Exile and Re-Constructing Social Identity in the Gospel of Mark.

by

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to add to the scholarly interpretive discourses surrounding the Gospel of Mark. This dissertation argues that the author of Mark attempts to re-construct social identity. Specifically, Mark deploys Jesus as a narrative method for a socio-cultural identity rectification after the Second Temple's demise. After the destruction of Jerusalem's temple, Mark was faced with new social incongruities, namely exile, alienation, and lost socio-communal institutions. I will argue that he was a displaced urban intellectual who mourns his lost social identification markers. However, Mark does not merely lament. Additionally, he provides a means to reconcile and rectify his social identity. Chapter 1 delivers an investigation into the possible dates and locations of Mark's composition. Examining the social, cultural, and political settings of first-century Palestine, supplies the necessary background of Mark's socio-historical context. Chapter 2 analyzes theories regarding the concepts of nationality, identity, and exile. I propose that Mark is an example of exilic literature, which can be understood through the larger umbrella of post-colonial literature. Chapter 3 will examine the textual evidence of Mark's lamentation sentiments. I argue that Mark questions his self-identity through sentiments of social alienation and that he expresses these emotions through lamenting lost socio-cultural institutions. Chapter 4 investigates Mark's creative intellectual attempts to reconcile his lost social-cultural identifiers. I emphasize that Mark replaces the lost "there" sacred space with a "universal/anywhere" one. Overall, I demonstrate that Mark, as an exilic author, simultaneously laments and reconciles his social incongruities through re-establishing, remoulding, and reconfiguring lost socio-cultural institutions and redefining institutional space.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Such is your present removal from what you take to be your native land. For by nature there is no such thing as a native land … Heracles spoke well when he said, "an Argive I or Theban, for I boast no single city; There is no fort in Greece but is my country" whereas the saying of Socrates is still better, that he was no Athenian or Greek, but a "Cosmian" (as one might say Rhodian or Corinthian) … This is the boundary of our native land, and here no one is either exile or foreigner or alien.
– Plutarch, *On Exile,* 600 BCE

The Gospel of Mark is an intriguing composition of ancient literature. In early Christian canonical literature, there are numerous elements that one can define as distinctively "Markan." For example, Mark's treatment of Jesus' disciples, especially in the case of Peter, as poor examples of discipleship; they continually "fall asleep"[1] when instructed not to, are perplexed continuously, and always fail to understand Jesus' teachings, especially in regard to the notion of the Kingdom of Heaven. One of Mark's fascinating and thought-provoking verses appears in Mk 15:34. At the end of Jesus' crucifixion, he cries in a "great voice … 'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me'" (φωνῇ μεγάλῃ … Ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με).[2] This passage is striking for a couple of reasons. First, Jesus is seen as questioning God, or perhaps even feels betrayed, whereas previously in his Gospel, Mark continuously displays Jesus as being aware of his prophetic martyred necessity. Secondly, Jesus portrays himself as being somehow "cut off" from God. In other words, upon being crucified, Jesus exhibits sentiments of abandonment, isolation, and alienation. This instance is especially noteworthy as it displays a type of incongruity. Throughout the text, Jesus is portrayed as a willing subject to anything of God's will. However, the sentiment of being abandoned and alienated forces Mark to rethink his painful

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[1] For example, see Mk 14:37, "and he comes and finds them sleeping" (καὶ ἔρχεται καὶ εὑρίσκει αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας), Mk 14:40, and Mk 14:41. In the span of six verses, Jesus leaves his disciples three times and returns to find them asleep each time, rebuking them upon discovering their slumbers.

[2] All translations are my own.

and problematic situation. It also does not correlate with Mark's depiction of a (mostly)[3] benevolent deity.

The Gospel of Mark has additionally been the subject of copious scholarly debates. Contentious issues range from, but are not limited to, Mark's authorship, time and place of composition, theological evaluations, and social interpretations and/or implications. Scholarly discourses of what elements should be considered primary, or emphasized, for interpreting and examining the text also differ. Some argue that apocalypticism should be emphasized when analyzing Mark.[4] Other scholars primarily utilize it for discovering "authentic sources" for Historical Jesus examinations.[5] This project aims to add to the scholarly interpretive discourses

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[3] See Mark 13, otherwise known as his "mini-apocalypse," as an example. Especially verse 8, "For nation will rise on nation, kingdom upon kingdom, and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines: these are the beginnings of pains" (ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπ' ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, ἔσονται σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους, ἔσονται λιμοί ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων ταῦτα). In this sense, God acts in a vengeful manner.

[4] For example, see Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), in which she emphatically states, "Jesus was [, first and foremost,] an apocalyptic preacher …" (125). Also see Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)* (New York: HarperOne, 2009); Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (Toronto: Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, 1993). A couple of problems exist with this interpretation. First, it assumes there was a specific "Markan" group whom Mark was addressing or that he was reflecting a group's purposed discourses. Secondly, despite Mark 13, there are no other indications in the text that emphasize, or suggest, a prompt cataclysmic event. Therefore, Mark 13 gains a "higher" status, compared to perceived contradictions, due to the fact that it correlates, and therefore boosts, their theories of early Christian communities primarily being apocalyptic sects.

[5] The number of scholars who employ Mark within this particular scope of study are too numerous to list as the examination of the Historical Jesus is vast. However, for brief introductions, see John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), who argues that Jesus is akin to a Cynic philosopher. Also see Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), who argues that Jesus should be seen as a type of social revolutionary prophet. Additionally, see Geza Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus* (Toronto: Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, 2000) and Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), who argue that

surrounding Mark. In general, I will argue that Mark reads as a cosmopolitan scribe's highly

imaginative[6] compositional narrative partaking in an attempt to rectify his new social,

incongruous situation, namely exile, alienation, and lost socio-communal institutions.

In his essay "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," William Arnal

argues that the Gospel of Mark

> … was written by and for a collection of double displaced persons: ethnically self-identified as "Jew/Judeans," having returned to Jerusalem from their actual homelands to a kind of second-class status, only to be displaced northward to Syria-Galilee by the events of the War. If this is so, we might find here an explanation for Mark's use of Jesus, and even his narrative use of Jesus, as a mechanism for reconfiguring, experimenting with, and commenting on ethnic identity, as well as the narrative's inversion of the valence of Galilee over against Judea as a "homeland."[7]

Christopher B. Zeichmann relays a similar argument focusing on the specific functions of certain

anachronisms found within the gospel of Mark. While on the topic of Jerusalem's Temple,

Zeichmann argues:

> The restitution of the temple's cultic functions onto Jesus' person, Mark's implicit links between synagogues and temple, and various other elements indicate a recurrent interest in replacing the temple. The recent trauma of the Judean War—with the destruction of the

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the Historical Jesus should be seen as a charismatic teacher and healer. According to this interpretation, Jesus is akin to a Galilean "holy man." Historical Jesus scholarship has tremendously aided in terms of producing various understandings, augmentations, interpretations, and constructions within first-century Roman-Palestine's socio-cultural matrix. However, these studies seem to run into similar problems outlined in the previous footnote. Just to be clear here, despite aiding and expanding scholarly discourses within these particular areas, a Historical Jesus examination is not the focus of this project. This footnote is simply to provide a small insight (for the purpose of brevity) of various "Markan" theories to highlight certain disparities within scholarly discourse.

[6] Following the arguments of Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origin* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998) and William E. Arnal, "Mark, War, and the Creative Imagination," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2017), 401–482.

[7] William E. Arnal, "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Z. Smith* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2008), 65.

temple and subsequent reorganization of regional social structures—seems to be at the root of these concerns.[8]

Eric Stewart outlines a comparable argument by suggesting that since the "sacred" centre of the Jewish world (the Jerusalem temple) was destroyed, "Jesus offers an alternative spatial practice, one that is centred on himself. The Kingdom of God exists spatially in the area around Jesus in which the new community 'gathers.'"[9] While mostly agreeing with these arguments, this project will expand upon these discourses. I will argue that Mark does not merely utilize Jesus as a personification for temple replacement. Instead, he deploys and uses Jesus as a narrative method for a socio-cultural identity rectification after the Second Temple's demise. I aim to provide an in-depth examination of these issues utilizing the Gospel's textual evidence. To aid my endeavour, and for analysis purposes, I will also use post-colonial and various social theories.

This project will examine how an early Christian exilic author attempted to locate himself within his new social milieu. In general, Jewish and Early Christian exilic literature display lost socio-cultural solidarity and physical detachment from their identified, and seemingly autonomous, institutions. This sentiment is amplified by perceptions and emotions of lost identity and nationhood. While living under political colonization, exilic authors commonly employ rhetoric that resembles or manifests into a form of resistance literature against the imperial colonizers due to a heightened sense of nationality. However, these sentiments are not concrete, or even universal, among exilic authors. They do not merely lament their lost identity and

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[8] Christopher B. Zeichmann, "The Date of Mark's Gospel apart from the Temple and Rumors of War: The Taxation Episode (12:137 17) as Evidence," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79 (2017), 422–437.

[9] Eric Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2009), 224.

nationality. They also engage in (re)constructing a new, imagined community composed of new

"native" institutions. Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig argue that

> Mark's story is littered with destruction. Yet it is not just an account of destruction and trauma. It is also an account of traumatic survival in that it tries to make sense of loss and offers ways of living with loss. It creates a space for mourning and contemplating loss, as well as for assembling something new, if only tentatively and temporarily … Mark is thus not only a book dealing with the aftermath of destruction but one that creates a container and begins the process of provisional reconstruction.[10]

Examining the Gospel of Mark through postcolonial and exilic lens within the sentimental

frameworks of alienation, disillusionment, and dislocation serves as a viable and profitable

method to reflect upon the author's practical apprehensions and concerns, specifically, dealing

with socio-cultural institutional[11] rectifications within his newly found social context. Through the

use of narrative, the author develops his frustrations regarding lost institutions towards a more

relevant (due to time and place) institution. This new institution is primarily encompassed and

projected through the narrative figure of Jesus. By utilizing a perceived authoritative figure, the

author is actively involved in a myth-making process by portraying Jesus as a sort of all-

encompassing reconciliation figure. Even though the author's self-identification and institutions

are in chaos, he attempts to reconcile and conflate various social duties and identifiers into the

character of Jesus. In other words, despite organizational disarray, lost institutions can be

navigated, reconfigured, and reimagined through the narrative figure of Jesus. With this in mind,

the narrative figure of Jesus within Mark can be seen as a type of socio-cultural institutional

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[10] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig, *Re-Reading the Gospel of Mark Amidst Loss and Trauma* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 27.

[11] To be clear, when I employ the term "institution" throughout this project, I am not specifically referring to just physical structure. I utilized the term "institution" more as an umbrella term. Under this umbrella, an institution can consist of physical structures, perceived "sacred" lands, and, most importantly, social organizations.

bricolage [12] or *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[13] Through this bricolage rectification character, one can reimagine identities and connect to their lost institutions, albeit in a new and different manner. By providing a post-colonial exilic reading of Mark attempting to remedy, or "make sense" of, his social alienation and dislocation, I hope to accomplish an inquiry that provides a new method of reading exilic literature, to increase perceptions regarding early exilic "Christian" authors, and to gain a better understanding of the Gospel as being a product of its particular historical milieu.

