). This delay was also an invitation for Jairus to believe in Jesus as the woman had.

The second test came in the form of a request by the emissaries from the house of Jairus. They asked Jairus not to trouble Jesus (v 35b) because the daughter was dead. "Do not fear, only believe" (v 36b). Even if the text does not explain the reason why Jesus addressed Jairus in those terms, one can believe that the words "only believe" (μόνον πίστευε)

suggest a strong call to Jairus for a continuing trust in Jesus. This means that when he heard the news of his daughter's death, Jairus' hope was shattered: Jesus the healer could not do anything for his daughter. This argument is sustainable when one refers to Luke's narrative: "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be healed." (Luke 8, 50b).

The third test came when Jairus was confronted by the mourners present at his house. Their reaction (weeping and crying) confirmed that the girl was dead. When Jesus told them of the contrary, they laughed (v 40). At that moment, Jairus was left with a choice between two options: (a) that the girl was dead and that Jesus could bring her back to life, or (b) that the girl was dead and that no one could bring her back to life. With the first option, it would mean for Jairus, to recognise in Jesus someone who has authority over life and death. This option would require an unconditional trust in Jesus. With the second option, it would have meant for Jairus to recognise that Jesus was a healer with no special ability to bring someone back from the dead. This second option simply required a "logical common-sense". Jairus chose the first option.

2: The woman with the flow of blood for twelve years.

The situation of the woman suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years was different from Jairus' position. She already knew that Jesus was different from the other physicians she had met before. She had spent all that she had (v 26) and expected a "free" cure from Jesus.

The woman wanted her cure to remain a secret (v 27b). She did not appear to be interested in the person of Jesus the healer, but only in his capacity to heal her (v 27a). After her cure, she disappeared in the crowd knowing that she had obtained what she wanted (v 30). Her confrontation with Jesus was only a confirmation of her full restoration (v 34). Through her itinerary, the woman came to Jesus in fear and trembling and left with the guarantee of her cure (v 34).

(2) The Oppositions

Even though the two stories studied above portrayed Jesus' accessibility to everyone, irrespective of social and economic situation, they both illustrated themes which opposed each other.

a: Jairus, a male leader was one of the synagogue chiefs. As such, he was one of the most influential and respected members of the community. He had social and religious powers and his role as community leader was to conduct and ensure the practical observance of ceremonial law in the synagogue (7). He was a man of high standing and he had a family.

Opposite to Jairus was a nameless woman with a flow of blood. At the time of Jesus, her situation rendered her ceremonially unclean and because of this, she was excluded from the religious community (Lev 15, 25-27; 20,18). Her flow of blood for twelve years tends to suggest that she had no children. Furthermore she was impoverished, after having spent all that she had with many physicians (v 26). She was rejected because of her ritual impurity (Num 5,2) and finally, in contrast to Jairus, a synagogue chief, she was excluded from the worship of God (8).

b: Jairus came to Jesus in the open, in the presence of a great crowd. Even though he was a synagogue official, he fell at Jesus' feet. He acted in the name of his dying daughter and was confident in Jesus' capacity to cure the girl. He adopted the same attitude of humility as expressed by the unclean leper (1, 40) and the gentile Syrophenician woman (7,25).

In contrast to this open attitude, the woman approached Jesus secretly, from behind. She believed that if she only touched his garments she would be healed (v 28). The woman acted alone and for herself. She had an inner perception of Jesus' power. Her furtive approach would suggest that she feared being exposed publicly for her unclean situation.

c: Jairus obtained satisfaction at the end after a long waiting period. On the other hand, as soon as the woman identified her need and touched Jesus' garments, she immediately felt in her body that she was healed of her disease (v 29).

d: When he heard of his daughter's death Jairus had to be encouraged by Jesus not to fear but to believe (v 36b).

Contrary to Jairus, the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years did not need to be encouraged. She had faith and considered Jesus as the ultimate chance for her achieving her cure (v 28). The genuineness of her faith was confirmed by her immediate experience of healing.

(3) The Coherence

Despite the oppositions presented above, these two stories have many similarities:

- a: Both Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years had a program. They wanted Jesus to act for them. Jairus wanted Jesus to cure his daughter while the woman with the flow of blood wanted to be cured.
- b: The two women who needed help had physical contact with Jesus. The woman with the flow of blood for twelve years came

behind him and touched him (v 27) while Jairus' dead daughter was touched by Jesus (v 41).

- c: The two women were connected with the number twelve, an important numerical reference for Israel (9). Jairus' daughter was twelve years of age (v 42). The woman was suffering from a long continuous affliction, a flow of blood, for twelve years.
- d: After their cure, both women were reinstated in the community. After raising the girl from the dead, Jesus asked the witnesses to give her something to eat as an indication that the girl could return to normal life again. As for the woman, Jesus said to her: "Go in peace and be healed of your disease" (v 34).

(4) The Actors.

1 Jairus:

Jairus is one of the religious persons who appears in a positive light in the Gospel of Mark. Contrary to the Pharisees' attitude (3, 1-6), he represents those who would do anything in order to save a life. His faith in Jesus was put to a severe test and he did not succumb. He believed that Jesus was more than a healer. He saw him as capable of bringing his dead daughter to life and as such he attributed to Jesus the power reserved only to God.

2 The Woman with the flow of blood for twelve years:

The woman was interested in Jesus as the person who had the power to cure her. She trusted Jesus' capacity to act. When Jesus asked for the person who touched him, she could have stayed silent. She moved forward in an act of faith (v 33). By doing so she witnessed to the crowd that Jesus had the capacity to cure and furthermore, Jesus could know when the act had been committed by him without his consent.

3 The Emissaries from the house of Jairus:

These people acted as the first obstacles to Jesus' program. They were the "logical thinkers" and they advised Jairus not to trouble Jesus as his daughter was dead (v 35b). They were ignored by Jesus.

4 The Disciples:

The disciples followed Jesus to Jairus' place (v 24). When Jesus asked for the person who touched him (v 30), the disciples, as "logical thinkers", gave him a simple answer: "You see the crowd pressing around you and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" (v 31b). Jesus paid no attention to their answer just as he ignored the suggestion made by the emissaries from the house of Jairus. Instead he looked around for the person he had cured (v 32).

Three of the twelve disciples were chosen to accompany Jesus to Jairus' house. They were Peter, James and John, the brother of James. According to the Marcan narrative they were the first three disciples chosen by Jesus (1, 16-19). They were chosen because they formed the

inner circle around Jesus. These three disciples reappeared on two other occasions: (a) at the scene of the Transformation (9, 2-8) and (b) at Gethsemane (14, 32-42).

5 The Mourners (v 38):

The mourners stood as the second group of opponents to Jesus. They laughed when Jesus told them that the girl was only sleeping. In their “logical thinking” no one had ever come back to life once the barrier of death had been crossed. To believe that Jesus was capable of raising someone from death would mean for them to believe that he had the power over life and death, a power solely reserved for God.

6 The Daughter of Jairus (v 42).

Jairus’ daughter does not appear on the scene until Jesus enters her father’s house. However in her absence, she influenced the whole text of 5,22-43. Her sickness was the reason why Jairus went to see Jesus (v 23). While Jesus was on his way to see her, the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years carried out and succeeded in her program.

(5) The Spaces

Spaces play an important role in these two stories. The action started with Jesus crossing again in the boat to the other side, beside the sea. He then arrived in an open space and the crowd gathered about him (v 21).

When he answered Jairus' call to go to his place, Jesus left the open space and moved to Jairus' house. While Jesus was on his way to the house, the crowd followed him. It was within the crowd that the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years was cured (v 29). After the cure, Jesus continued on his journey. Later, he arrived at Jairus' house with a selected party. After his encounter with the mourners, Jesus went to the place where the girl was and raised her from the dead.

The choice of these places or spaces contributes to the dramatisation of the two stories. The action started in an open space and finished in the intimacy with a call for secrecy by Jesus (v 43). This evolution could be presented in the following way:

From beside the sea to the crowd.

From the crowd to a house.

From within a house to the place where the girl was.

The Crowd

In the two stories, the word “crowd” appears five times (v 21; 24a; 27b; 30; 31b). The crowd has a helpful role in the movement of the action. The crowd gathered around Jesus once he had crossed again in the boat to the other side (v 21b) and followed him (v 24b). The crowd acted as a catalyst in helping the woman to carry out her program (v 27). It also provided the opportunity to explain that Jesus was conscious of what happened to him even though the woman’s program was not known to anyone (v 30). Finally the crowd allowed the author to present the disciples as “logical-thinkers” acting in a similar manner to the emissaries from Jairus’ house (v 35) and the mourners (v 40).

The Semiotic Square

The Semiotic Square exposes the change discovered through the Narrative and Discursive analysis. The Semiotic Square shows how negative values unfold and become positive values.

In the episode of Jairus' daughter, one can note the following changes:

- a The story of a request to cure (v 23) is followed by a statement of a death (v 35b)
- b A statement of death (v 35b) called for total trust (v 36)
- c A call for total trust (v 36) is met by an expression of sarcasm (v 40)
- d An expression of sarcasm (v 40) is succeeded by an experience of salvation (v 42).

For Jairus, his trust in Jesus' capacity as a healer developed into a total trust in Jesus' power to save someone from death. At the end of the episode Jairus and the other members of the party were exceedingly astonished (v 42).

In the episode of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years, the following changes can be noted:

- a A secret program (v 28) is followed by a statement of cure (v 29)
- b A statement of cure (v 29) brought a call for testimony (v 30b)
- c A call for testimony (v 30b) led to a confession of cure (v 33)
- d A confession of cure (v 33) became an experience of salvation (v 34).

D: Conclusion

The story of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (v 22-24; 35-43) and the story of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (v 25-34) illustrate two successful programs by Jesus. These programs also show the failure of Jesus' opponents to stop him performing his permanent original program of giving life either through teaching (4, 1-2) or healing (1,34).

In the first program, Jesus cured a woman with a flow of blood. Instead of leaving the cured woman with her secret (v 29), Jesus took the crowd

as witness. He re-established her in her dignity by calling her “Daughter”, and as such, reinstated the woman into the community by saying: “Go in peace and be healed of your disease” (v 34b). This reinstatement brought the following possibilities for the woman: (a) she could bear children (she could expect her periods to come normally), (b) her exclusion from the worship of God was over.

In his dialogue with the woman, Jesus allowed her to realise that her cure was the consequence of her faith in his person and not the result of an act performed by a paid healer. No paid healer would have healed her without a fee or would have addressed her as Jesus did. At the end of this episode, Jesus presented himself to the woman as someone acting on behalf of God (“Go in peace, and be healed of your disease”, v 34b).

The second program (the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead) illustrates the development of Jairus’ attitude towards Jesus. Jairus trusted Jesus’ healing capacity. As the story progressed, his trust was tested. What started as a request for a cure (v 23) became a request to

believe in Jesus' capacity to raise someone from the dead. As Jairus was losing courage, he had to be "stimulated" by Jesus (v 36). Jesus' stimulation worked because Jairus followed him (v 37). Taking with them Peter, James and John, the brother of James, Jesus and Jairus arrived at the house where the girl was. There, with the girl's mother, the party went to the place where the girl was and Jesus raised her from the dead. As a consequence of the girls' new situation, the party was "crazily astonished" (10).

The aim of this chapter has been the study of two stories where the word $\sigma\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ (save) was used. In the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (v 22-24; 35-43), the word save was used by Jairus (v 23) in a request put to Jesus the healer to come and lay his hands on his dying daughter. However as the story developed, the word save introduced a new dimension. It meant the capacity to be victorious over death.

In the story of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years, the word save (v 34) was used by Jesus. It meant a confirmation that the woman's cure was the consequence of her faith in him.

In another episode, one recipient of Jesus' goodness decided to follow him after his cure. This was the case of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho (10, 46-52), whose story will be studied in the next chapter. Our objective will be to show how faith leads to discipleship.

End-Notes

- 1 These four steps have been fully described by many semioticians especially Walter Vogels. See Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, Delaware: M Glazier, 1986).
- 2 Vogels, *Reading*, 47-71.
- 3 The analysis of Mark 5, 21-43 is based upon the Greek text. The English text used in the study is basically the translation of Reverend Alfred Marshall: *The Revised Standard Version: Interlinear Greek-English New Testament with the literal English Translation* (Oxford: Marshall Pickering, 1988). At times, the text has been modified in order to be closer to the Greek translation by using the Jerusalem Bible.

Reverend Marshall's translation has been chosen because of the way in which the author presents the movement of the text as a succession of waves. For example:

And when Jesus had crossed..

And seeing him...

And he went with him...

And a great crowd followed him...

And there was a man...

And immediately the hemorrhage ceased...

And immediately the girl got up and walked....

- 4 The Mourners: In Israel, at the time of Jesus, the presence of mourners at the moment of a death, marked two important elements: (a) the beginning of the funeral ceremony, as the bodies of the dead had to be disposed of on the day of death, and (b): the beginning of a long period of grieving. After the official announcement of a death, the official mourners would come to the house of the dead person. There, they would tear their outer

clothing while standing in the house, in accordance with the ancient customs. This referred to the moment David tore his clothes when he heard about the death of King Saul (2 Sam 1, 11, 24). Jacob tore his clothes when he saw the blood-stained coat he had given to his son Joseph, and thought that Joseph was dead (Gen 37,35). The clothes were torn over the heart, exposing how the heart was broken or torn with grief. Another role of the mourners was to weep and lament. This time weeping and lamenting expressed the incapacity of human beings to bring someone back to life. It illustrated that whoever a person was, one day, death would come and take the person from the beloved ones.

5 Vogels, *Reading*, 47-57

6 Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a theme in Mark's Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 104.

- 7 Marshall, *Faith*, 95
- 8 L.Dambrine, *Guérison d'une Hémorroïse et Résurrection de la Fille de Jaire (Marc 5, 21-43)* (Paris:Cahiers Bibliques, 1971), 65-82.

Her sickness, qualified as a plague (v 29) excluded her from the religious community and from any public worship'. Her situation was considered in some religious circles as a punishment from God or even the consequence of an alliance with Satan. Her situation, according to the religious beliefs of the time, required isolation and exclusion. (translated from French).

- 9 The number "twelve" has a significant meaning for the people of Israel. It refers to the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 25, 16) and to the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen 35,22). It also refers to the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus (3,14) and to the twelve baskets left after Jesus' miracle (6,43) as a proof of God's generosity and care for humanity.

10 The words “ἐξέστησαν εὐθὺς ἐκστάσει” (5,42) have been translated in many ways, but always in a positive way. Marshall proposed the words : “overcome with amazement” while Hervieux suggested stronger words: “crazily astonished”. An etymological research reveals that the word: “ἐκστάσει” is from “εκ” meaning “out” and “ηιστεμι” meaning “to place or put”. Thus the word speaks of “being removed out of senses” and it has produced the English spelling of ecstasy.

The first mention of the word in Mark’s Gospel, translated by amazement, was used in 1,22: “ἐξεπλήσσοντο”. It referred to the surprising attitude of the people of Capharnaum to Jesus’ teaching. In that case, the word meant the tremendous impact or shock the people had when listening to the new type of teacher and teaching that met their eyes and ears.

The second mention of the word “amazed”, is in 1,27: “ἐθαμβήθησαν”. This time the word referred to the attitude of

the people present in the synagogue of Capharnaum. They had witnessed Jesus' power over an unclean spirit and were amazed and frightened with terror.

The third encounter with the word “ἐξίστασθαι” is in 2,12. This time, the word means literally, “to stand out of”. The attention of those seeing the paralytic rising and taking his pallet and going home was so taken up that they noticed nothing else. These people were in a way taken out of their usual routine by the wonder of the miracle and were almost beside themselves.

The fourth time the word amazed was used is in 5, 20: “ἐθαύμαζον”. This time, it referred to the positive attitude of people living in the Decapolis in reaction to the proclamation by the cured man. These people were amazed to hear the cured man telling what Jesus had done for him.

The fifth mention of the word “amazement” came in 5,42, the verse which is of special interest to us. The word “ἐξέστησαν” in the case of 5, 42, can be compared to the word “ἐξεθαύμαζον” used in 12, 17. In 12,17, the word “amazed” was used to describe the attitude of the enemies of Jesus. They were the Pharisees and Herodians sent by the chief priests, the scribes and the elders (11, 27) in order to entrap Jesus in his word (12, 13). In the case of these envoys, the word “amazed” did not have the same meaning as for Jairus. The envoys were amazed at Jesus, not so much at the profundity of his reply or his deeds, but the fact that there was nothing in the reply on which they could lay hold.

To conclude this research on the word “ἐκτάσει”, one can say that in the case of Jairus, it was an “explosion of joy” linked to the result he expected (he followed Jesus because he trusted him). However, Jairus found the result unbelievable when his daughter was raised from the dead. He was “astonishingly astonished”

(“immediately they were exceedingly astonished with a great astonishment”: Marshall, 159). This was not the case for Jesus’ opponents (12,13). They were not happy because they did not find in Jesus’ reply anything they could use against him.

For further research of the above refer to:

Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 30,34; 50-51; 107-108; 117-118; 234.

D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of Saint Mark* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1983), 161-162.

Marshall, *The Revised Standard Version*, 159.

Jacques Hervieux, *l’Evangile de Marc* (Paris: Centurion Novalis, 1991), 80-83.

Chapter Four

How Bartimaeus, a blind beggar becomes a model for a new generation of disciples.

A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 10, 46-52.

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How Bartimaeus, a blind beggar becomes a model

for a new generation of disciples.

A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 10, 46-52.

Introduction

The previous chapter studied two stories. The first story 5,25-34 showed how Jesus cured a woman with a flow of blood for twelve years as part of his permanent program of teaching (4, 1-2) and healing (4, 34). The analysis of the text testified of Jesus' capacity to heal the woman, as well as re-establishing her to her dignity. The second story was the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter (5, 21-24; 35-43). The analysis of the text showed how Jesus took over Jairus' program, which was a request to cure a dying daughter, and brought it further. Jesus brought Jairus' program further when Jairus lost courage, after having heard that his daughter was dead. Jesus reassured the discouraged father and asked him to believe in him. As a consequence of Jairus' total trust in Jesus, the girl was raised from the dead.

From these two performances, it came to light that in the case of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years, “save” meant more than a cure. “Save” was the consequence of the recognition by Jesus of the woman’s faith in him as someone superior to all healers. In the case of Jairus’ daughter, save meant recognising in Jesus the capacity of defying death by bringing someone back to life.

In this chapter, the aim is to investigate the story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho by using the Semiotic Analysis method. In this episode, the word *σέσωκέν* (save), (v 52), is used by Jesus in his dialogue with Bartimaeus to confirm that the man’s cure was a consequence of his faith in him. The objective of this investigation is to show how the author used the story of the man’s cure to describe discipleship. This study will explore Bartimaeus’ initial program (10,47), its development and its accomplishment (v 48-51) and its conclusion (v 52) before his departure for Jerusalem.

This study will follow the four steps practised by semioticians in the analysis of biblical texts (1). These steps are: (A) the cutting of the text, (B) the narrative, (C) the discursive analysis, and (D) the conclusion, which verifies whether the operations discovered through both analyses move the semantic values of the text (2).

(A) The Cutting of the Text (10, 46-52)

The story of Bartimaeus marks a turning point for the Gospel of Mark. This pericope comes before Jesus' final departure for Jerusalem (11, 1) and after his explanation to the disciples of the true meaning of service (10, 42-45). The cure of Bartimaeus is the first of two events happening on the first of three days leading to the crucifixion of Jesus (3). The second event is the "triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem." This cure also marks the end of Jesus' missionary journeys.

- v 46 *And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.*
- v 47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*
- v 48 *And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*
- v 49 *And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; rise, he is calling you."*
- v 50 *And throwing away his garment, he sprang up and came to Jesus.*
- v 51 *And Jesus said to him: "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him: "Master, that I may see again."*
- v 52 *And Jesus said to him: "Go, your faith has saved you." And immediately he saw again, and followed him in the way. (4)*

The above story follows a different narrative pattern from the story of the healing of the man with the withered hand. In the story of the man with the withered hand, no one asked Jesus to cure the man, while in this episode Bartimaeus cried out for help (10, 47). The man with the withered hand was cured as part of a pedagogy in order to cure the Pharisees of their false interpretation of the law of the Sabbath (2, 27). Bartimaeus' cure was in response to his confession of Jesus as Son of David (v 47). At the end of the episode of the cure of the man with the withered hand, nothing is said of him, he disappeared into the crowd while Bartimaeus followed Jesus in the way (v 52). Furthermore, one can follow the story of Bartimaeus easily from the beginning to the end without any intercalation or "sandwiched" interventions as in the case of the episode of Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years.