The reason for selecting the Gospel of Mark is threefold. First, it appears to have been written by someone in social exile. Secondly, it expresses sentiments of disillusionment, alienation, and dislocation. Finally, it attempts to rectify these social ills by using a narrative method to comment upon and ultimately restructure contentious social issues. My aim is to demonstrate that Mark, the social exile, struggled and lamented his lost socio-cultural institutions and self-identification markers. However, he also actively searches for social rectification. Through the process of myth-making, the author attempts to re-establish, remould, and reconfigure lost institutional identifiers through the narrative figure of Jesus to gain a more grounded sense of self-identity. In general, I will argue that Mark displays cosmopolitan proclivities, which typically stem from urban discourses of idyllic communities, by framing a narrative that stars a perceived authoritative character who laments recently lost self-identification institutional markers. But, at the same time, he attempts to alleviate and reconcile these losses by

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[12] I utilize the term "bricolage" here in accordance with, or along the same lines as Claude Levi-Strauss. See Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[13] See Karl Friedrich Eusebius Trahndorff, *Asthetik oder Lehre von Weltanschauung und Kunst* (Berlin, 1827). Trahndorff uses the term Gesamtkunstwerk to represent a form of (usually) visual art that encompasses numerous and various forms of art styles in order to create a "newer" style, something all-encompassing, or something "different." I use the term here to refer to something newly constructed conglomeration composed of other various and numerous "outside" sources.

constructing narrative instances, particularities, and indicators that provide new self-identification

socio-cultural institutions. In other words, through textual narrative, the exilic author of Mark

provides an example of a fully conscious effort in endeavouring to rectify his recent social

incongruities.[14]

For such an inquest, providing context is a necessity. When was the Gospel potentially

written? And who wrote it? The first chapter will attempt to give an additional discourse on these

problematic questions. I will argue that an investigation into the social, cultural, and political

settings in first-century Palestine is essential for an examination of Mark, and indeed any piece of

ancient literature. First, I will approach the subject of dating Mark. Following scholars such as

John Kloppenborg,[15] I will additionally argue for a post–70 CE date of composition. To attempt to

comprehend Mark's social and individual alienation sentiments, a compositional timeframe for his

narrative is essential, namely, to provide an understanding of the Jewish revolt resulting in the

destruction of Jerusalem's Temple and the occupation of the city itself. Moreover, to further

emphasize a mid–'70s CE date, I will provide an investigation into post-revolt economic systems,

namely additional taxes and forced dislocation, which could have resulted in new vocational

tribulations. The second important factor in, and for, situating Mark is the author himself. To think

of Mark as suffering from various alienations, the concept of self-identity is vital. How does Mark

view himself? With what does he identify? How is self-identification exhibited in his narrative?

While speculating a possible location origin of the composition is notoriously difficult, if not

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[14] I am purposely employing Jonathan Z. Smith's terminology here. See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Map is Not Territory," in *Map Is Not Territory.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 289–309, where he states that perceptions of incongruous situations are "intellectual activities that "gives rise to thought" (293–294).

[15] See John Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124.3 (2005): 419–450.

definitively impossible, I will engage with other scholarly discourses surrounding this issue due to its perceived importance in academia in regard to providing a fuller analysis of Mark. Furthermore, in terms of this project, I do think that attempting to place Mark in an approximate physical location, with an emphasis on self-identification, will be beneficial to relay my impressions of his textual intentions, particularly in regard to social and individual reconciliation. Additionally, such an inquest is fruitful as a means of analyzing the possible social proclivities of the author. Regarding identity, my argument will follow Arnal's "double exilic author" argument.[16] However, I hope to expand upon social location possibilities. Finally, for comprehensive purposes, I will end this section with an overview of Mark's literary technique and why it is considered necessary for a Markan textual examination, namely, the significance of his "framing" technique in addition to his knowledge of and reliance on prophetic literature. By effectively employing these narrative techniques, Mark is able to frame his conceptions and proclivities while simultaneously actively engaging in a social-reconciliation construction.

Chapter 2 will be an investigation into the concepts of nationhood, identity, and the perceived importance of a terrestrial (and cosmic) place, or home. Defining such concepts has proven notoriously difficult. Instead of attempting to argue for a static and universal concrete definition, I will focus on how the notions of nation, nationhood, and nationalism can be beneficial if utilized as a fluent and flexible descriptive schema.[17] The term, or idea of, identity has also proven elusive and problematic. While recognizing these difficulties surrounding the concept, I will argue that identity *can be* a useful category by suggesting that it is a descriptive

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[16] See Arnal, 57–67.

[17] I employ intentionally the word "schema" here and throughout. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), defines schemas as "mental structures in which knowledge is represented" (75). They are mechanisms to interpret the constructions of a social world's ambiguities (78).

schema for a group's self-identification connected and reflected through the agents of

commonality.[18] These agents of commonality can include mythic discourses, symbols,

classifications, culture, and rituals. Additionally, to aid this section, I will also employ other

various post-colonial theories.[19] Afterward, I will provide an examination of the concept of

exile,[20] specifically, the sentiments, emotions, and resulting discourses that exilic authors reveal

and demonstrate as a result of the loss of place, nationhood, and identity while attempting to

purposely examine, reflect upon, and rectify their new social reality. I will argue that Mark

reflects discourses deriving from a cosmopolitan ideal. In general, Chapter 2 will provide my

post-colonial theory, especially relating to the concept of exile, a theoretical framework that will

underline the rest of this examination, specifically, how these concepts relate to Mark's Gospel

and how they can even be helpful in providing a beneficial analysis of the text.

 For Chapter 3, I will explore Mark's projected anxieties, frustrations, and sentiments

caused by his lost sense of socio-cultural identity and how these sentiments manifested themselves

into the text. Therefore, this section will be composed of numerous examinations of various

instances in which Mark exhibits sentiments of lost identity and personal struggles with

alienation. To begin this section, I will analyze textual examples in which Mark displays agitation

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  [18] I follow Brubaker's argument here that identity can be seen as a type of "self-understanding," (47) forming a collective (44). In general, he argues that "Commonality" of similar attributes of self-understanding form a "Connectedness" through linking social ties, finally forming a "Groupness," or a "sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group" (47).

  [19] Regarding specific theorists, I will examine scholars (to name a few) such as Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013); Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000); Homi K. Bhabha, "The third space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (ed. Jonathan Rutherford; London: Lawrence & Wishart., 1990), 207–221.

with "outside" (Roman) military forces. Staying within the realm of Mark's annoyances, I will then discuss his characterizations of the Pharisees and scribes to lament, reflect upon, and chastise power scuffles stemming from broken socio-cultural identification institutions. Mark firmly places blame for the previous failing systems squarely at the feet of the prior "elites" of society. Therefore, I will argue that Mark displays and demonstrates his identification proclivities. Next, I will focus on his depiction of the disciples as being representatives of a perceived lost institutional community while also utilizing them to condemn dispositions of accumulating socio-political, and even economic, power. Afterward, I will argue that Mark's Passion narrative also portrays the author's sentiments of alienation and abandonment. Therefore, this final alienation narrative highlights the continued theme of social loneliness and isolation throughout the Gospel. Finally, to conclude this chapter, I will investigate various portrayals of the temple's destruction and the subsequent consequences. I suggest that on the one hand, Mark is somewhat lamenting this destroyed icon. However, on the other hand, upon his reflection, he highlights perceived negative temple traits that were "corrupt" and is progressing, or "moving forward," with his social institutional reconciliation efforts.

Finally, Chapter 4 will consist of an examination regarding how Mark endeavours to rectify his alienation and loss of socio-cultural institutions through a creative intellectual narrative. I will argue that Mark engages with and attempts to rectify his social and physical dislocation, alienation, disillusionment, and conflicts through a creative imagined discursive narrative that showcases his idyllic socio-cultural identity institutions and reframes them in a "universal" setting. The author's perceived lost socio-cultural identification markers, mostly derived from institutional frameworks, are (re)imagined as new socio-cultural institutions. These new social institutions are conglomerated into a universal setting and are supported and authorized by a

perceived authoritative figure. Additionally, Mark's social reconciliation stems from understood idyllic social systems that derive from a cosmopolitan intellectual. In other words, an intellectual figure debates other intellectual characters, all attempting to assess and reconfigure their new-found incongruous social circumstances while advocating for their proclivities, understandings, and authorities. Specific textual examinations are employed to stress these points. First, Mark undertakes social rectification of Jerusalem's lost temple. This reconciliation attempt can be accomplished by illustrating Jesus as an authorized agent to "gather around"[21] or through a universal "Kingdom of God." Next, I will discuss Mark addressing the problem of losing socio-cultural representation or authority figures. By concluding that the previous authorities were corrupt, Mark creates a new universal priestly authority through Jesus. Finally, I will provide an examination into Mark's reimagined idyllic social community, consisting of social-economic relations and concern for marginalized peoples. I argue that Mark's illustrated reformed economic system highlights his concerns over the problematic nature of socio-cultural and economic power conflicts, which can lead to communal schisms and undermine any form of socio-cultural reconciliation. Overall, Mark's projects reflect and argue for his method of reconciliation, which he does by reclassifying the Kingdom of God into one much more aligned with previous prophet literature. These rectifications reflect Mark's newly imagined conglomerated, ubiquitous, and cosmopolitan social-cultural institution stemming from, and ultimately overcoming, sentiments of lost self-identification.

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[21] I am purposely using Eric Stewart's terminology here.

Chapter 1

Mark's Social Setting and Circumstances

Before applying post-colonial theory to Mark's text, an examination of Mark's milieu is necessary. An investigation into the social, cultural, and political settings in first-century Palestine is essential for an analysis of Mark, and indeed any piece of ancient literature. In other words, what are the social and political factors in first-century Palestine, and how do they contribute to exilic Mark's sense of alienation and attempt at self-identification rectification? When beginning an examination of an ancient text, the first questions that arise are who wrote it, when did they write it, and where did they write it? Throughout the history of Markan scholarship, there has been no consensus on these vexing questions. Despite growing agreements on some matters, such as a post–70 CE date, these seemingly "introductory" questions are still crucial for Markan studies. As Stephen H. Smith states, "some account of the traditional questions—who Mark was, date and provenance of the Gospel, and so forth—can hardly be avoided."[1] Seeing how Mark's social and political context is critical to my examination, I will add, with my assessment, to the overall scholarly discourse. My goal in engaging with these debates is contextual. As Peter J.J. Botha summarizes, "The aim is not so much to define the correct situation for the interpretation of Mark as to elucidate some of the critical conditions, the essentials, for meaningful discussion of possible Markan context."[2]

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[1] Stephen H. Smith, *The Winged Lion: An Anatomy of Mark's Gospel* (Leicestershire: Matador, 2017), 1.
[2] Peter J.J. Botha, "The Historical Setting of Mark's Gospel: Problems and Possibilities" in *JSNT* 51 (1993): 27–55, 28.