The division of the text will be further justified by the following three criteria. They are (A) the criterion based on the movement of Jesus, the main actor, (B) the criterion of time and (C) the criterion of action.

(A) The criterion of the movement of Jesus, the main actor.

This story starts with the following words: “And they came to Jericho, as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside” (v 46). The indication that Jesus came and left Jericho without any account of missionary activities may suggest that Jesus had been unsuccessful there (5). Jesus had a program. He was on his way to Jerusalem in order to continue his mission of teaching his disciples about him (v 33-34) and the Kingdom of God (v 24-31). But Jesus knew what was awaiting him in Jerusalem: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the nations, and they will mock him and will spit at him and will scourge him, and will kill him; and after three days he will rise again.” (v 33-34). The introduction of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, a supporting actor at v 46b indicates that something new was going to happen. Bartimaeus too had a program: he wanted to be cured (v 47). However his program met obstacles. Many rebuked him (v 48). Jesus heard the man’s cry and

said: "Call him" (v 49). In his dialogue with the man Jesus asked: "What do you wish me to do for you?" (v 51). By using this formula, applicable to the attitude of servants when addressing their request to their masters, it seems that Jesus wanted to express in deeds what he said previously: "the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve" (v 45). After their dialogue, Jesus cured the man and dismissed him, then he went on his way to Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the criterion of action analysed above demonstrates one important point: Jesus, on his way to Jerusalem with the intention of fulfilling his program, stopped when called "Son of David" by the blind beggar, cured him and continued on his way. In curing the man, Jesus indicated that the title "Son of David" was first and foremost a title of service (v 51).

(B) The criterion of time.

This episode occurred when Jesus left Jericho and was on his way to Jerusalem. There is no specific indication of time, and yet the cure fits

in the first of the three days leading to the crucifixion. This story introduced the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (11, 9).

(C) The criterion of action.

The objective of the criterion of action is to show how the selected text stands as a unity. In the story of Bartimaeus, the action starts with the departure of the main actor Jesus, from Jericho (v 46). Then the supporting actor, Bartimaeus acts (v 47-48), but there is a negative reaction from the crowd (v 48a). Jesus intervenes (v 49a) and between him and Bartimaeus a dialogue takes place (v 50-51). As a consequence of this dialogue, the man is cured and decides to follow Jesus (v 52).

Conclusion

The above analysis demonstrates that the text has sufficient unity and can be discussed by the Semiotic Analysis method. The story of Bartimaeus stands on its own and forms a literary unit with a beginning and an end state.

(B) The Narrative Analysis of 10, 46-52.

The method which will be used for the narrative analysis of the above text will be the one used by W.Vogels (6). It means applying the following six steps to the text: (1) the Begin-State, (2) the Manipulation, (3) the Competence, (4) the Performance, (5) the Sanction and, (6) the End-State.

1. The Begin-State

At the beginning of the story, all the elements were in place for the action. On his way to Jerusalem (10,32), Jesus came to Jericho and then left Jericho (v 46) with his disciples and a great crowd.

Bartimaeus, the supporting actor was sitting by the roadside (v 46). He was a blind beggar and as such was in a state of need. As for the disciples and the great crowd, they were following Jesus (v 46).

2. The Manipulation

The manipulation of Jesus, the main actor came in the form of a cry from Bartimaeus, the petitioner: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (v 47). This is the first time Jesus was called Son of David in the Gospel of Mark. Twice Bartimaeus appealed to Jesus as Son of David. In doing so, the blind beggar appealed to the one whom he believed to be more than just a man from Nazareth (1,24; 10,47). He believed in the one who was of Davidic family and was a merciful healer (10,47). When rebuked by “many” (v 48), the blind man cried out all the more echoing what he cried earlier, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Bartimaeus’ program succeeded. Although many rebuked him (v 48) and called for silence (v 48b), the man managed to make himself heard by Jesus (v 49).

3 The Competence

The decision by Jesus to stop and to order those surrounding him to call the man to him meant that Jesus had agreed to act. In calling the man,

Jesus expressed the three modalities needed for a story to move: He wanted to act: “Call him” (v 49a), he was able to act; “What do you want me to do for you?” (V 51a) and he knew how to act. This is confirmed in Bartimaeus’ request to Jesus: “Master, that I may see again” (v 51b).

The disciples and the crowd appeared incompetent. The scolding attempt to silence Bartimaeus produced the opposite result. It made the man shout all the more his determination despite opposition (v 48b).

4 The Performance

Once Bartimaeus had come to him, Jesus entered into a dialogue with him: “What do you want me to do for you?” This question to Bartimaeus meant that Jesus wanted the blind beggar to identify his needs. Did the blind beggar want money or something else? The man replied: “that I may see again” (v 51b). The man obtained what he wanted without being touched by Jesus physically.

Once Bartimaeus was called to Jesus, he moved very fast. He threw away his garment, he sprang up and came to Jesus (v 50). This acceleration of movement indicates that Bartimaeus was in a hurry... Once he was near Jesus, Bartimaeus immediately entered into a dialogue with Jesus and he publicly confessed Jesus as Master (v 51).

As for the performance of the disciples and the great crowd, they did not allow the man to be heard by Jesus, they even rebuked the beggar. When Jesus called for the man, they changed their behaviour from scolders to advisers, siding with the man and encouraging him (v 49).

5 The Sanction

The sanction of Jesus' performance came in the form of a confirmation given by the author that the blind beggar had received his sight (v 52). However, Jesus sanctioned his own action by telling Bartimaeus that his cure was a result of his faith (v 52a).

6 The End-State

After Bartimaeus' healing, Jesus asked the man to go his way while he continued on his way to Jerusalem (11,1). Instead of following Jesus' advice, Bartimaeus followed Jesus and started a new program. He became a disciple. As for the disciples and the great crowd, they followed Jesus to Jerusalem (11,1).

Conclusion

The Narrative Analysis of this story has illustrated a successful program for both Jesus and Bartimaeus. Despite the obstacles represented by the disciples and the crowd, the blind beggar obtained his cure and decided to follow Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus was recognised publicly as the "Son of David" capable of healing. It was with this positive recognition that Jesus went to Jerusalem.

(C) The Discursive Analysis of 10, 46-52.

The Narrative Analysis of the text allowed us to follow the story from the moment Jesus entered and left Jericho (v 46) to the moment Jesus departed for Jerusalem (11,1). However this episode is not held together by the narrative operations only. It is also held by a network of relationships between the various semantic values. For this reason, this section will search: (1) the themes, (2) the oppositions, and (3) the coherence between the themes. This section will also study (4) the actors, (5) the spaces and (6) the time. The objective of this section is to show how the text was organised.

(1) The Themes.

A: Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of David

Contrary to the attitude of the woman with a flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34) who makes no reference to the person of Jesus, but only to Jesus' role as a healer, Bartimaeus was interested in both aspects.

He was sitting by the roadside and reacted when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing. The use of the name: Jesus of Nazareth with the title Son of David, indicates that something special about Jesus had been perceived (7) by the blind beggar.

B: Faith leads to Discipleship.

The theme of discipleship appears strongly at the end of the story. Contrary to Jairus who had to be encouraged to believe in Jesus (5, 36b), Bartimaeus was already a convinced believer at the beginning of the story (v 47b). He called Jesus “Son of David” publicly and when he was silenced (v 48), he cried out the more (v 48b). Finally, Bartimaeus’ voice was heard by Jesus who called for him. In his movement towards Jesus, Bartimaeus threw off his garments (v 50). In the dialogue which followed, Bartimaeus did not ask for money, he asked for vision.

From the above observations, one can present Bartimaeus' discipleship in the following way:

- (1) It starts with a call to Jesus, Son of David.
- (2) It develops through a dialogue with Jesus during which Bartimaeus regains his physical sight.
- (3) The dialogue leads to Bartimaeus' choice to follow Jesus as a disciple.

Bartimaeus, the blind beggar "saw" Jesus as the Son of David while the disciples, who had been with Jesus for three years "had eyes but did not see, and had ears but did not hear" (4,12). Nevertheless a cure based on faith was not enough for Bartimaeus (v 52). Bartimaeus decided to abandon his past way of life (stop begging) and all his possessions (he had thrown away his garment) and took the path of Jesus. In doing so, Bartimaeus became more powerless, losing all possible securities, but as disciple, he enriched himself of the company of Jesus, the one he called "Master" (v 51b).

(2) The Oppositions

In the story of Bartimaeus, there appears a clear change in the thematic situation of the actors involved.

- a: At the beginning of the story, Bartimaeus was a blind man (v 46) and a beggar. At the end of the episode, he received his sight back (v 52).
- b: Bartimaeus was sitting “by the roadside” (v 46b), in an attitude of inactivity. At the end of the episode he entered in the movement of Jesus (v 52b).
- c: When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was passing by, the blind beggar cried out for him (v 47). The disciples rebuked him, telling him to be silent. He cried out all the more (v 48).
- d: When Jesus asked for the blind beggar who came by throwing off his mantle (v 50), the disciples and the crowd changed their attitude towards the man. From scolders, they became “advisers”.

In conclusion, the above oppositions illustrate how in a text of seven verses the author showed such a contrasting difference between the Begin and the End-state. This contrasting difference will be analysed further in the Semiotic Square.

(3) The Coherence

This text which stands on its own appears coherent. The “lacks” present at the beginning of the story disappeared at the end of the episode:

- (A) The blind man was cured (v 52b)
- (B) The dependant beggar became independent and took the initiative to follow Jesus (v 52).

4 The Actors

1. Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho:

Bartimaeus was a characteristic marginal whose blindness did not stop him from endeavouring to improve his lot in life (8). In contrast with Luke 18, 35-41 and Matthew 20, 29-34 who omitted to mention the

name of the man, Mark not only mentioned the man by name: Bartimaeus, he also introduced him as the son of Timaeus.