The interest in the identity and location of Mark first arose with Eusebius of Caesarea's (circa 324 CE) testimony of Papias of Hierapolis (circa 140 CE). Papais concludes,

> Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter's. Peter used to adapt his teaching to the occasion, without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord's sayings, so that Mark was quite justified in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only—to leave out nothing that he had heard, and to make no misstatement about it.[3]

According to church tradition deriving from Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria,[4] the author of the Gospel was Peter's travelling companion and interpreter. He was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, but a recorder of Peter's memories. Mark aided Peter in translating Peter's narrative from Aramaic to Latin and Greek.[5] However, it should be noted that Papias does not comment upon the location of the composition.[6] The assumption is that Mark was recording Peter's teachings in Rome and later compiled them in Alexandria. In terms of authorship, Papias is the original arbitrator to link Mark's Gospel, and hence its author too, with Peter. If one follows Eusebius' text, this purported narrative is a third-hand account: "Eusebius is quoting Papias who,

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[3] Eusebius, "Historia ecclesiastica III 39.15," in *Eusebius. The History of the Church* (trans. G.A. Williamson; London: Harmondsworth, 1965), 152.

[4] For clarity, Irenaeus of Lyons in *Adversus haereses* 3.1.1 also proclaims that Mark provided a document of Peter's teachings after his death. Thus, Mark was written in Rome sometime in the 60s CE during Nero's persecutions. For a more detailed examination, see M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM Press, 1985), especially, pages 2–3. Regarding Clement of Alexandria, he also concurs that Mark was the composer of Peter's teachings in Rome. Clement timeframe of Mark's composition is associated with Caligula's reign, due to Caligula's threat to the Temple of erecting a revered statue of himself. If right, then this signifies a compositional date of circa 40 CE. See James Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 2, 9–12.

[5] Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1990), 283. Koester states that early church fathers and Christians thought Mark was Peter's interpreter and upon Peter's death, Mark comprised his Gospel from his recollections.

[6] H.N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in its Historical and Social Context* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004), 77.

in turn, is quoting a shadowy figure known as the Presbyter, or Elder; [Therefore,] there is an element of hearsay about all this."[7] Arguments have suggested,[8] however, that Papias was merely connecting the character of Mark found in 1 Peter 5:13 with the Gospel's author. Indeed, Eusebius indicates that Papias knew the text of Peter.[9] There are numerous suggestions on the question of why Papias felt the need to tie Peter with the Gospel. H.N. Roskam, for example, states that Papias' motivation was due to his desire to guarantee the Gospel's authority by tracing it back to a first-hand witness or disciple. In other words, Papias was attempting "to safeguard the Gospel against doubts concerning the reliability of its contents."[10] S.H. Smith provides another possible reason, suggesting, "Perhaps the Church felt uneasy that the New Testament should associate Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, with Rome, but not Peter, the head of the Church universal."[11] Whatever the reason, the point here is that Papias is the first instance of proposing an actual identity to the Gospel.

Despite problems of adhering to a historical narrative originating from "insider" sources, this interpretation does have some scholarly footholds.[12] Within *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, Hans Leander relies on early tradition and concurs that Mark must have some connection or relation to Peter. Since Peter was an uneducated, illiterate fisherman peasant from Galilee, an interpreter was a necessity as he would not be able to

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[7] S.H. Smith, 3.

[8] See Roskam, 78–80.

[9] See Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica III*, 39.17.

[10] Roskam, 79–80.

[11] S.H. Smith, 20. This interpretation, however, is dependent on the assumption that the early *ecclesia* accepted Matthew 16:18, "Yet also, I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my *ecclesia*" (κἀγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν …). All translations are my own.

[12] For example, see James Dawsey, *Peter's Last Sermon: Identity and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 16–20.

communicate his message unassisted.[13] Mark's text, however, does not correlate to this argument. Firstly, Peter's portrayal in Mark is not a flattering one; it is rather demeaning. Secondly, it would be rather strange for Mark to write down Peter's events using creative techniques such as catachresis and metonymical gaps,[14] but Mark is still somehow able to express his colonial situation. How can an uneducated and illiterate Peter brilliantly weave together biography and comment upon the subversive colonial situation with such deviousness, cleverness, and clever wordplay? Was Mark and not Peter responsible for these interpolations? If so, then Eusebius' comments regarding Mark's accuracy are mistaken.[15] Thirdly, this interpretation requires the composition of the text to have occurred pre–70 CE in Rome, two notions I will argue later.

This chapter will explore Mark's social milieu and attempt to provide additional discourse on problematic issues revolving around possible dates and locations of composition. First, I will approach the subject of dating Mark and will argue for a post–70 CE date of writing, leaning more towards the mid–70s. For attempting to comprehend Mark's social and individual alienation sentiments, a compositional time for his narrative is essential; namely an understanding of the Jewish revolt resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem's Temple and the occupation of the city itself. Moreover, to further emphasize a mid–70s CE date, I will provide an investigation into post-revolt economic systems, namely additional taxes and forced dislocation, which could result in new vocational tribulations, and the alteration of the political arrangement, especially in Jerusalem. The second important factor in, and for, situating Mark is the author himself. To think

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[13] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 170.

[14] Catachresis and metonymical gaps are two convincing theories of language techniques that Leander relies upon for his commentary.

[15] See Eusebius, *Hist.. eccl.* 3.39.15. Eusebius claims Mark wrote down accurately whatever he remembered, made no mistakes in writing things as he remembered them, and did not omit nor add any fiction to the narrative.

of Mark as suffering from various alienations, the concept of self-identity is vital. How does Mark view himself? With what does he identify? How is self-identification exhibited in his narrative? Although speculating a possible location origin of the composition is notoriously difficult, if not definitively impossible, I will engage with other scholarly discourses surrounding this issue due to its perceived importance in academia in regard to providing a fuller analysis of Mark.

Furthermore, in terms of this project, I do think an attempt to place Mark in an approximate physical location, with an emphasis on self-identification, will help to relay my impressions of his text, particularly in regard to social and individual reconciliation. Such an inquest is a fruitful method of analyzing possible social proclivities of the author. Regarding identity, my argument will follow Arnal's "double exilic author" argument.[16] However, I hope to expand upon social location possibilities. Although conflating the concepts of location and identity can be seen as problematic, for my purposes, actually linking the two will be beneficial for my arguments. My belief and hope are that while examining the problem of the compositional location, having supporting self-identification arguments will ultimately add depth to my overall assertions and reasoning. Additionally, within this section, I will engage with Mark's perceived written dichotomy and social tensions between urban and rural settings. By effectively employing these narrative techniques, Mark can frame his conceptual proclivities while simultaneously actively engaging in a social-reconciliation construction. Finally, I will end this section with an engagement regarding the question of to whom Mark was writing. Throughout scholarship, there is an assumption that Mark was addressing, or representing, a community—perhaps even a specific Markan community. This community is shaped by where one places Mark geographically

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[16] See William Arnal, "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Z. Smith* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2008), 57–67.

and when one dates Mark. I will argue, however, that the assumption that Mark was writing to or for some community is problematic. It assumes Mark was writing with a clear theology, Christology, and proclivities of discipleship. That Mark was a member of a particular group or writing for or to a specific group is possible. But the assumption that there was a definitive early Markan community that accepted and adhered to a distinct theology or Christology is more based on the assumption of early "Christianity" having different, formal, and highly designed doctrines.

Date

Scholars examining Mark's Gospel held numerous debates regarding when the author first composed his Gospel. Currently, scholarship has reached, more or less, a consensus of a circa 70 CE date of composition. The standard agreement usually falls between 65 and 75 CE. Despite this growing consensus, the issue of dating Mark continues. I will briefly outline and engage in this debate due to its importance for this project. Without a dating argument, this project would fail to garner any credence. In general, scholarship's dating of Mark is split into two camps—pre– and post–70 CE, or pre- or post-destruction of the temple. Scholars who advocate for a pre–70 CE date[17] claim the Gospel makes no detailed references to the temple's destruction and portrays no

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[17] For example, see Keith F. Nickle, *The Synoptic Gospels: Conflict and Consensus* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 75; Charles Cutler Torrey, *Documents of the Primitive Church*, (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941); E. Earle Ellis, "The Date of Provenance of Mark's Gospel" in *The Four Gospels* (ed. F. Van Segroeck; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1992), 801–815; Gunther Zuntz, "Wann wurde das Evangelium Marci geschrieben?" in Markus-Philologie (ed. Hubert Cancik; Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck, 1984), 47–71, he clearly states, "I confessed to a panel my preference for that date of the second gospel to the year 40" ("Ich habe mich erkuhnt vor einem Gremium von Kennern die Datierung des Zweiten Evangeliums in das Jahr 40 zu befurworten," 47). Zuntz's dating of Mark's composition is depended upon Mark 13's correlation with Caligula's temple threat instead of the temple's actual destruction in 70 CE. He states, "This date is based upon interpreting Mark 13:14 as a veiled expression of Caligula's intent to erect his statue in Jerusalem's temple—an unbelievable sacrilege and abomination for believing Jews" ("Dieser Datierung basiert auf der

knowledge of the Roman siege on Jerusalem, or in general, the Jewish revolt against Rome.[18] This contentious issue primarily revolves around interpretations of Mark 13. For pre–70 CE supporters,[19] occasionally Mark 13 is perceived as a legitimate prophecy and not merely a reflection of the violence that occurred in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. However, Eve-Marie Becker argues that historical literature reflects prophesies post factum. She states,

> Historiographical literature in the narrower sense historicizes the Prodigien. She brings them into connection with historical events and later interprets them explicitly from them. Especially in the synthesis of historical representation with the means of an esoteric literary convention lies the innovative potential of historiographical literature in dealing with prodigies.[20]

John Kloppenborg concurs. Discussing the Roman siege ritual of *Evocatio Deorum*, Kloppenborg argues that "the effectiveness of the *evocatio* and the correctness of the interpretation of sacrificial entrails could be known *and narrated* only in retrospect, after the successful completion of a siege."[21]

Deutung von Mark 13, 14 als ein verhullter, aber unzweifelhafter Hinweiss auf Caligulas Absicht, sein Standbild im Tempel zu Jerusalem aufstellen zu lassen—fur glaubige Juden ein Sakrileg von unuberbietbarer Abscheulichkeit," 47). Also see Crossley. Similar to Zuntz, Crossley dates Mark as early as 42 CE.

[18] For example, see E.P. Sanders and M. Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 1989).

[19] For two prominent examples, see Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988) and Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

[20] Eve-Marie Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie: Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 194* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 315. She states, "Die im engeren Sinne historiographische Literatur historisiert die Prodigien, d.h. sie bringt sie in Verbindung mit geschichtlichen Ereignissen und deutet sie nachträglich explizit von diesen her. Gerade in der Synthese historischer Darstellung mit den Mitteln einer an sich esoterischen literarischen Konvention liegt das innovative Potential historiographischer Literatur im Umgang mit Prodigien."

[21] John Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124.3 (2005): 419–450, 444.