Bartimaeus was different from the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6) who was a “passive-passive” actor (he was in the synagogue of Capharnaum and asked nothing of Jesus). Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside but he was very active and insistent (v 47b-48).

The paradox of the situation was that the blind beggar “saw” with accuracy, better than the disciples, who Jesus of Nazareth was. He saw Jesus as the “Son of David”, an expression reserved for the Elected one, for the Messiah expected by the chosen people (2 Sam 7, 1-17). The disciples rebuked Bartimaeus. However, they did not manage to stop the man from calling Jesus. After his cure, Bartimaeus followed Jesus.

2. The Disciples and a Great Crowd: “they”.

The disciples and the “great crowd” were considered as one identity by the author. The episode of Bartimaeus followed the scene during which

the disciples were indignant at James and John for their attitude regarding power (10, 35-39; 41-42). Furthermore, the disciples and the great crowd failed to discern in Bartimaeus' call a confession of Jesus as Son of David. Fortunately "they" changed attitude towards the blind beggar when Jesus ordered them to call the man. At the end of the episode, the disciples and the great crowd followed Jesus to Jerusalem.

3. Jesus

This episode marked a turning point in the presentation of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. Before his positive encounter with Bartimaeus, Jesus was confronted with the continuous misunderstanding and controversies within his group of disciples (9). After his meeting with Bartimaeus, Jesus went to Jerusalem for his ultimate testimony, knowing that he would give his life as a ransom for many (v 45).

(5) The Spaces

The story happened when Jesus was leaving Jericho, the final stage of his journey to Jerusalem. The action started with the presence of Bartimaeus by the roadside. Then the operation moved from the roadside to the middle of the road and finished with the man following in the way.

By the Roadside (παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν)

The mention of this location was important for the story. It indicated that Bartimaeus was outside the movement. He was dependant on others and was unable to participate in any activities of the community. More than a geographic location, the expression: “by the roadside” meant that no one expected anything from Bartimaeus.

The Middle of the Road

Jesus did not go to Bartimaeus but ordered those around him to call the man (v 49). The man moved from the roadside to the middle of the road where Jesus was (v 50). This suggestion followed the evidence that a

leader always walked in front of the group (v 32) and in the middle of the road, allowing people to join in from both sides of the road (10). Furthermore, the fast movement of Bartimaeus towards Jesus (v 50) could also illustrate the man's determination to leave the roadside (to leave the state of passivity) in order to be on the road (to become active).

In the Way (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ)

The use of the words "in the way" (v 52b) meant that Bartimaeus put his steps in Jesus' steps. He could have gone his own way, as did the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6), but he decided to follow Jesus. By choosing Jesus' way, Bartimaeus gave a new definition of discipleship, different from the one suggested by the disciples' behaviour (v 37).

(6) The Time.

The healing of Bartimaeus happened on the first of the three days leading to the crucifixion. It came before the departure of two disciples for Bethphage in order to get the colt required by Jesus (11,5).

Conclusion

The Discursive Analysis illustrates the faith of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar in a specific man: Jesus of Nazareth. The reply of Jesus: “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” (V 52a) confirmed that since the beginning of the story, Bartimaeus knew that Jesus was the Son of David, the one with messianic prerogatives. Bartimaeus came as he was. He threw his garment away instead of wearing it, meaning that he left all his possessions behind in order to follow Jesus (1, 18, 20; 2,14). By his attitude, Bartimaeus turned a call for a cure into a new form of fellowship. Before Bartimaeus, the call for discipleship followed a specific pattern. There was (a) the call by Jesus (1,17) followed by (b) the promise made by Jesus (1,17b). The chosen person then abandoned everything (1,18a) and followed Jesus (1,18b). With Bartimaeus fellowship became the initiative of the individual after a contact with Jesus.

The Semiotic Square

The objective of the semiotic square is to explore the link between the Narrative and the Discursive analysis. The semiotic square also shows how the negative values have been transformed into positive values through the action of the main actor, Jesus.

In the episode of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, one can notice the following transformations:

- a A cry for mercy (v 47b) is followed by an experience of healing (v 52b)
- b A call for silence (v 48) is followed by an advice to take courage (v 49b)
- c An experience of healing (v 52b) is followed by a decision to follow Jesus (v 52b).

Bartimaeus carried out his program despite the negative elements he met. The disciples and the crowd did not succeed in stopping him (v 48a). Their opposition even turned into an encouragement for Bartimaeus (he

cried out all the more), (v 48b). Finally Bartimaeus met Jesus and was cured by him (v 52). He made Jesus' way his own personal way (v 52b). As for Jesus, faithful to his original program of teaching and healing, he continued on his way to Jerusalem.

Conclusion

The story of the cure of Bartimaeus illustrates two programs. Both programs finished positively. Bartimaeus regained his sight (v 52b) and Jesus showed those surrounding him that his capacity to heal was part of his service. Furthermore Jesus expressed in deeds what he said previously to his disciples: "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve" (v 45).

This story also painted the changeable mood of the disciples and the crowd. They rebuked the man when they heard Bartimaeus calling for Jesus (v 48) and they immediately changed attitude when Jesus asked them to call the man (v 49).

In conclusion, Bartimaeus' attitude towards Jesus brings another facet to the word discipleship. Before Bartimaeus, the disciples were chosen by Jesus and were given a mandate (1, 17-20; 3,14). In the case of Bartimaeus, Jesus did not choose him. Before Bartimaeus, the disciples were promised rewards for their service (10, 28-30). Bartimaeus threw his garment, sprang up and came to Jesus, and after his cure followed Jesus without any promise of reward. This individual initiative of Bartimaeus to follow Jesus was the consequence of his faith. While for the previous characters studied the word "save" announced the end of their program, in this case, the word "save" introduced the beginning of a new program for Bartimaeus. It started his program as a follower of Jesus (v 52).

Jesus' way led to Golgotha, the place for his ultimate testimony. Amongst those present at the cross, were those who proposed various programs to Jesus (15, 30-32). For these witnesses, the passers-by, the chief priests and the scribes, Jesus was a failure. For a pagan, a Roman centurion present at the cross, Jesus' program was a success. The man

saw the way in which Jesus died and confessed: “Truly, this man was the son of God” (15, 39).

The next chapter will investigate the episode of the cross (15, 22-39). The objective will be to illustrate how Jesus, even crucified, fulfilled his permanent program of teaching and healing. This time, Jesus’ teaching was oriented towards obedience to, and faith in the One he called Father (8,38; 11,25; 13,32; 14,36), the One he turned to when he was greatly distressed and troubled at Gethsemane (14, 32-42).

End-Notes

- 1 These four steps have been fully described by many semioticians especially Walter Vogels. See Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, Delaware: M Glazier, 1986).
- 2 Vogels, 47-71.
- 3 E.Pousset, *Une Présentation de L'Évangile Selon Saint Marc* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1978), 194-198.

Pousset suggests that the story of Bartimaeus introduces the first of three days leading to the crucifixion of Jesus which Pousset calls “trilogy of days” (la trilogie des jours). The first day, argues Pousset, was marked by the cure of the blind man and the triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (10,46-11,11). The second day of the trilogy, says Pousset, was marked by the driving out of those selling and buying in the temple (11, 15-17).

It also included the question of the chief priests, the scribes and the elders to Jesus about his authority (11, 27-33) and the announcement of their plot against Jesus. The third day, suggests Pousset, starts with Jesus teaching the Pharisees (12, 13-17), the Sadducees (12, 18-27), and the scribes (12, 28-34). On that same day of the trilogy, continues Pousset, Jesus also taught in the temple (12, 35-44). He also taught his disciples (13, 1-36) and afterwards went to Bethany to the house of Simon the leper where a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard (14, 3-9). It was on that day that Judas Iscariot went to see the chief priests with the decision to betray Jesus (14, 10-11). This third day also included the celebration of the Passover (14, 12-31), the scene of Gethsemane and the treason by Judas (14, 32-52), the arrest of Jesus and his judgement by the chief priests (14, 53-65) and Peter's denial of Jesus (14, 66-72).

- 4 The analysis of Mark 10, 46-52 is based upon the Greek text. The English text used in the study is basically the translation of Reverend Alfred Marshall: *The Revised Standard Version: Interlinear Greek-English New Testament with the literal English Translation* (Oxford: Marshall Pickering, 1988). Reverend Marshall's translation has been chosen because of the way in

which the author presents the movement of the text as a succession of waves. For example:

*And they came to Jericho;
And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples...
And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth...
And many rebuked him...
And Jesus stopped and said...
And throwing off his garment...
And Jesus said to him...
And the blind man said to him...
And immediately he received his sight...*

- 5 J. Hervieux, *L'Évangile de Marc* (Paris: Centurion, 1991), 155-157.

Hervieux believes that there is a specific reason why Mark situated the scene with precision. When one comes from Transjordan (where Jesus had gone) (10,1), says Hervieux, Jericho appears as the locality by which one enters Israel (v 46a). It was the first time Mark showed Jesus going to Jerusalem with other people, other than his disciples. Nothing happened in this city for Jesus, as if he was unsuccessful there, as if the city was no longer important, as if Jesus had become the new passage to the Promised land. This is why, believes Hervieux that Mark underlined that Bartimaeus met Jesus "outside" the walls of Jericho...

- 6 Vogels, *Reading* 47-57

- 7 G. Robinson, *A Change of Mind and Heart* (Sydney, N.S.W: Parish Ministry Publications, 1994), 392-396.

Robinson compares Peter's faith to that of Bartimaeus. In Robinson's opinion, Bartimaeus needed no more experiences in order to follow Jesus to Jerusalem while Peter needed permanent encouragement and at the end, he denied knowing Jesus.

Robinson concluded:

“While others had given only the pedestrian title “Jesus of Nazareth”, the blind man had been able to draw the firm conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah. The fact was openly present for everyone to see, but it was a man who could not see with his eyes who had seen it clearly with the mind and heart. The others surrounding Jesus were the blind”.

- 8 S.E Johnson, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1991), 182.