Botha provides a slight variation on the prophecy argument. He suggests that the author of

Mark was probably "an itinerant, radical teacher, travelling around and performing this particular

version of the Jesus story on various occasions."[22] Being an itinerant teacher, Botha argues that

Mark could have had very little interest in the temple or its activities. He states,

> It has often been maintained that the destruction of the temple by the Roman armies must have been of major importance to the world of the early Christians. But the use of this argument is not without problems. It presupposes that the fall of Jerusalem was an issue of major concern to all Christians … The destruction of the temple was not necessarily a clear demarcation point with far-reaching implications for all and sundry … [It is] assumed that early Christian documents must reflect the event in certain detail (as measured against Josephus), or that the apparent lack of references must be explained by subtle and artful allusions.[23]

In other words, Botha is proposing that too much emphasis is placed upon the destruction of the

temple as a catastrophic event that flipped the entire world. Therefore, according to Botha,

"Christians" living in other parts of the Roman Empire would not have a direct or personal link

with the temple. Despite Botha's use of "Christian" regarding early Jesus movements, his point of

homogenizing a population is worth consideration. However, this conceptualization implies

indifference and ambivalence to, seemingly, the majority of Jewish "Christians." Moreover, the

destruction of the temple *was* a catastrophic event for many Jewish people. It brought serious

questions of identity along with real social, economic, and political consequences. Perhaps a

bigger problem with Botha's argument is that it appears to derive from both a praising and

apologetic perspective. Botha suggests that Mark's teaching method of praxis was unique: "This

new teaching is not only for listening to, but also to be done; especially when it comes to trust in

God. In this sense, Mark stands out in the context of the Hellenistic world with its peculiar

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[22] Botha, 39.
[23] Botha, 33, 35.

fatalistic attitude."[24] This rhetoric implies the antiquated dichotomy of "Jewish" ritual or sacrifice against active "Christian" social participation.

Certain pre–70 CE scholars argue that Mark 13 is rhetorically addressing Caligula's declaration to erect an image of himself in Jerusalem's Temple.[25] This particular reading usually links the Caligula Crisis to Mark's condemnation in 13:14. He labels the harbinger of crisis as "τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως." In other words, Mark's "Abomination of Desolation" is a direct indictment of Caligula's orders to Petronius to install an image or altar of Caligula. Indeed, Caligula's announcement elicited various protests. As E. Bruce Brooks states, "The Alexandrians sent Philo to plead their case at Rome [and] Caligula's generals protested against it."[26] However, W.A. Such[27] provides a convincing textual argument that Mark employed familiar traditions (Daniel, 1 Maccabees) to a new situation. Such argues that Mark's use of "τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως" refers more to an individual(s) than an object because of the text's combination of a masculine participle (ἑστηκότα - ὅπου οὐ δεῖ) with a neuter phrase (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως). Due to this discrepancy, various explanations have come forth, including an image of a deity or a specific person perceived as an apotheosis. W.A. Such states that this grammatical anomaly draws

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[24] Botha, 50.

[25] For example, see Crossley, Zuntz, E.E. Ellis, N. H. Taylor, "Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis, Part 2, The Markan Eschatological Discourse," in *JSNT* 62 (1996): 13–41; and Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). Theissen, however, does not subscribe to a pre–70 CE date.

[26] E. Bruce Brooks, "Time Depth in Mark," in *Alpha (1): Studies in Early Christianity* (eds. Alvin P Cohen, Glenn S Holland, and E. Bruce Brooks; Amherst: Warring States Project, 2017): 73–80, 76.

[27] W.A. Such, *The Abomination of Desolation in the Gospel of Mark: Its Historical Reference in Mark 13:14 and its Impact in the Gospel*, (Lanham, New York, and Oxford: University Press of America, 1999). Peter C. de Vries also observes this juxtaposition, see Peter C. de Vries, *Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics and the Discourse of Mark 13: Appropriating the Apocalyptic* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2017), 72.

attention to an individual, not an object or event: "The cryptic phrase now refers, not to a thing (pagan statue or image) as in the material from the Caligula Crisis, but to a blasphemous individual."[28] Overall, as Roskam suggests, "There is no mention of profanation; the issue is the temple's destruction."[29]

Another line of reasoning for a pre–70 CE date stems from John William Wenham.[30] Wenham adheres to the Four Document Hypothesis, but dates Luke-Acts from 50–62 CE. Therefore, since Luke's Gospel is dependent upon Mark, Mark must be dated earlier than 50 CE. Wenham's argument is based upon dating Acts circa 62 CE. Due to the texts lacking details regarding Paul's trial and death, Wenham sees this as an implication that the Luke-Acts' author was either not aware of these events or, more likely, they merely had yet to occur. To emphasize his argument, Wenham also depends upon the early church tradition of associating Peter with Rome (found in Acts 12:5–17). The reason for Mark's brevity, distinctness, and emotional detail is indicative of the author transcribing Peter's first-hand accounts. However, as S.H. Smith outlines, "Everything depends on the early date of Acts."[31] The problem is that scholarly consensus generally dates Luke-Acts circa 80–90 CE. By dating Luke-Acts to a later period, the Four Source Hypothesis still aligns with Mark's composition circa 70 CE. Moreover, for

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[28] Such, 57.

[29] Roskam, 90.

[30] See John William Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991).

[31] S.H. Smith, 19. Without diving into a dating debate regarding Luke-Acts, I would agree with a later dating period. I find Joseph B. Tyson's arguments for an even later compositional date of canonical Luke convincing. See Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006). Tyson provides a compelling argument that canonical Luke was based upon a "proto-Luke" and composed circa 120–125 CE as a response to Marcion (119–120 CE). For example, post-resurrection accounts in Luke 24 "may be read as an explicit rejection of the theological convictions of the Marcionites" (86). However, the debate and subject of "proto" and "canonical" Luke, as well as their dates of composition, are well beyond the scope of this project.

Wenham's argument to be convincing, Mark (and Acts) has to be eyewitness testimony.

S.H. Smith again raises a critical objection, contesting the thought that Mark's intimacy is due to proximity. He states, "Some of these details could not have been provided by Peter or any other eyewitness. Jesus' anguished prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (14:36) was made some distance from Peter, James, and John, while they were all fast asleep. Again, some seemingly superfluous details, such as an eyewitness might recount, have theological import for Mark."[32]

Two additional problems are encountered when equating Mark with a pre–70 CE date. Firstly, there is no evidence from early "Jewish-Christian" groups that reflect or reveal a distinctive anti-temple attitude, as "anti-temple sentiment was not prevalent within early Christianity before the temple's destruction."[33] The basis for the Jewish "anti-temple" attitude can be attributed to the perceived need for some reformation or re-evaluation of various priestly roles and rituals. Secondly, what would be the motivation for the author to include this specific prophecy? For post–70 CE advocates,[34] a perceived fulfilled prophecy is the precise explanation as it confirms Jesus' predictions. The prophecies have become a reality. The post–70 CE advocates also claim that chapter 13 comments on the current chaotic situation people find themselves in after the siege of Jerusalem while attempting to provide comfort and stability.

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[32] S.H. Smith, 21–22.

[33] Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 63.

[34] Scholars who advocate for a post–70 CE date are too numerous to outline fully. For the case of brevity, see Roskam, especially pages 81–93; S.H. Smith, 22–23; Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Marks Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Charles A. Bobertz, *The Gospel of Mark: A Liturgical Reading* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2016), especially xviii n8 and xxiii; Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991), 315; Werner H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 13; Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia and London: Trinity Press International & SCM Press, 1990), 290.

However, for pre–70 CE advocates, the motivation is more difficult to comprehend. The main issue is Jesus' credibility and, as Adam Winn states, "given that much of Mark's gospel (if not all of it) is devoted to promoting Jesus, including this prophecy, was quite risky. If the temple is not destroyed, then Mark's Jesus is easily discredited."[35] In other words, why would people take Mark's Gospel seriously with Jesus' failed prophecies? One could argue that the prophecy does not have a specific timeline, but as significant amounts of time pass without its realization, Mark is increasingly discredited. Does including a dubious major prophecy to make a minor point of Jesus' abilities enough for Mark to damage and discredit his whole gospel? Winn provides an answer, "… at no point did Mark risk the validity of his gospel by including prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled."[36]

Overall, post–70 CE arguments are more compelling. Throughout the text, there are too many anachronisms and reference dates to ignore. One example is found in Mark 8:22–26. Arguably, these verses provide readers with a dating "clue." The narrative revolves around Jesus healing a blind man with his spit. This narrative is nearly identical to a circulated myth revolving around the Roman emperor Vespasian. C.M. Tuckett claims that "the suggestion that the Markan story is a deliberate counter to Vespasianic claims means that Mark must be dated later than 70 CE."[37] Whether or not this is a challenge to or replacement of Vespasian's myth is unknown. But, for dating purposes, Mark's resemblance is compelling.

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[35] Winn, 65.

[36] Winn, 67.

[37] C.M. Tuckett, "Christ and the Emperor: Some Reflections on Method and Methodological Issues Illustrated from the Gospel of Mark," in *Christ and the Emperor: The Gospel Evidence* (eds. Gilbert Van Belle and Joseph Verheyden; Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 185–202, 192.

Christopher B. Zeichmann[38] provides another compelling argument for a post–70 CE date.

Instead of focusing on Mark 13, Zeichmann employs the taxation pericope (Mark 12:13–17) for

his case. Pre–70 CE taxation policies in Galilee, Judea, and southern Syria are debatable. Certain

scholars claim that Herod instituted some form of oppressive taxation,[39] whereas others[40] dispute

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[38] See Christopher B. Zeichmann, "The Date of Mark's Gospel apart from the Temple and Rumors of War: The Taxation Episode (12:13-17) as Evidence," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79 (2017), 422–437.

[39] See Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Roman Domination: The Jewish Revolt and the Destruction of the Second Temple," in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple* (ed. Hershel Shanks; Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2011), 287–324, 296; Richard Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996), 77–80. Horsley claims that Galileans had three levels of taxes—to Herod, Roman tribute, and the temple tax. Also see Jean-Philippe Levy, *The Economic Life of the Ancient World* (trans. John G. Biram; Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1967). It is important to note here that Levy does not indicate that specific and overwhelming taxes were forced upon Judea pre–70 CE. Levy's argument is more a generalized comment regarding "permanent tributes, simultaneous taxes and rentals on land reserved by Rome as her own property … These were sometimes old established taxes enforced and collected thenceforth for the benefit of the Roman state" (63). Moreover, Levy states that during the Roman Empire, large-scale public works and projects were undertaken (72). However, Levy does not claim that these massive construction projects were funded primarily through taxation. Roman coffers bulged due to exploitation, loan-sharking, and colonial expansion (see 63–66).

[40] Especially see Fabian E. Udoh, *To Caesar What is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine 63 B.C.E–70 C.E.* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005). Udoh argues that there is no evidence to suggest Rome imposed an annual tribute on Herod (143) as it cannot be established what taxes were paid in Herod's kingdom (160). Udoh states that "under the Republic and early Principate, forms of taxes and tax rates were not uniformly applied" (161). Given some form of economic autonomy, Udoh proposes that Herod would have imposed taxes dependent upon various situations and what suited his economic need and political agenda at the time (162). He also states that it appears there were some forms of direct taxes that were paid in cash; this would include a sporadic land tax (164). He also emphasizes that there is no evidence to suggest that Herod levied a type of "head tax" (171). Udoh concludes that Herod's revenue must have (primarily) been from indirect taxes in the forms of tolls, duties, and sales taxes (particularly within marketplaces on items such as fruits) as they were ubiquitous in city-states. Additionally, "Rome permitted dependent states to collect their tolls" (171–176). Overall, Udoh attempts to break the scholarly narrative that oppressive taxation systems were a primary precursor to the Jewish Rebellion in 66 CE. He states, "the economic despair brought about by Herodian and Roman taxes, it is alleged, drove Judean 'peasants' to the protest movement now called Christianity and to open revolt in 66 CE. Rome, I have argued, derived no direct taxes from Herod's kingdom, or portions of it, while the

the claims of a crushing tax system. Dennis P. Kehoe points out that the imperial land confiscation (resulting in imperial estates) occurred gradually, especially picking up steam during Nero's reign. He states, "Nero put to death (and therefore confiscated their property) six possessors who owned half of Africa … [This] does suggest that the extent of imperial ownership of land in Africa increased substantially under Nero."[41] However, post–70 CE Judean taxation is more traceable, primarily due to Vespasian's new tax, *fiscus Iudaicus*, which was imposed after the destruction of the temple and the occupation of Jerusalem. As Jean-Philippe Levy states, new charges were sometimes imposed "based on the rights of conquest."[42] Indeed, Vespasian did place a new taxation upon the Ἰουδαίων. "Vespasian introduced this tax to replace the annual half-tetradrachm/one-didrachm tax that Jewish men had paid to the temple … the differences between the temple tax and the *fiscus Iudaicus* were significant: the new tax did not support the cult of the Jerusalem temple but was collected by Roman officials to fund the Roman temple known as Jupiter Capitolinus."[43] Zeichmann convincingly argues that Mark's taxation episode refers to this new tax situation. He reinforces his hypothesis by indicating that Mark employed the term "Καίσαρ" as nominal and not as a representation of the entire imperial state. Mark is directly

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territory was governed by Herod and his descendants" (180). Udoh also argues against the notion that tithes were an economic burden. The "first tithe," which people were somewhat hesitant to pay, was given to either priests or Levites. The "second tithe" was more for entertainment during the festivities of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Therefore, the second tithe should not be considered a tax. People wanted or were more willing to give based upon tradition (277). Both these tithes helped feed the temple personnel and aided the economy of Jerusalem. Udoh also notes that they both seemed to have been more voluntary, as people could exploit various loopholes (278).

[41] Dennis P. Kehoe, *The Economics of Agriculture on Roman Imperial Estates in North Africa; Hypomnemata 89: Undersuchungen Zur Antike und zu Ihrem Nachleben* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1988), 11.

[42] Levy, 63.

[43] Zeichmann, 432.

referring to someone's specific image on a coin and not utilizing an analogy.[44] Zeichmann summarizes,

> Mark's usage of Καίσαρ also presumes a nominal meaning. For Mark, "Caesar" is the name of the specific man whose image and title (ἐπιγραφή) the coin depicts, and so cannot be a title itself. "Caesar" does not function as synecdoche for "civil authorities" or "the Roman state" in Mark, and the evangelist does not treat this name as synonymous with either the office of *princeps* or the political body of the empire—usage consistent with other late first-century Greek writings.[45]

Another issue Zeichmann brings forward is Mark's monetary terminology. In verse 15, Mark labels the taxation coinage as denarii (*δηνάριον*). The interesting point here, as Zeichmann observes, is that denarii were rare or even nonexistent in the Levant region before 70 CE and only came into more extensive circulation after the Jewish rebellion. But since denarii is a distinctive word choice, Mark offers a coinage anachronism.[46] The primary point is that "even though Judeans were subject to several taxes after the annexation of the territory in 6 CE, none of these capitation taxes was collected via coin until the war … [Instead,] The collection of the *fiscus ludaicus* began in Vespasian's fourth Egyptian year (commencing 29 August 71)."[47] The significance is that Mark is commenting upon his contemporary problem (concerning confusion overpaying this newly enforced tax), but anachronously locates the controversy in the past through his narrative.

Parables have a long history of interpretation as allegories for real people and situations, and Markan studies are not exempt. David Rhoads states that parables "offer commentary and explanations about the meaning of actions and people and happenings in the story-world of

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[44] See Zeichmann, 426–428.
[45] Zeichmann, 428.
[46] See Zeichmann, 428–429.
[47] Zeichmann, 431, 437.

Mark's Gospel."[48] Roskam continues this trend with a socio-historical interpretation of the parable

of the vineyard, which provides another insight into dating Mark post–70 CE, specifically, she

calls attention to the situational political rhetoric in Mark. Roskam employs the parable of the

vineyard (Mark 12:1–3) as an allegory for the political changes in Palestine and Judea. Roskam

interprets this parable as a post–70 CE political reflection. Mark, referencing Isaiah 5, depicts the

person planting the vineyard (Ἀμπελῶνα ἄνθρωπος ἐφύτευσεν) and the "ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος"

(the owner) as God. The vineyard (Ἀμπελῶνα) itself represents the geographical lands and

peoples of Israel. [49] God then delegated the maintenance of the vineyard (the land and people) to

socio-political and "religious" leaders. These leaders consisted of the "chief priests, scribes, and

elders, that is, all parties that made up the Jewish Sanhedrin."[50] The tenants, or leaders, of the

vineyard, continually reject the owner's messengers and eventually kill the owner's son, an

ultimate foreshadowing of Jesus' crucifixion. Roskam argues that the parable accuses the Jewish

governance of rejecting God's ownership and of poor all-around leadership. "Therefore, God will

intervene, take leadership over Israel away from the Jewish leaders, and give it to others (v. 9)."[51]

Overall, for Roskam, the parable of the tenants' primary emphasis is the shifting of ownership.

Philip Kendrick indicates that the shifting of land ownership was prevalent from Claudius to

Vespasian,

> Roman officials set about "normalizing" the state of the ancient Ptolemaic royal lands, which had passed into its possession under the will of Ptolemy Apion but neglected to the extent that their tenants had ceased to pay rent or to acknowledge public ownership.

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[48] David Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism and the Gospel of Mark," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50.3 (Sept, 1982); 411–434, 425.

[49] Roskam, 82–83.

[50] Roskam, 83.

[51] Roskam, 83. Mark 12:9 states, the master of the vineyard and destroy the tenants and will give the vineyard to others (… ἐλεύσεται καὶ ἀπολέσει τοὺς γεωργούς, καὶ δώσει τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἄλλοις).

These lands were now surveyed, recovered to the State and sometimes leased out again on new terms.[52]

Roskam, however, argues that the only significant shift, or change, in the political situation (ownership) of Palestine occurred after the Jewish revolt and destruction of the temple. Before 70 CE, Judea, Galilee, and Samaria were being governed and administered by Roman *praefecti* and *procuratores* under the legate of Syria. After the rebellion and temple destruction, "Judea became a separate Roman province on the same footing as the province of Syria. From then on, Judea was ruled by its own Roman legate."[53] Roskam's point here is a vital one. She states,

> The relatively large degree of self-government Judea had enjoyed until 70 [CE] no longer existed after the seizure of Jerusalem. During the Roman occupation of the country from 6 [CE] up to 70 [CE], the internal affairs of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had to a great extent been handled by the Jerusalem Sanhedrin. After 70 [CE], however, the Sanhedrin could no longer exercise its former authority, for the Romans took the administration of Judea directly into their own hands.[54]

The implications of the poor leadership of the vineyard are clear. Due to the corrupt tenants, the Jewish administration lost its semi-autonomy. To support Roskam's argument, I would add a section of verse 12:10 ("The stone that the builders rejected becomes the head of the corner-stone—"Λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας") as evidence for a post–70 CE composition date. The builders (οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες) rejected (ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν), or did not stand up for, their institution. Therefore, the new stone (Λίθον) is the new socio-political institutional cornerstone. Continuing with my overall argument, I suggest that the new stone (Λίθον) is a symbolic reference to Jesus, or "the son," as the new socio-cultural institution. Overall, Roskam provides a convincing argument/interpretation of the

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[52] Philip Kendrick with a contribution by Ahmed Buzaian, *Libya Archaeological Guides: Cyrenaica* (London: Silphium Press, 2013), 6.
[53] Roskam, 83.
[54] Roskam, 84.

parable of the vineyard as an indication of a post–70 CE composition. Similar to Zeichmann's

argument of the taxation episode being a reflection of a current (circa 70 CE) situational concern,

the parable of the tenants can also read as an anachronistic reflection, one in which Mark

addresses the new post–70 CE political realities within a narrative situated in the past.

In support of the argument that Mark was implying that the previous temple leadership

was corrupt, the episode of the fig tree (Mark 11:12–25) can be employed to reinforce this point.

The root of the narrative is Jesus' cursing. Even though figs were not yet in season, Jesus still

utters a curse upon the barren tree. The addition of the phrase "for it was not the season of figs"

(ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς οὐκ ἦν σύκων) is telling. Mark is alluding to an obvious metaphor. If he intended

to write a literal narrative about a withered fig tree, then Jesus cursing the barren tree is peculiar

because it portrays Jesus as entitled, bad-tempered, and overindulged. The very next verse(s)

provides the reader with the answer to the previous metaphor: "And they came to Jerusalem and

into the temple, he began to throw out the sellers and the buying in the temple" (Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς

Ἱεροσόλυμα. καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀγοράζοντας

ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ). Afterwards, in verses 20–25, Mark again links the withered fig tree with Jesus'

condemnation of temple practices and leadership: "And going in the morning, they saw the fig

tree withered from its roots and Peter remembering said to him 'Teacher, look, the fig tree you

cursed withered'" (Καὶ παραπορευόμενοι πρωῒ εἶδον τὴν συκῆν ἐξηραμμένην ἐκ ῥιζῶν καὶ

ἀναμνησθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει αὐτῷ· Ῥαββί, ἴδε ἡ συκῆ ἣν κατηράσω ἐξήρανται). Peter's

declaration of the fig tree's death caused by Jesus' cursing reminds readers that right before,

Jesus also cursed/accused temple practices and leadership. Mark's "sandwich" structure[55] is

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[55] Much has been written on the narrative structures of Mark, specifically his "sandwich," or framing, technique. For example, see Marcin Moj, "Sandwich Technique in the Gospel of Mark," in *The Biblical Annals* 8.3 (2018): 363–377; Rhoads, 424; James R. Edwards, "Markan

apparent and significant. By inserting Jesus' temple rebuke between two withered fig tree episodes, Mark is directly linking the narratives into one specific meaning—a denouncement of previous temple practices and leadership, which he now perceived as antiquated and corrupt. Discussing Mark's narrative techniques and structures, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon states,

> Mark's rhetoric is one of juxtaposition—placing scene over against scene to elicit comparison, contrast, [and] insight … the inserting of one story into another, is an integral part of the plot. But Markan intercalation is always for interpretive purposes. The framing story is to be interpreted in light of the inside story, and vice versa.[56]

Also, Mark's use of the fig tree as an allegorical symbol cleverly resembles Isaiah 34:4, which equates withered leaves and shrivelled figs from a fig tree to a withering cosmological event. By incorporating Isaiah's symbolism, Mark's inclinations to the reader are apparent. Therefore, by utilizing Isaiah's metaphor, Mark associates the withered fig tree to previous temple practices and leadership. They became cursed because they failed to produce any subsistence (or "fruit"). "The fig-tree Jerusalem and its corrupt religious hierarchy cannot produce any sustenance."[57]

Finally, Mark 13, or Mark's mini-apocalypse, is arguably the foremost episode scholars focus on while attempting to date Mark. In general, Mark 13 has influenced a copious number of scholarly interpretations. Unfortunately, as S.H. Smith outlines, "much of the [scholarly] evidence relies on external factors and surmise, with very little weight placed on the text itself."[58] For my purposes, a complete scholarly overview of Mark 13 is well beyond the scope of my project. In general, two academic discourses emerge from Mark 13. One discourse argues that Mark 13 refers

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Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," in *Novum Testamentum* 31.3 (July, 1989), 193–216.