- 9 L. Doohen, *Mark, Visionary of Early Christianity, a Gospel Commentary* (Santa Fe: Bear & Co Inc, 1986), 95-109.

“Although they are privileged to be with Jesus and experience his power, the disciples were afraid (4, 40)... In addition to their fear and lack of understanding, the disciples throughout display attitudes of selfishness that result from temptation (8,33)... Even after being rebuked by Jesus, the sons of Zebedee again try to gain special privileges and position (10, 35-45) and thus arouse the indignation of the ten (10,41). The disciples’ unreliability is a puzzling aspect of Mark’s portrait... Although Jesus speaks of suffering, they speak of power, and whereas he gives himself in service, they seek position and privilege. Their familiarity with Jesus is no guarantee that they will understand him”. (p 96)

- 10 R.H. Gundry, *Mark, A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Michigan: William B.Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1992), 593.

Here is how Gundry sees the call for Bartimaeus:

“When Jesus stopped and said: “Call him”, his movement was one of authority. By calling the man to him, Jesus made him move from “by the road” to a “face to face” with him. It was a process of evolution”.

Chapter Five
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Program (Jesus on the cross).
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**How a negative program revealed itself to be a positive
program (Jesus on the cross).**

A Semiotic Analysis of Mark 15, 22-39.

Introduction

The previous chapter studied the story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho, who, once healed by Jesus (10,52), followed him in the way. The story illustrated three elements which indicated how Bartimaeus' initiative to follow Jesus inaugurated a new generation of discipleship. He was the first person in the Gospel of Mark to identify Jesus, the man from Nazareth, as the Son of David (10, 47b-48b). Secondly, instead of being called and chosen by Jesus as were the twelve (1, 17-20; 3,13-14), Bartimaeus followed Jesus on his own initiative (10, 52b). Thirdly, when called by Jesus (10, 49a), Bartimaeus threw off his garment, sprang up and came to Jesus (10, 50). He came spontaneously without concern for his belongings, whilst some of the disciples were questioning Jesus

about their future share for following him (10, 28-30). The story of Bartimaeus also illustrated how faith in Jesus would always achieve an encounter despite obstacles. The disciples and the crowd rebuked Bartimaeus when he cried for Jesus (v 48) and yet, they did not manage to stop Jesus hearing the blind man's call (v 49).

Jesus' way led to Jerusalem, the place for his supreme revelation. While he was on the cross, the program proposed to Jesus by his opponents was to save himself and to come down from the cross (15, 29-31). He refused this program of salvation and he died as someone abandoned by God.

The word *save* appears three times in the selected narrative 15, 22-39 which will be particularly studied in this chapter. The first time σώσον (save) was used by those passing by the Golgotha (v 30). They derided Jesus, asking him to come down from the cross. The second time, the word ἔσωσεν (he saved) was used by the chief priests who mocked Jesus to one another with the scribes (v 31). They recognised that Jesus

had saved others (ἄλλους ἔσωσεν) through healing. The third time, the word σώσαι (to save) was used by the same actors, the chief priests and the scribes (v 31b). This time they changed the meaning of the word save. It no longer meant healing someone but it meant coming down from the cross, a program which was not executed by Jesus. However a Roman centurion, a pagan, saw the way in which Jesus died and confessed that Jesus was the son of God (v 39). This confession suggests that even through death, Jesus continued to fulfill his original mission of teaching (4, 1-2) and healing (1,32-34).

At the beginning of Jesus' agony, the centurion saw in Jesus a renegade condemned to death, but after Jesus' death (v 39), the man was cured from the form of blindness which did not allow him to see Jesus in his true identity. His eyes opened and he saw Jesus as the son of God (v 39b). What did this man see that changed his way of looking at Jesus while Jesus' opponents stayed blind? He saw the total trust of Jesus in God, the theme which this chapter intends to discuss.

This study recognises that the unity of Mark 15 is structured around the use of four different time indicators touching the events happening on one day.

The first time indicator εὐθὺς πρωτῆ (immediately early), at dawn, (v 1), introduced the scene between Jesus and Pilate (v 2-15) as well as the scene of the mockery by the soldiers (v 16-20).

The second time indicator ὥρα τρίτη (third hour), (v 25), was introduced by the compelled commission of Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross to the execution place (v 22). Following this commission, Jesus was offered wine mingled with myrrh (v 23) and had his garments divided amongst the soldiers (v 24). After this, the soldiers crucified him with two robbers (v 27).

The third time indicator ὥρας ἕκτης (the sixth hour), (v 33), was introduced by the mockeries against Jesus from the passers-by (v 29) and by the chief priests and the scribes (v 31). This sixth hour also included the death of Jesus (v 37) and the confession of the Roman centurion (v 39).

The fourth time indicator *ὀψίας* (the evening), (v 42) introduced the end of the action. It indicated that Jesus' body was put in a tomb and that a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb (v 46).

Even though Mark 15 stands as a unity, for the purpose of this thesis, the main attention will be focussed on the unified segment of v 22-39. This choice is due to the fact that the word *save* appears three times in this segment which provides enough information to allow a discursive and narrative analysis of the selected segment (v 22-39). However in the discussion on the criterion of time where the four time indicators discussed above are involved, the whole of chapter 15 will be studied. When the criterion of action or the movement of Jesus is studied, the discussion will involve only v 1-39 which starts with the bringing of Jesus to Pilate for interrogation (v 1) and ends with the death of Jesus (v 37). Because of the complexity of the text, every section discussed will be reintroduced.

The study of 15, 22-39 will follow the four steps used by W.Vogels for the Semiotic Analysis of biblical texts (1). These steps are (A) the cutting of the text, (B) the narrative and (C) the discursive analysis, and (D) the conclusion, which verifies whether the operations discovered through both analyses move the semantic values of the text (2).

(A) The Cutting of the text (15, 1-47)

As the text (15, 1-47) stands as a unity, the whole chapter is needed for the study of the word save.

- v 1 *And immediately in the morning, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes and the whole council held a consultation. They bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate.*
- v 2 *And Pilate questioned him: "Are you the King of the Jews?"*
And he answered him saying: "You have said so."
- v 3 *And the chief priests accused him of many things.*

- v 4 *But Pilate again questioned him saying: "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you."*
- v 5 *But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate wondered.*
- v 6 *Now at the feast he used to release for them a prisoner whom they begged.*
- v 7 *And amongst the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the rebellion, there was a man called Barabbas.*
- v 8 *And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do what he used to do for them.*
- v 9 *And he asked them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"*
- v 10 *For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.*
- v 11 *But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.*
- v 12 *And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?"*
- v 13 *And they cried out again, "Crucify him."*

- v 14 *And Pilate said to them, "why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him."*
- v 15 *So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*
- v 16 *And the soldiers led him away inside the palace, which is the praetorium, and they called together the whole cohort.*
- v 17 *And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him.*
- v 18 *And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"*
- v 19 *And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him.*
- v 20 *And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him, and they led him out to crucify him.*
- v 21 *And they compelled a passer-by, a certain Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.*

- v 22 *And they brought him to the place called Golgotha, a place which is interpreted as the place of the skull.*
- v 23 *And they gave him wine having been spiced with myrrh; but he did not receive it.*
- v 24 *And they crucified him, and divided his garments, casting lots for them, to decide what each might take.*
- v 25 *Now it was the third hour and they crucified him,*
- v 26 *and there was an inscription on which was written the accusation against him: THE KING OF THE JEWS.*
- v 27 *And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.*
- v 29 *And those passing by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ah! the one who would destroy the temple and build it in three days,*
- v 30 *save yourself, and come down from the cross.*
- v.31 *Likewise also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes saying: He saved others; himself, he cannot save.*

- v 32 *Let the Christ, the King of Israel come down from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reproached him.*
- v 33 *And when it was the sixth hour, darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour.*
- v 34 *At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice: “Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani?” which is interpreted: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*
- v 35 *And some of those standing by heard him and said: “Behold, he is calling Elijah.”*
- v 36 *And one ran and, filling a sponge with vinegar, placed it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying: “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”*
- v 37 *But Jesus, letting go a loud voice expired.*
- v 38 *And the veil of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*
- v 39 *And when the centurion, who stood opposite to him, saw that he had expired, he said: Truly this man was the son of God.*

- v 40 *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome,*
- v 41 *who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and served him, and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.*
- v 42 *And when it was evening, since it was the day of Preparation, which was the day before the Sabbath,*
- v 43 *Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable councillor, who was himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.*
- v 44 *And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead.*
- v 45 *And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.*
- v 46 *And having bought a linen shroud, he laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.*

v 47 *Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.*

As for the story of Bartimaeus (10, 46-52), there are no real difficulties in cutting the micro-text 15, 1-47 from the Gospel of Mark (3). Three criteria are normally used for the cutting of the text. They are (i) the criterion based on the movement of the main actor, (ii) the criterion of time and (iii) the criterion of action. However, as Jesus, the main actor appears inactive through chapter 15, but is moved from the house of the high priest to Pilate's place (v 1) then to Golgotha where he died (v 37), the criterion of movement and the criterion of action will be merged together while the criterion of time will be used to explore the four time indicators discussed previously.

(i) The criteria of the movement of Jesus, the main actor and his action.

The criterion of movement often indicates that something new is starting or is about to happen while the criterion of action follows an actor from the beginning of an event to its end. For this reason, the text chosen for discussion is 15,1-39. It starts with Jesus' delivery to Pilate (v 1) and ends with the confirmation of Jesus death by the centurion (v 39).

In this episode, the narrative begins with the following words: "And as soon as it was morning the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council held a consultation. They bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate" (v 1). Questioned by Pilate, Jesus gave an answer (v 2), but to the accusation brought forward by the chief priests, Jesus did not say a word (v 5). Pilate then satisfied the wish of the crowd, had Jesus scourged and delivered him to be crucified (v 15b). After this, the soldiers clothed Jesus in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him (v 17). They mocked him and then led him out to crucify him (v 20). And they brought him to the place

called Golgotha (v 22). After this, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh (v 23). He did not take it (v 23b). After this, they crucified him (v 24).

At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice: “Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani?” (v 34). Then letting go a loud voice, he expired (v 37). Unlike the stories where Jesus was the one who took the initiative, the events of Mark 15 portray an inactive and immobile Jesus. On the cross Jesus could not move. He could not react to his opponents’ programs. However, his death on the cross did not indicate the end of the literary unit or a break in the unity of the story. On the contrary, Jesus’ death introduced two new situations: (a) the veil of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (v 38), and (b) a Roman centurion, a pagan who was standing opposite to Jesus saw the way Jesus expired and confessed that Jesus was the son of God (v 39). Without these two events (v 38-39), the death of Jesus would have appeared as the death of a renegade. This is why the criteria of the movement of Jesus and his action focussed on the segment of verses 1-39.

(ii) The criterion of time.

As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, Mark 15 is structured by time indicators. These indicators provide a dramatic atmosphere to the story. The crucifixion of Jesus came as the most important sequence of a day marked by the following elements:

A: As soon as it was morning the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council held a consultation (15, 1a).

B: They bound Jesus, and led him away and delivered him to Pilate (15, 1b).

C: After his trial (v 2-15), Jesus was taken inside the Palace where he was mocked, stripped and led out to be crucified (v 16-20).

It was at the third hour when they crucified Jesus (v 25).

At the sixth hour, while Jesus was on the cross, it became dark over the whole land (v 33).

After the ninth hour, Jesus died and at that moment, the curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (v 38).

Following that event the centurion confessed that Jesus was the son of God (v 39).

D: When the evening had come, the body of Jesus was granted to Joseph of Arimathea (v 45). Joseph wrapped the body in the linen shroud and laid it in a tomb (v 46). Two women witnessed the rolling of the stone against the door of the tomb (v 47).

Conclusion

The above presentation shows that the episode of Jesus on the cross (15, 22-39) falls within the unity of Mark 15. It illustrates how the episode started in the morning (v 1a) and ended in the evening with the two women witnessing the closing of the tomb of Jesus (v 47). The cutting of the text does not exclude the connections between this text and the rest of the Gospel. On the contrary, the death of Jesus reflects the success of the Pharisees and Herodians in their decision to destroy Jesus (3, 6). Furthermore, Jesus' death comes as the "natural" consequence of his permanent opposition to the religious authorities of Jerusalem.

(B) The Narrative Analysis of 15, 22-39.

As indicated in the introduction, the Narrative Analysis will concentrate

on the selected text of v 22-39 because of the presence of the word save in the text (v 30-31) and also because the text contains sufficient elements necessary for the analysis of a text. The objective of the Narrative Analysis of 15, 22-39 is to show how the episode moves from the Begin-State to the End-State despite Jesus' apparent immobility on the cross.

In this section, the six steps constituting the Narrative Analysis will be applied to the text. They are (1) the Begin-State, (2) the Manipulation, (3) the Competence, (4) the Performance, (5) the Sanction and (6) the End-State.

1 The Begin-State

Jesus was brought to Golgotha to be crucified (v 22). He had already been betrayed, condemned to death, delivered to the Romans, ridiculed, spat on, whipped and now, the next step of the program came.

Others were present at Golgotha. They were the soldiers, who offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh (v 23) and women who followed him when he was in Galilee (v 40).

2 The Manipulation

Many attempts were made to manipulate Jesus in order to get him to act by coming down from the cross.

The first attempt came in the form of sarcasm by the passers-by. They derided Jesus, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, (σῶσον σεαυτὸν), (v 30a), and come down from the cross”.

The second attempt came in the form of mockery and irony from the chief priests and scribes. They said:

“He saved others; but he is unable to save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe” (v 32).

The third attempt came from the two robbers crucified with Jesus. Even though they shared the same sentence, they reviled him (v 32b).

All those attempts failed. Jesus did not ask God to bring him down from the cross.

3 The Competence

Jesus did not succumb to any of the petitions proposed to him. In doing so, he proved his opponents' incompetence to manipulate him. During Jesus' passion, in the eyes of his opponents, Jesus appeared to be the incompetent one (14,65).

4 The Performance

Jesus did not perform according to his opponents' expectations. After having uttered a loud voice he expired (v 37).

5 The Sanction

Jesus was not taken down from the cross by Elijah (v 36) or by God. His death appeared to his opponents as an abandonment and a rejection by God.

While Jesus did not perform according to his opponents' expectations, he performed according to his real character and the sanction of his behaviour came from the Roman centurion, a pagan. The centurion saw

how Jesus expired. He confessed: “Truly, this man was the son of God” (v 39). In order for the centurion to confess that the dying Jesus was the son of God, the man had to see what Jesus’ opponents did not see. Jesus’ opponents saw in Jesus one who blasphemed when he endorsed the title of Christ, the Son of the Blessed One (14, 61) while the centurion saw Jesus in relation with God, the One he had called “Father” (14,36).

6 The End-State

For Jesus’ opponents, the end-state of Jesus was one of a renegade who, by some undefined means saved others, but was unable to save himself (v 31).

The centurion’s confession confirmed that Jesus was submissive to God when facing death. Jesus’ attitude on the cross was in continuation with his attitude in the garden of Gethsemane when he said: “Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.” (14, 36).

Conclusion

The Narrative Analysis of the episode of Jesus on the cross (15, 22-39) has illustrated one important element. Jesus died on the cross and this event, seen through the eyes of different witnesses produced different results. For Jesus' opponents, his death was the consequence of God's judgement of a man who uttered blasphemy (14,64). For the Roman centurion, Jesus' death was a spectacle of someone totally submissive to God (v 39). For Jesus, it was an act of total trust in the Father.

(C) The Discursive Analysis

The Narrative Analysis has shown the operations of the text. It allowed one to follow the text step by step, from the moment Jesus was brought to Golgotha (v 22) to the moment the Roman Centurion confessed that Jesus was the son of God (v 39). But this text is not held together by the narrative operations only. It is held together by a network of relations between the various semantic values. For this reason, this section will

search (1) the themes, (2) the oppositions and (3) the coherence between the possible themes. This section will also study (4) the actors, (5) the spaces and (6) the time, in order to show how the text was organised.

(1) The Themes

On the cross, hidden realities are revealed.

On the cross, Jesus' humanity appeared fully. He rejected none of the descriptions made of him, namely, the King of the Jews (v 26b); the one who would destroy the Temple and would build it in three days (v 29); the one who saved others, but cannot save himself (v 31); the Christ (v 32a); the King of Israel (v 32a). However, saving himself by coming down from the cross was not part of his program. Jesus died without divine intervention. His death was confirmed by the centurion to Pilate (v 44-45). Nevertheless, the centurion saw more than the fact of Jesus' death. He perceived the relationship between the dying man and his God and confessed: "Truly, this man was the son of God" (v 39).

The Roman centurion's confession of Jesus as "son of God" was the first application of this title to Jesus by human lips. Previously, on two occasions when Jesus was given a divine title he reacted.

The first time, Jesus was called "the holy one of God", (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ), (1,24b), by an unclean spirit. Jesus ordered the unclean spirit to be silent and to leave the possessed person.

The second time, the words "Jesus, Son of the Most High God" (Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου), (5, 7) were used by a legion of unclean spirits. Again Jesus ordered the unclean spirits to leave the possessed person. On the cross however, Jesus did not react when the confession was made by a reliable witness.

At the moment of Jesus' death, the presence of God in the Temple was revealed to all. The veil was rent (v 38). This symbolised the end of the Temple and its ordinances. The "Holy of Holies" was a place of absolute sacredness, which could not be entered except once a year by the High Priest on the feast of Yom Kippur. This place, the Holy of

Holies became now accessible to all through Jesus, the new Temple. No more did the authorities of the Temple have the monopoly of God's worship (4).

(2) The Oppositions

This episode suggests the following oppositions between Jesus and those surrounding him:

- a: The soldiers offered Jesus wine mingled with myrrh in order to decrease his sensibility to the excruciating pain. However Jesus refused (v 23).
- b: Jesus' opponents ridiculed and derided Jesus (v 29-32). Jesus did not react to their irony. He ignored them.
- c: Jesus' opponents taunted Jesus to come down from the cross in a spectacular demonstration of God's power. Jesus refused. The demonstration of God's power he looked for would come through his cry, his trust and his abandonment in the hands of God.

(3) The Coherence

Both Jesus and those present at the cross appeared coherent in their program. While Jesus died in accordance with what he said to his disciples (10, 33-35), his opponents saw in his death the judgement of someone who blasphemed against God (14,64).

(4) The Actors

1 The Soldiers (they).

The soldiers appeared as the performers of Pilate's orders. Pilate delivered Jesus to them and they executed the decision.

2 The Passers-by.

After the mention of the two bandits, the words of the passers-by bring our attention back to Jesus. The passers-by derided Jesus, wagging their heads. They said: "Ah! The one who would destroy the temple, and

build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross” (v 29-30). They asked Jesus to come down from the cross (v 29-30) but they failed. Their request was full of irony because they never believed in Jesus’ capacity to come down from the cross. The “Ah!” (v 29), was more an expression of scepticism concerning Jesus than the expectation of a miracle. For the passers-by, Jesus’ death on the cross was a confirmation that God did not help him, that he was not the Son of God.

3 The chief Priests.

The chief Priests appeared as the most virulent enemies of Jesus. After the mock trial of Jesus (v 1), they bound Jesus, led him away and delivered him to Pilate. At the cross, the chief Priests did not speak of the charge brought by the passers-by. They preferred to attack Jesus on political grounds (the King of Israel, v 32) by asking him to come down from the cross “now”. They acknowledged that Jesus had saved others (3,4; 5,23,28,34; 6,56, 10,52) and expected the same when it came to Jesus’ own life: “that we may see and believe” (v 32). The chief Priests’ challenge of Jesus was of a religious nature. Their notion of salvation

was based on the capacity of the Christ and Messiah to come down from the cross. In their view, no obstacle could destroy the Messiah because God was with him in everything he did.

4 The Scribes.

The Scribes were associated with the chief Priests as respondents to the “blasphemy” perpetrated by Jesus. Their mockery came as a request to show what the Christ and the King of Israel could do (v 31). The use of the word “now” (v 32a) indicated that, the Scribes, as the chief Priests, believed that Jesus’ claim of kingship or Christ was false.