[56] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 34, 39.

[57] W.A. Such, 166.

[58] S.H. Smith, 22.

to the temple's destruction. Some scholars, however, dispute this claim, arguing that there is no clear indication that Mark was explicitly referring to the destruction of the temple reflectively. Since copious discourses surrounding Mark 13 exist, my aim here is to briefly engage with this debate to reinforce my position that Mark's text was composed post–70 CE.

Samuel George Frederick Brandon argues that Mark 13 is a clear example of a reflective story due to its vivid nature, meaning that Mark's intense and powerful imagery is a result of the author's hindsight,[59] or his "*vaticinium ex eventu*."[60] S.H. Smith, however, flips Brandon's argument. He compares Mark's "vivid" account of Jesus' prophecy to Luke 21:20: "whenever you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies then you will know that her desolation is near" (Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ, τότε γνῶτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς). Luke describes the historical situation of Jerusalem being surrounded by armies (κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων), meaning that Luke's account of Jerusalem's destruction is more transparent about the actual situational episode. Therefore Smith concludes, "Mark is rather less specific, and would fit a situation in which the destruction of the Temple was understood to be imminent, but had not yet occurred."[61] S.H. Smith bases his argument on the reasoning that circa 65 CE, communities *were anticipating* the temple's destruction. Luke, argues Smith, provides a more accurate reflection on the temple's destruction than Mark. Therefore, Mark 13 does not have to be read as post factum since assumptions of an immediate catastrophe of some sort were already circulating within the population. S.H. Smith also draws attention to Mark's warnings of "false Christs." He states, "Mark's text would fit the period 65–70 [CE]. The proliferation of false

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[59] See Samuel G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London: SPCK, 1957), 185–205.
[60] Roskam, 86.
[61] S.H. Smith, 23.

Christs (13:5–6; 13:9–13, 18) was more likely at times of upheaval or crisis, and the Zealot

fanatics who orchestrated the Jewish war against Rome would easily have fitted the bill."[62] S.H.

Smith's argument of a ubiquitous discourse of an impending cataclysm is somewhat problematic.

There is no evidence of widely circulated documents stipulating an imminent disaster of epic

proportions. Moreover, if there were, it is impossible to "prove" this discourse was ubiquitous or

even popular among the general population. Additionally, as Roskam points out, "The evangelist

could not have presented the prediction of the destruction of the temple as an utterance of Jesus

with such firmness unless he was very certain about its fulfilment. Otherwise he would have

risked having Jesus pronounce a prophecy that would be falsified by the facts, which is a highly

implausible supposition."[63] In other words, Mark would not have dared to compose such a

declaration unless he was clear that Jesus' prophecy would be fulfilled. Otherwise, Mark runs the

risk of having his main character's abilities and status questioned. Another problem arises when

S.H. Smith is drawn into the ecclesiastical debate about Mark's compositional relationship with

Peter, namely the question of whether Peter was still alive while Mark was recording his

teachings. S.H. Smith suggests that Papias was noncommittal on the issue of Peter being active

during the times of composition, only that Mark wrote down what Peter said. S.H. Smith

concluded that this "does not necessarily suggest that Peter was still alive at the time of writing.

On balance, the earliest and perhaps most reliable testimony indicates that Mark wrote after

Peter's death but, by implication, not long after."[64] S.H. Smith appears to neglect his previous

warning, one that suggests not relying on external evidence.[65] While developing an argument

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[62] S.H. Smith, 23.
[63] Roskam, 87.
[64] S.H. Smith, 24.
[65] Once again, see S.H. Smith, "Much of the [scholarly] evidence relies on external factors and surmise, with very little weight placed on the text itself" (22).

centred on interpreting Papias, S.H. Smith falls into the trap of relying on external evidence instead of the text itself.

On the opposite side, Roskam argues that Mark 13, with a particular emphasis on verse 19, is a clear indication of a post–70 CE compositional date. The focus here should be on the perceived changing timeframes within the verse. Roskam states,

> The "now" at the end of this verse is remarkable … One would expect Mark's Jesus to say in v. 19 "such as has not been … until then," not "until now." Thus in v.19 there is a change of perspective between the words αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι, which depict the future events from Jesus' viewpoint, and the word νῦν, which refers to the same events from a different viewpoint, i.e. that of the author. The "now" in v. 19 seems to reflect Mark's time rather than Jesus.[66]

Additionally, scholars draw attention to the correlation between the temple's destruction and the tearing of the temple curtain in Mark 15:38: "And the temple's curtain was split into two, from top till bottom" (καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω). The argument for a post–70 CE compositional date is simply that "the rending of the temple curtain means the profanation of the temple and presages the temple's destruction. By tearing the curtain, God effectively deprives the holiest part of the temple, the centre of Jewish worship, of its protection."[67]

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[66] Roskam, 91.

[67] Roskam, 92–93. While I agree with Roskam on her basic point here, I do question her overall conclusion on the temple's destruction. Roskam states that this was due to Jesus' crucifixion. In other words, the temple's destruction and the Roman victory against the Jewish rebellion were simply an act of vengeance—God's revenge for killing Jesus. It would be "Highly unlikely that Mark would have presented Jesus' death as avenged by God through the destruction of the temple, as he does in Mk 15:38, if that event had not yet taken place" (93). I will address Mark's Passion episode in the following chapters. In these chapters, I will argue that this episode is a strong indicator of Mark's attempt to reconcile and rethink a traumatic situation in terms of developing new communal institutions and not simply a supernatural or cosmic "revenge" narrative.

As previously mentioned, one of the leading scholarly contentions within Mark 13 is verse 14, especially regarding the "Abomination of Desolation" (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως). Scholars are divided in their attempts to deduce the meaning of this passage. In the early mid-nineteenth century, the Little Apocalypse theory consisting of Mark 13 as reminiscent of an older Jewish written apocalyptic document became popular, much to the chagrin of George R. Beasley-Murray. Beasley-Murray states, "The theory of a 'little apocalypse' in Mark 13 was not the product of a dispassionate analysis of the text; it was the last stage of a developing emotional reaction to a theological problem propounded by agnostics."[68] Roskam concurs by adding, the "Problem was the insight that the announcement of the imminent eschatological breakthrough of God's kingdom as predicted by Jesus had not been fulfilled. In order to 'save' Jesus from criticism, scholars tended to regard the eschatological elements as inauthentic sayings, not stemming from Jesus himself."[69] More recent scholarship,[70] however, still maintains that Mark 13 stems from another apocalyptic document. Whether or not Mark does lift his mini-apocalypse from another record is inconsequential. For one, there is no definitive way to reveal this hypothetical document and nothing to concretely base it on (unlike, for example, the document of Q).[71]

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[68] George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse* (Brockton: Peabody: 1993), 19.

[69] Roskam, 88.

[70] See Kloppenborg.

[71] For clarification, I do not think Mark was copying material from a previously *written* text. To me, Arnal's view of Mark utilizing previous sayings materials is a more likely scenario. Arnal states, "Once again, Mark appears to be using essentially noncontextual sayings material to construct a narrative." William Arnal, "Mark, War, and Creative Imagination," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 401–482, 439.

The one clear fact is that Mark presumes his potential readers[72] will be familiar with this phrase. In verse 14, he writes, "Let the reader understand" (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω). James Crossley suggests that Mark's audience would recognize this phrase in Rome.[73] While indeed possible, the idea of linking the "Abomination of Desolation" (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) to the universal and homogenized Rome is too generalized. What is evident, however, is Mark's familiarity with the book of Daniel. Specifically, he displays his awareness of Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. In Daniel, the "Abomination of Desolation" (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) applies to the desecration of the temple by the Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BCE. While previously covering scholarly attempts to link this passage with Caligula,[74] scholars who date Mark post–70 CE are also conflicted regarding who or what this derogatory title is. Some refer to the Zealot leader Eleazar, who occupied the temple.[75] Robert Eisler argues that it denotes Pilate's assignment of Roman soldiers in Jerusalem.[76] Peter C. de Vries understands the title referring "to

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[72] Note here that I purposely chose to stipulate Mark's "potential readers" instead of a specific Markan community. I will address the issue of Mark composing his gospel for, or to, a specific community later in this chapter.

[73] Crossley, 28–29.

[74] Also see Brooks, 76 and 80. Brooks states, "All told, the Caligula interpretation thus seems literarily unproblematic" (76). Citing the Caligula episode as the most plausible interpretation, Brooks argues Mark 13 was written around the summer of 40 CE. To establish this date, Brooks draws attention to Mark 13:18, "Yet pray that your fleeing will not be occur in winter" (προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται χειμῶνος). Overall, Brooks argues that Mark completed his text circa 45 CE, one year after Herod's death (80). However, Brooks heavily relies on Luke-Acts for historical dating purposes.

[75] See Joel Marcus, "The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark," *JBL* 111 (1992): 441–462, 454–456; and Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 345–346.

[76] Found in de Vries, 72.

corrupt temple leadership."[77] Others argue that the title was about Titus.[78] Despite the passage's ambiguity, I am inclined to gravitate towards τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως referring to Titus, or more precisely and likely, the Roman legion(s) stationed in Jerusalem. The masculine participle ἑστηκότα stipulates a continued placement, or standing, not a brief defilement or threat of desecration. Additionally, I am in agreement (to a certain degree) with W.A. Such regarding Mark 13 as a narrative possessing an overall narrative structure.[79] Such argues that the main crux of Mark 13 is the narrative's climax in verse 14. Mark begins with a narrative introduction in vv. 1–4, builds his story through vv. 5–13 (a crescendo of sorts), leading to verse 14, the climax of the narrative.[80] The continual presence of Roman legionnaires in Jerusalem correlates with both these points.

The main point, however, is that readers can more readily identify numerous and various possibilities of the τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως if Mark is a post–70 CE document. Roskam states

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[77] de Vries, 73. De Vries interprets Mark's τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως to the temple leaders. He argues that Mark perceives temple leadership (especially the high priest) and their temple practices as blasphemous (73).

[78] See W.A. Such; Roskam, 87–92; Ivan Head, "Mark as a Roman Document from the Year 69: Testing Martin Hengel's Thesis," *JRH* 28 (2004), 240–259; and Morna Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (BNTC; London: A & C Black, 1991), 313–15.

[79] To be clear, I agree with Such's general argument regarding narrative structure, but question certain conclusions. For example, I would quibble with the "fact" that Mark is based upon an existing Jewish apocalyptic text (4), although "not necessarily with a set literary form" (53), which stemmed from the Caligula episode (53). Also, I am skeptical of Such's reasoning for Mark 13. He argues that Mark was addressing a specific community that had undergone persecution (171–178). He states, "Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin is a Markan construction of exemplary suffering easily interfacing with [current] discipleship experience of persecution" (175). Such argues that as a result of this persecution, Mark's rectification is an eschatological intervention (see 170 and 173).

[80] See W.A. Such, 19, 24, 27, 29, 31, 36–37. Such states, "The syntactical structure in vv. 5–13 peaks at v. 14 where the sign request in v.4 is answered. Verses 5–13 fail to provide the pinpoint specificity required to answer what the singular τὸ σημεῖον indicates while v. 14 does. Instead vv. 5–13 *create tension by unfolding preliminary events which sequentially propel the narrative forward to a climactic point* at v. 14 where the sign request is answered" (24, emphasis added).

Mark 13 is "eas[ier] to understand if one supposes that the evangelist knew that the temple had

been captured by the Roman army."[81] Overall, I agree with the majority of scholars who date

Mark's composition in a post–70 CE context. Zeichmann's examination of the taxation episode,

Mark 13, and the parable of the tenants' argues that these pericopes resemble Palestine's shifting

political situational reality consistent with a 72–73 CE date. This date affords Mark a timeframe in

which recent traumatic historical events and their participants were still current enough to be fresh

within his mind. It also provides him enough of a time lapse to reflect upon and develop a

rethinking, interpretation, and reconciliation of such events and the resulting socio-cultural self-

identification concerns and disputes.

Identity and Location

Perhaps a more divisive scholarly issue surrounding the Gospel of Mark is *where* Mark

composed his document. Locating a definitive geographical location for Mark's composition is

notoriously problematic, if not impossible.[82] Despite the difficulty locating Mark, there are strong

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[81] Roskam, 91.

[82] In terms of Arnal's double exile argument, if Mark was a double exile (which this project assumes) who ultimately landed and settled in Upper Galilee/Southern Syria (which this project also assumes), where was he "originally" situated? This question is elusive and impossible to concretely answer as every argument would be entirely based upon conjecture. Although, in terms of pure speculation, I would suggest a locational "origin" of Eastern Galilee (Tiberias or Tarichaeae) or Cyrene. Again, I am not suggesting these propositions are correct. I find the engagement with locational possibilities intriguing. Eastern Galilee or Cyrene social history appears to relate well to certain sections of Mark. Arguments advocating a Galilean compositional location could also work as a testimony for Mark's "homeland." Cyrene is more difficult to explain. Kenrick states that "During classical Antiquity this … zone was densely settled … [and t]here was a substantial Jewish community in Cyrenaica" (1, 6). The point here is not that there was a Jewish population in Cyrene, but that Cyrene suffered from continuous hostilities between urban and rural populations, and between the various ethnicities within the city—Greek, Libyan, and Jewish. Kenrick states, "Cyrenaica suffered an extended period of instability, with squabbles within the cities, between the cities and between the Greeks and the Libyans of the interior … [and] there would always have been tension between the settled urban

arguments for and against the various locations. In scholarly debates, two deductions primarily

appear. First is the traditional site for Mark's composition, namely Rome.[83] In contrast, the last

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and agricultural communities" (5). Mark's text coincides with these various hostilities. Additionally, bread is a major dietary concern in Mark (feeding narratives, Last Supper). Although Palestine was a bread producer, North Africa was the primary wheat producer in the Roman Empire—"Roman North Africa supplied perhaps two thirds of the grain consumed at Rome in the first century … [and was the] most important source of grain by the reign of Nero" (Kehoe, 3-4). North Africa had significant economic power (see Levy, 40–42) as the vast majority of North African produced grain was reserved for Rome, threatening eastern Greek cities with possible food shortages (see Levy, 77). Control of Rome's "bread bowl" was power. Vespasian, who controlled Egypt during the succession hostilities after Nero's death, could have become emperor simply by forcing grain embargos (Levy, 78). Finally, the Jewish populace in Cyrene consisted of organized groups (possibly implying a military term) who involved themselves in various political disturbances—see Shim'on Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 131–135. This meant that they did face sporadic hostilities in Roman North Africa, for instance, the Alexandrian riots and resulting persecutions—see Sandra Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 C.E. and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009). Additionally, Flaccus proclaiming an edict that all Jews were now "foreigners" in Alexandria—see Joseph Meleze Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Ramese II to Emperor Hadrian* (trans. Robert Cornman; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 169.

[83] Numerous scholars subscribe to and advocate this stance. For example, see Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); John R. Donahue, "Windows and Mirrors: The Setting of Mark's Gospel" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995), 1–26; Donald Senior, "'With Swords and Clubs …'—The Setting of Mark's Gospel and His Critique of Abusive Power" in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987), 10–20; S.H. Smith, 18–28, where he states, "It would seem that, on balance, the traditional setting of Rome is the most likely" (28). Smith also makes a perplexing statement, "Since Rome is the only serious claimant, and Mark's association with the city was widely acknowledged from the earliest times, *Mark's status as a Roman gospel remains relatively unchallenged*" (28, emphasis added). This statement is puzzling because Smith *does* outline arguments challenging Rome as the compositional location, indicating that he *is* aware of competing contentions. Therefore, his statement claiming Rome as Mark's compositional location being unchallenged is confusing. Also see Frederick C. Grant, *The Earliest Gospel: Studies of the evangelic tradition at its point of crystallization in writing* (New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1943), 53–57. Interestingly, Grant's chapter of a prevalent ecclesiastical movement in Galilee seems to reflect a good argument for a Galilean composition (125–147). Here, Grant convincingly argues that the "Son of Man" eschatology stems from a "northern" concept (gathered from "northern" texts, such as Enoch and Daniel) and differs from the more nationalistic "Messiah" concept, which was more based in Judea/Jerusalem (126–127).

two locational arguments are relatively related—Galilee, or Southern Syria.[84] It should be noted

that there are arguments for the compositional location of Alexandria.[85] However, since this

perception is from myths of the early Egyptian Christian tradition, it has not found a significant

foothold in the majority of scholarship. As such, I will not directly address this perspective.

Hans Leander, relying on biblical tradition (Irenaeus), places the author of Mark in Rome.

Despite the seeming agricultural settings throughout Mark, Leander argues for an urban

environment, specifically Rome. He states, "Parables in Mark all come from the agrarian world …

[this] indicates a rural setting …Written texts would require considerable skills and financial

resources, [writing] was a largely urban phenomenon, which makes the proposition of a rural

origin less likely."[86] Adam Winn agrees with Mark's composition location being in Rome. He

argues that Mark displays influences of Latin syntax and vocabulary. Winn dismisses the Aramaic

in Mark as the author catering somewhat to his Jewish audience by insisting that "many of the

Jews in Rome were from Palestine and Aramaic influence on their use of Greek would be

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[84] Once again, numerous scholars adhere to this position. For example, see Howard C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); Joel Marcus, "The Jewish War and the Sitz im Leben of Mark" in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992), 441–462; Koester, 289–292; Theissen, 236–249. Theissen concludes, "if we must choose between the hypothesis of a Roman or a Syrian origin for Mark's Gospel, it seems to me that the weight of the evidence is on the side of its having been written … [and] more readily understood if it originated in the southern part of Syria" (249).

[85] Scholars who claim Alexandria as Mark's compositional location are more limited than scholars advocating for Rome or Palestine/Galilee. This position is based more on early Christian writings (for example, see Eusebius, *HE*, II. xvi. 1), although this reading has been challenged as a misreading (see S.H. Smith, 26); John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.*, especially 1:7. However, rhetoric relating Mark to Alexandria appears to be based on early Egyptian Christian tradition where Mark is perceived to be the "founder and first bishop of the church in Alexandria." See Birger A. Pearson, "Christians and Jews in First-Century Alexandria," in *The Harvard Theological Review, Christians among Jews and Gentiles: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* 79.1/3 (Jan.–Jul., 1986), 206–216, 210.

[86] Leander, 169–170. Despite my disagreement with Mark's composition in Rome, I agree with Leander that the text is likely an urban document.

expected. The use of Latinisms in Galilee is much more difficult to explain than Aramaisms in Rome."[87] However, the exact opposite appears more likely. The Aramaic phrase found in Mark 5:41, "*Talitha cum*" meaning "little girl, get up," does not appear to have any significant meaning or a direct connotation with anything notable. The Aramaic phrases Mark employs are more ordinary, commonplace, and informal. They are routine "everyday" language. However, Mark's choice of Latin words is telling; for example, he speaks of a census, a centurion, a denarius, a legion, *praetorium* (governor's official residence), and an executioner. All these Latin terms are substantial titles, labels, and designations. All have a direct connotation to something or someone that most, if not all, with whom people living in first-century Palestine would have been familiar. Roskam states that Mark's Latin "terms could easily spread throughout the Roman world and become loan words wherever in the Empire Greek was spoken. *Their use was certainly not restricted to Rome.*"[88] Another difficulty with locating Mark in Rome is that Mark establishes the vast majority of Jesus' ministry and relocation after his death in Galilee. Winn again dismisses the text by suggesting that "Mark's tradition" of Galilee as the place of Jesus' ministry and resurrection site is the reason for Galilean prominence.[89] The dismissal of the text in favour of an ambiguous response is problematic. Winn seems to ignore Mark's clarion call for people relocate themselves into Upper Galilee,[90] seemingly to create social, organizational institution(s). Finally,

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[87] Winn, 84

[88] Roskam, 95 (emphasis added).

[89] Winn, 84.

[90] See Mark 13:14, "Let the reader understand, then the ones in Judea, let them flee into the mountains" (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω, τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη). This verse can be read as a call for social relocation. More importantly, see Mark 16:7, "But go, tell his desciples disciples and Peter that he is proceding into Galilee, there you will see him, as he said to you" (ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι Προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν). This verse is vital due to its call to action immediately after the climax of Jesus' death. Therefore, in terms of social narrative, Mark 16:7 is the stories story's resolution intertwined with an indication to congregate.

Winn argues for a Roman location due to a presumed motif of "suffering discipleship" relating to the persecutions of Nero.[91] Although possible, this motif appears odd if one considers that Mark was composed at least two to four years after Nero's death. Also, early Christian persecution was local, sporadic, and exaggerated. Mark was writing under Vespasian and the fact, one that Winn himself acknowledges,[92] that there is no evidence of persecution under Vespasian is significant. Additionally, the presumed theme of suffering discipleship is minor (8:34–35). For this theme to have a substantial impact, one has to interpret Mark 13 in this light. However, Winn slightly contradicts himself because his argument surrounding Mark 13 relies exclusively on "a future reality for Mark and his community … he is describing future eschatological realities."[93] A problem occurs when viewing Mark 13 as a *purely* "apocalyptic" text because there is very little in the rest of Mark's Gospel that would indicate an apocalyptic agenda. Moreover, Mark survived the Jewish revolt, an event that must have seemed like the end of the world, a sort of terrestrial apocalypse. Conversely, Mark appears to employ the "suffering servant" motif in a similar vein to Isaiah 53. Some scholars[94] interpret the suffering servant theme with later Christian theologies, namely, relating the suffering servant to Jesus. However, this reading is anachronistic and laced with later Christian apologetics. Others argue[95] that the suffering servant references a Jewish prophetic, or messianic, individual. Roy A. Rosenberg argues that the "prophet shows that he was

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[91] Winn, 82.