5 The two Robbers.

Jesus was crucified, together with two robbers. One robber was on his right and the other on his left (v 27). Once the chief Priests and the scribes had stopped mocking Jesus, the two robbers took over. They too reviled Jesus (v 32). Their attitude was one of negativity toward Jesus, and while they all shared the same fate, they sided with his opponents.

6 Jesus.

Even though he was immobile on the cross, Jesus was the centre of the activities around him. The soldiers crucified him (v 25b). Jesus said nothing. At the ninth hour, when darkness had already come over all the land, Jesus cried with a loud voice: “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (v 34). Even after many hours on the cross, Jesus was strong enough to utter a strong voice (v 37).

7 The Centurion.

The centurion was not a follower of Jesus. He was in charge of one hundred men, therefore an officer of importance in the army of occupation. He had been posted near the cross to watch over the final hours of three condemned men. He was not known by name, as was Bartimaeus, and he was indifferent to the fate of those crucified. The centurion however was not a mere bystander. He was standing opposite to Jesus (v 39). He saw and heard the mockery and insults addressed by Jesus’ opponents. He also saw the way in which Jesus died and the spectacle of the cross (seeing and hearing), moved him. He saw an

epiphany. In contrast to the attitude of Jesus' opponents, who blasphemed against Jesus, the centurion confessed: "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (v 39).

The centurion's confession came as a condemnation of Jesus' opponents.

His use of the word "truly" indicated that his conclusion was the consequence of a time of observation and reflection.

(5). The Spaces

Spaces played an important role in this episode. The action started with Jesus being brought from the place of the high priest (14, 53) to Pilate's palace (15,1). After his condemnation, Jesus was led away inside the palace where the soldiers mocked him (15, 16-20a). After this he was led out to be crucified (v 20). At Golgotha, the Roman soldiers (v 22) crucified Jesus between two robbers (v 27). When Jesus uttered a loud cry and expired, the veil of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (v 38).

Golgotha (Γολγοθᾶν)

Golgotha was a transliteration of the Aramaic “gulgoltah” meaning skull (5). Golgotha was also translated by “the dead’s head”. It was a prominent place where executions were held to serve as a deterrent and a warning to passers-by. For this reason, the execution ground, the hill, was situated near the gates of the city, close to the road. Golgotha was high enough to expose the spectacle for everyone to see (6).

The Cross (σταυροῦ)

One of the methods of execution at the time of Jesus was nailing one to the cross. The cross was generally just high enough to raise the feet above the ground. The victim was placed upon it before the cross was elevated, the hands and feet being fastened to it by nails, and the body being supported by a peg fastened into the wood between the legs (7).

The veil of the Temple (ναός)

The veil of the Temple was the shrine situated in the Holy of Holies, in which was the Ark of the Covenant. It was the curtain which separated the Ark from the Holy Place. The veil was the place where God manifested Himself, into which the High Priest only had access once a year. With Jesus' death, there was no more separation between the Ark, the Holy Place and the people.

The Roman centurion was standing opposite to Jesus (παρεστηκῶς ἐξ ἐναντίας)

After Jesus' death, the Roman centurion, who watched over the crucifixion declared that Jesus was the son of God. What did he see? Opposite to the cross, he had the spectacle of the way in which Jesus died (v 39).

(6) The Time

Section 15, 22-39 starts with Jesus being brought to the Golgotha (v 22) where he was crucified and mocked (v 29-32). This was followed by Jesus' death on the cross (v 33-39).

From the sixth hour (noon) till Jesus' death, at the ninth hour (mid-afternoon), (v 34), darkness came all over the land. The sixth hour suggested the supernatural character of the event as darkness came at the time of the day when the sun was normally at its highest point. At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice and died (v 37). The short time of agony (three hours), and the loudness of Jesus' voice, indicated that contrary to other crucifixion victims, Jesus did not weaken slowly and fall into unconsciousness before dying. It meant that Jesus expressed a remarkable exhibition of strength (8).

Conclusion

This Discursive Analysis illustrates the difference between the expectations of Jesus' opponents ("to come down from the cross"), (v 30b) and the unexpected confession of a Roman centurion (v 39b), who requested nothing and yet saw the true identity of Jesus ("this man was the Son of God"). This analysis also illustrates how, when Jesus expired in a loud voice, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom (v 38b). This sign means that by his death, Jesus makes the presence of God accessible to all.

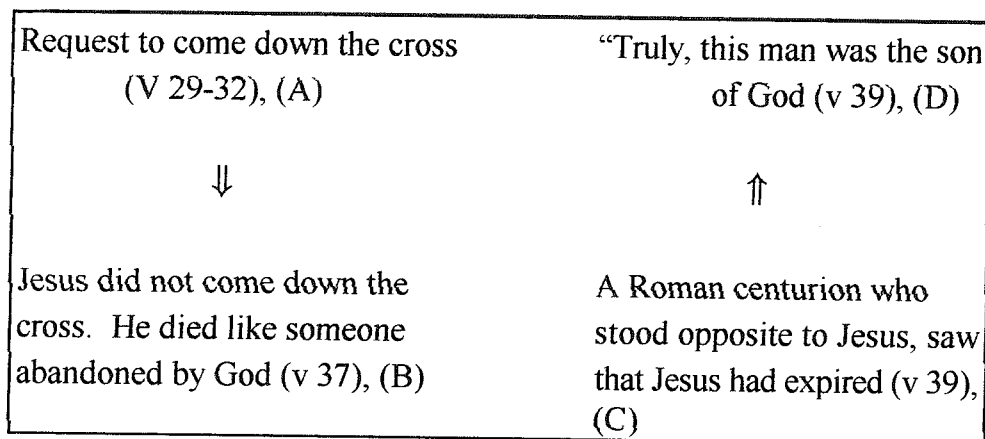
The Semiotic Square

The objective of the Semiotic Square is to describe the elements discovered through the narrative and discursive analysis. It also shows how negative values are changed into positive values.

In the episode of the crucifixion, one can note the following changes:

- a. A request put to Jesus to act by coming down from the cross (v 29-32) became an acknowledgement of defeat for Jesus (v 37).

- b A request for Jesus to save himself (v 30-31) became a confession of Jesus' identity by a centurion (v 39).



The purpose of the above diagram is to illustrate how the episode of the crucifixion was seen by the various participants. Jesus' opponents wanted him to come down from the cross (A), an apparent positive program proposed to him. Jesus did not come down the cross (B). For his opponents, he was abandoned by God (B). When the same result (Jesus did not come down from the cross) was observed by another witness (C), the Roman centurion, it produced a confession of Jesus' divine identity (v 39), (D).

Conclusion

The episode of the cross stands as the key element and the climax of the Gospel of Mark (9). It shows that all the miracles and proclamations of Jesus find their true meanings in the way in which he abandoned himself to the Father when he was on the cross. Despite requests from his opponents to perform a miracle by coming down from the cross, Jesus did not react to their demands. For his opponents, Jesus had the opportunity to show his sonship as suggested in the Wisdom of Solomon 2, 12-20 and he failed:

Let us lie and wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our breaches of the Law and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing. He claims to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a son of God. Before us he stands, a reproof to our way of thinking, the very sight of him weighs our spirits down; his way of life is not like other men's, the paths he treads are unfamiliar. In his opinion we are counterfeit; he holds aloof from our doings as though from filth; he proclaims the final end of the virtuous as happy and boasts of having God as father.

Let us see if what he says is true, let us observe what kind of end he himself will have. If the virtuous man is God's

son, God will take his part and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.

Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his endurance to the proof.

Let us condemn him to a shameful death since he will be looked after - we have his word for it.

However, Jesus did not fail. He died as he predicted to his disciples (8,31):

“And he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again”.

“And he said to his disciples: Elijah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt” (9, 12).

“For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10, 45).

The opportunity was given to Jesus' opponents to witness Jesus' sonship, but they were “blind”. They saw only a renegade on a cross. In contrast to Jesus' opponents was a Roman centurion, a pagan, who stood opposite to Jesus, saw everything and manifested that Jesus was the son

of God (v 39). In doing so, the man echoed what Mark said at the beginning of his Gospel: “The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God” (1,1), (10). He also brought a seal of authenticity to the life and mission of Jesus while condemning Jesus’ opponents for their disbelief and blindness. Jesus’ opponents ironically expected a theophany from an almighty magician, who with a stick and thunder would deliver the Christ. This expected theophany did not occur.

Jesus was saved by the One he called “Father, Abba”. But his salvation came from his total surrender to God. During his earthly mission, Jesus saved many: in some cases, he linked the recipients’ healing experiences to their trust in him (5,34; 10,52). To those who wanted to save their own life, Jesus asked them to trust him totally (8,35a; 8,35b; 10,28-30; 16,16). On the cross, Jesus illustrated what he asked from others by submitting himself totally to someone else. He knew that even through death, he could turn to the One who was the source of all life, the One he called “Father” and who would not abandon him but would save him. In doing so, Jesus showed that the veritable meaning of the word *save*

was more than just healing someone. *Save* was the act of total trust and abandonment to the Father (14,36) as Jesus trusted and abandoned himself to the Father when he was on the cross.

End-Notes

- 1 These four steps have been fully described by many semioticians especially Walter Vogels. For a presentation of these steps, one can consult: Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, Delaware: M Glazier, 1986).
- 2 Vogels, *Reading*, 47-71.
- 3 The translation of Mark 15, 1-46 is based upon the Greek text. The English text used in the study is basically the translation of Reverend Alfred Marshall: *The Revised Standard Version: Interlinear Greek-English New Testament with the literal English Translation* (Oxford: Marshall Pickering, 1988). At times, the text has been modified in order to be closer to the Greek

translation by using Rev. Ezra Gould's work: *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983). Reverend Marshall's translation has been chosen because of the way in which the author presents the movement of the text as a succession of waves. For example:

And they brought him to the place called

Golgotha...

And they gave him wine...

And they crucified him...

And with him they crucified two robbers...

And when it was the sixth hour...

And some of those standing by...

And when the Centurion...

- 4 Jacques Hervieux, *L'Évangile de Marc* (Paris, Centurion Novalis, 1991), 230.

“Mark is very sober in this moment of extreme gravity. What he is interested in is to show the importance of Jesus’ death. The event of the curtain being torn in two, 15,38, is not an anecdote. It is a symbol, and what a symbol! In the Jewish world, the high priest was the only one allowed, once a year, to enter in the heart of the Temple (behind the curtain of the sanctuary): in the presence of God. With the death of Jesus, this curtain of separation was abolished. This means that with the death of Jesus came the end of the Jewish cult. All men, even non-Jews were now given free access to God”. (Translated from French)

- 5 Rev Ezra P. Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 291.
- 6 Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a theme in Mark’s narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 198-305.
- 7 Gould, *Critical and Exegetical*, 291.

8 J.P.Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as a Model of Action* (New York/Mahwah, N.J: Paulist Press, 1992), 334.

J.B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum iudaicanum* (Rome: Pontif. Instituto di Archaeologia Christiana Press, 1952), 240.

9 Marshall, *Faith*, 202-208.

10 Even though the words υιοῦ θεοῦ (son of God) are absent from some manuscripts, this study has included them as an integral part of verse 1. According to Metzger, the missing words: “Son of God” may be due to an oversight in copying occasioned by the similarity of the endings of the sacred name.

For further information please refer to:

B.M.Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1975), 73.

Conclusion

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Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will draw together the findings from the study of the word *σωσαι* (save) in the Gospel of Mark. It will briefly review the methodology used through this thesis. After this, it will attempt to bring together the narrative morphology of the word *σῶσαι* as it appears in the four selected texts. Following this section, the chapter will look at some of the problems and limitations raised and encountered in this research. All possible linguistic limitations will be listed. The concluding section of this chapter will consider the implications of this thesis for further research and interpretation of the word *σῶσαι* in other Gospels.

The Methodological Review

The first chapter of this thesis gave an account of the Semiotic Analysis method, a technique suggested and applied as a serviceable linguistic system for the study of the word *save*. The chapter revealed the origin of the methodology and

told of its development till the time of Vogels, the semiotician whose approach was used throughout this thesis. After this, the chapter presented the various technical terms used in the analysis of texts. These terms were: the Cutting of a text, the Narrative analysis comprising of six steps (Begin-State, Manipulation, Competence, Performance, Sanction and End-State), the Discursive analysis, the Semiotic Square and the Conclusion.

The merit of using the Semiotic Analysis method is that it provides a literary analytical system allowing the delimitation of texts. The delimitation is based on the assumption that a text is a narrative unit in it's own right capable of revealing the personality as well as the programs of the different participants. Nevertheless, this system also shows that the literary units of Mark's Gospel are not isolated episodes but are all linked to the whole of the Gospel. This method has also the merit of enabling one to appreciate how the author of the Gospel of Mark used different circumstances of the life of his characters to convey the meaning of the word *σῶσαι*.

The Semiotic Analysis method as presented in this thesis can increase the possibilities of Narrative Criticism and Structural Analysis. The insight is given that the author of Mark's Gospel has a pedagogy to arise faith in Jesus by using the word *σῶσαι* was grounded in the evidence given in each episode studied. However, the author's pedagogy found its apogee in the revelation of the cross (15, 22-39) where Jesus expressed an unconditional trust in the Father.

The Narrative Morphology of *σῶσαι* (save) in the Gospel of Mark

In Mark's Gospel, three perspectives are associated with the word *σῶσαι*. They are: (A) a physical cure, (B) an unconditional trust, and (C) an eschatological reward.

(A) A Physical Cure

The word *σῶσαι* was applied for the first time by the author in the story of the cure of the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6). In this episode, the word *save* was used by Jesus in his encounter with the Pharisees (v 4b). However, Jesus' action (the physical cure of the man with the withered hand) was seen by his opponents, the Pharisees, as an act of violation of the Sabbath Law. As a

consequence of his deed, Jesus' opponents decided to destroy him (v 6b). This study demonstrated how the author used the story of a physical cure to illustrate the incompatibility between Jesus' and the Pharisees' interpretation of the Law of the Sabbath.

In the story of the rising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5, 21-24; 35-43), the word *save* was used by Jairus in his request to Jesus to come and cure his daughter. However, when Jairus heard of his daughter' death, he lost courage (v 36) and Jesus had to stimulate him to believe in him. This thesis showed the progression of Jairus' faith. The investigation of this episode illustrated how a request for a physical cure became a confirmation of Jesus' ability to be victorious over death.

In the episode of the cure of the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34), the word *save* was used by Jesus to confirm to the impure woman that she was cured. Furthermore Jesus advised the woman that her physical cure was a result of her faith in him (v 34). However this study demonstrated that, by acknowledging publicly her cure, the woman allowed Jesus to reinstate her

in her dignity and in her community.

In the literary unit covering the cure of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho (10, 46-52), the word *save* was used by Jesus to confirm the event of the man's cure (v 52). Once cured, the man did not go his way, as did the woman suffering a flow of blood, but rather, he followed Jesus. The analysis of this episode disclosed that with Bartimaeus, a new dimension is given to the word *save*. Before Bartimaeus, disciples were chosen by Jesus (1, 16-20; 3,13-19). With the man's free decision to follow Jesus after his cure, a new dimension is given to the word discipleship. With Bartimaeus discipleship became an act of total and unconditional trust in Jesus (8, 35b).

(B) An Unconditional Trust

The word $\sigma\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ (save) was not used by Jesus in the episode of the crucifixion (15, 22-38). It was used in a sarcastic way by his opponents as a mean to force him to come down from the cross. Jesus was not brought down from the cross by any divine intervention as his opponents requested. He died as someone who was abandoned by everyone, even by God. However, through his agony, Jesus

never rebelled against his God. His abandonment to his Father's will (14,36) meant that for him *σωσαι* (save) was more than a cure or the coming down from the cross. For Jesus, *save* was the act of having a total and unconditional trust in the Father. Jesus knew that whatever happened, even suffering or death, he should not distrust the Father who would save him. Jesus suffered and died on the cross. Even through this, he stayed submissive to his God. His attitude of trust and reliance was the continuation of his behavior in the garden of Gethsemane (14,36) where he abandoned himself to his Father.

(C) An Eschatological Reward

There are five instances where the word *σωσαι* was used by the author with an eschatological perspective. They are: “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and the gospel will save it” (8,35; 8,35b), “The disciples were exceedingly astonished saying to themselves, ‘then who can be saved?’ ” (10,26), “And you will be hated by all men on account of my name, but those who will endure to the end will be saved”(13,13) and “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved” (16,16). These eschatological assurances only found their meanings in a complete

understanding of the death of Jesus on the cross. What Jesus proposed to the faithful ones was first and foremost an experience similar to the one he had on the cross. This meant an ordeal of total rejection which could lead to suffering and death. But if the faithful ones stay devoted to him through suffering and death, without blaspheming against God, as he himself stayed devoted to the Father, then they would save their life.

This study was based on the narrative morphology of the word *σῶσαι* (save) throughout four selected texts in the Gospel of Mark. This thesis sustains that the author had a specific pedagogical objective when using the word *σῶσαι* (save) throughout his Gospel. He wanted to demonstrate that *σῶσαι* (save) was more than a physical cure (3,1-6; 5, 21-24,35-43; 10, 46-52). He wanted to illustrate that *σῶσαι* (save) was the act of total and unconditional trust in Jesus as he himself trusted the Father when he agonized on the cross (15, 22-38).

Additional questions inviting further Research

More research needs to be done in order to obtain an overall meaning of the verb *σῶσαι* (save) in Mark's Gospel. In this thesis, no attempt has been made to use

a traditio-historical or historico-legal criticism of the texts in order to obtain the evidence of the attitude of Palestinian Judaism at the time of Jesus regarding the treatment of individuals such as the man with the withered hand (3, 1-6), the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (5, 25-34), the dead daughter of Jairus (5, 35-43) or Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho (10, 46-52). Furthermore, the scope of this research did not attempt a comparative analysis of the selected passages of the Gospel of Mark with the corresponding texts in the other Gospels. Nor did this study refer to extra-textual approaches to correlate features of Mark with features in other ancient texts.

Even though the Semiotic Analysis method is proposed by Vogels as a simple method for pastors, it stays very technical. The method creates its own vocabulary which is transparent to the expert, but unfamiliar to the uninitiated.

Another limitation of the method is that when it concentrates on an episode it excludes any passages outside the selected text. Finally, in this thesis, each text was studied as a separate unit. Because of this methodology, each chapter produced a repetition of the technical terms used.

The Limitations of this Research

Before this attempt, semioticians have only tried to utilise this method to examine stories from the biblical texts but never have they tried to study one specific Gospel with the objective of exploring one theme as this thesis did. As this thesis opens a new concept of semiotic methodology, it is open to further studies and academic analysis.

A further conscious limitation of this thesis lies within its parameters. This research limited itself to only five texts. The criterion for the choice of these specific narratives was based on the presence of the word “save” in the context of an encounter between Jesus and other characters.

This study deliberately chose the Gospel of Mark as the basis for this research. The rationale for this choice is the brevity of his episodes, the simplicity of the language and the apparent urgency of the author to tell the stories. This urgency is reflected in the permanent use of the word *immediately* (εὐθὺς). Furthermore, no attempt has been made to present a textual criticism of the Gospel or to challenge the authenticity of Mark as author.

Conclusion

This thesis is only the beginning of a long term research. The application of the Semiotic Analysis method to the episodes where the verb σωσαι (save) was used has given some answers to the original question: What does the word σωσαι (save) mean? In the light of this research, one can suggest the following meanings: It is the act of curing someone (3, 1-6). It is the act of raising someone from the dead (5, 21-24; 35-43). It is also the act of curing and reestablishing someone in her dignity (5, 25-34). *Save* also means to give someone back his sight (10, 46-52). However, the word *save* has another dimension: It is the act of trusting Jesus totally and unconditionally as he himself trusted his Father during all his life, especially when he was dying on the cross (15, 22-39).

Recommendation

Further research, perhaps at a Ph.D. level, needs to be carried out in order to evaluate whether the Semiotic Analysis method can provide the same richness of understanding when applied to other texts. This could mean an application of this method to other Gospels or other books of the Scriptures. One theme can

be of interest: the application of the Semiotic Analysis method to the parables which, by nature, have a “Begin-State” and finish with an “End-State”.

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