[92] Winn, 172.

[93] Winn, 70.

[94] For example, see Bo H. Lim, "The Lynching of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah: Death at the Hands of Persons Unknown," in *Ex Auditu* 31 (2015), 108–120, 109–110; Ronald Bergey, "The Rhetorical Role of Reiteration in the Suffering Servant Poem (Isa 52:13, 53:12)," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40.2 (Jun 1997): 177–188. Bergey also discusses how early Christian writers would understand Isaiah's poem.

[95] For example, see Julian Morgenstern, "The Suffering Servant: A New Solution," in *Vetus Testamentum* 11.4 (Oct., 1961): 406–431, especially 409–420.

a simple man, 'without form or splendour,' corresponding to the 'man of simple spirit' who would usually be appointed by the Babylonian and Assyrian rulers to die in their stead when evil omens threatened."[96] Although possible, more convincing interpretations of Isaiah 53 regard the poem as referring to the people, or nation, of Israel.[97] Or, as Ben Witherington states, "the subject is the future of Israel (by which I mean non-Christian Jews)."[98] These latter interpretations mesh well with Mark's text. The overall point is that the "suffering discipleship" motif is more congruent within a Palestine setting, representing local populations. Mark addresses more real, current, and local problems (exile, the revolt, the destruction of the temple leading to lost national institutions) and attempts to reimagine his new reality and condition.

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[96] Roy A. Rosenberg, "Jesus, Isaac, and the 'Suffering Servant,'" in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84.4 (Dec. 1965): 381–388, 385. Rosenberg, however, concludes his article discussing how early Christians interpreted Isaiah as Jesus.

[97] See Mark J. Boda, "Walking in the Light of Yahweh: Zion and the Empires in the Book of Isaiah," in *Empire in the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall; Hamilton: McMaster Divinity College Press, 2011), 54–89; Joel Edward Rembaum, "The development of a Jewish exegetical tradition regarding Isaiah 53," in *Harvard Theological Review* 75.3 (July 1982), 289–311. Rembaum provides a detailed list of scholars (see n.47). Also see Joel Kaminsky and Anne Stewart, "God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40–66," in *The Harvard Theological Review* 99.2 (Apr. 2006): 139–163. Kaminsky and Stewart come to the interesting conclusion that second Isaiah is also "references to the nations within Second Isaiah primarily serve a rhetorical function to exalt the sovereignty of Israel's God. [correct the previous sentence] The prophet *evokes a type of universalism*, but one that maintains and even deepens Israel's particularistic election … By elevating Israel's God to such great heights, *Second Isaiah demonstrates to his exilic audience that YHWH, the God of all the world, had indeed not only authorized his people's exile, but also their return and restoration*" (162, emphasis added). These points (exilic authorization, restoration, and universalism) are critical to Mark's composition.

[98] Ben Witherington, *Isaiah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 351.

Clifton Black convincingly counters a Roman location by proclaiming that "the connection

of Mark, both Evangelist and Gospel, with Rome appears to have been sustained in Christian

tradition using Mark's prior association with Peter."[99] He argues that the connection derives from

> (1) Papias testifies to a link between Peter and Mark; (2) the Papias tradition is read in
> light of 1 Peter 5:13, which links Mark and Peter to Rome; and (3) the tradition of a
> Roman provenance for Mark is created and then parroted by later ancient witnesses. If this
> interpretation of the evidence is accepted, the ancient witness of a Roman provenance for
> Mark is worthless.[100]

Black's argument here is persuasive. There is nothing inherent within the text to suggest Rome as

the location of composition.

More convincing arguments place the composition of Mark somewhere in Galilee or

Southern Syria.[101] The cases for Galilean/Southern Syrian prominence are vast and are strictly

based upon Mark's text as there appear to be no external, sources linking Mark with these regions.

For the sake of brevity, textual analyses include a wide range. Theissen examines Mark's usage

τὴν θάλασσαν as opposed to Lake.[102] Jonathan Z. Smith examines Mark's narrative of the Syro-

Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24–30).[103] James M. Dawsey looks at Mark 2:1–12 usage of mats

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[99] Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 225.

[100] Winn, 78.

[101] For example, Eric Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2009). Stewart provides a convincing spatial argument advocating for Capernaum as Mark's primary locational concern. Also see Roskam, 95–113; Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988; Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Markan Site," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford, Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 99–125. Here, Smith places Mark in the Levant.

[102] Theissen, 237–239. Theissen argues that Mark's use of τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίαςis (especially with the genitive attributes) is more in line with Hebrew and Aramaic nominal constructions as opposed to Latin or Greek usages.

[103] Smith, *Markan Site*, 121–124. Smith convincingly argues that this narrative reflects navigation with the proximate other, namely that the story "might suggest a continued Syrian Jewish interest in experimenting with, in mapping and exploring, Syro-Phoenician relations" (123). Additionally, Smith quickly mentions that the Syro-Phoenician narrative is concerned

compared to "beds" and suggests that mats correlate with archaeological evidence of Capernaum's sleeping apparatuses.[104] Plus, Roskam draws attention to Mark's primary interest in Galilee[105] and Jesus' perceived separation between the people of Judea and Mark's "community."[106]

The main objection for a Galilean location is the fact that Mark explains certain Jewish practices and customs, indicating that "the audience was predominantly Gentile and would be unfamiliar with such Jewish practices. Such an audience seems unlikely in the Jewish-dominated Galilee."[107] Winn appears to understand this possibility, so he assumes that the Gentiles within Galilee would already be familiar with all these Jewish customs. The only reason provided was that they should know and understand the customs merely because they were neighbours.[108] This explanation is not entirely convincing. Just because groups of people are neighbours does not indicate that one has full knowledge of the other. Before the Jewish rebellion, there were numerous misunderstandings between the Jews and Greeks living in Galilee.[109] Perhaps the principal stumbling block to a Galilean provenance is the accusation of geographical errors,[110]

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with the Syrian conceptual practice of exorcism (121). This quick reference by Smith is, I think, more vital than it first appears. Throughout his text, Mark relies on the ritual practice of exorcism as a means to continually portray Jesus' power and authority. The mention that exorcism was a well-known ritual in Syria can help explain Mark's proclivities for including copious exorcism narratives.

[104] See James M. Dawsey, *Peter's Last Sermon: Identity and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2010). Dawsey, however, locates Mark in Rome but employs his mat evidence stemming from an authentic Galilean Peter.

[105] Roskam, 101–109.

[106] Roskam, 97. The argument here is intriguing, but I quibble with the equivocation of a Markan community, a topic I will address later in this chapter.

[107] Winn, 86.

[108] Winn, 87.

[109] See Seth Schwartz, *The Ancient Jews from Alexander to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 70–81.

[110] See Winn, 85.

especially 7:31, in which Mark has Jesus moving north through Sidon to return to the Sea of Galilee. The question here is why Jesus would travel north then south again to reach his destination? Indeed, this is an odd occurrence. Numerous explanations have been proposed, including Mark discussing regions according to ethnicity and avoiding a treacherous mountain path. Stewart relies on Dean Chapman[111] for his response, arguing that Mark did not possess the capabilities of a modern cartographer. Instead, ancient agrarian peasant societies employed space concerning proximity; "the more remote the place was from the author, the more likely the 'scale' of the places might become distorted."[112] Believing Mark's location to be around Jerusalem, he would not have been as familiar with Upper Galilee. Roskam's argument reverses this perception—namely, that Mark's Galilean geographical references are sound, accurate, and detailed.[113] Instead of Mark having limited knowledge of Galilee, he displays a lack of Judean geographical knowledge and describes Judea and Jerusalem in "superficial" topographies.[114] Both arguments draw attention to Mark's geographical oddities and vague descriptions. However, Mark is usually vague throughout his text. Pinpointing these specific instances does not entirely help situate Mark.

Despite a lack of consensus and problematic details within Mark's text, I am still persuaded by the Galilean/Southern Syrian compositional arguments. Therefore, this examination will presume Mark's final compositional location as such. However, these locations are not homogenous, and ideologies can vary depending upon social and/or communal identifications. Arguably the central communal dichotomy is between urban/rural identifications. Stemming from

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[111] See Dean W. Chapman, "Locating the Gospel of Mark: A Model of Agrarian Biography," in *Bibilical Theology Bulletin* 25 (1995): 24–36.

[112] Stewart, 11.

[113] Roskam, 108–109.

[114] Roskam, 95.

the Greek urban economy,[115] Roman economics were centred in urban locations. Within the

Roman Empire, the social, political, and economic elites resided in cities. If a rural families

somehow acquired wealth, they rapidly fled to the cities.[116] Dennis P. Kehoe states, "rural and

urban development is a particularly important theme in the history of the Roman provinces … An

urban culture flourished under Roman auspice."[117] This flourishing includes locations such as

Tiberias, Sepphoris, and Jerusalem (especially with the temple being the social-political-economic

institution). Harland declares, "The elites, consisting of the royal family, aristocrats, religious

leaders, and some priests, drew their primary source of income from medium-sized and large

estates. Absentee landlords, living in the cities and benefiting from production in the countryside,

were common in this social-economic structure."[118] Roman economic practices of agricultural

systems fostered intensive agriculture to support broader urban markets.[119] Olive presses and

grain, for example, were "cultivated intensively for an urban market."[120] As a result, wealth

(accumulating from "cash crops" such as olive oil) led to redistribution into more central hubs and

institutions (cities and temples) and food supply was utilized as a political armament. Food

weaponization could stem from Roman control of trade (limiting a specific product) or more

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[115] See Levy, 31–40. Levy describes how the Greek urban economy was created and maintained through colonization (city settlements), creation of transportation and trade routes, currency and coinage, banks, and usury systems monopolizing and exploiting coin or planting seeds.

[116] Ze'ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 378.

[117] Kehoe, 3.

[118] Philip A. Harland, "The Economy of First-Century Palestine: State of the Scholarly Discussion," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (eds. Anthony J. Blasi, Paul-André Turcotte, and Jean Duhaime; Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 511–527, 515.

[119] Kehoe, 18.

[120] Kehoe, 18.

impoverished farmers' exploitation due to their dependence on the urban elites.[121] Schwartz describes Jerusalem as "awash in money to an unprecedented extent and the money funded not only the temple staff and the poor, but provisioners, construction and maintenance workers."[122] Concurring, Warren Carter argues that the "temple secured the elite's socio-political, economic, and religious domination through taxes, buying and selling sacrifices and supplies for temple ritual, administering landed estates, receiving and storing gifts, and controlling rituals and festivals."[123] Evidence also suggests that there were markets present within major centres that, more than likely, obtained their goods from peasant farmers.[124] Additionally, cities were the primary administrative centres; Sepphoris and Tiberias was used by Roman administrators,[125] and Jerusalem was the principal and most imperative locus in Judea, perhaps even Palestine. Leander argues that the reason for urban and rural hostilities was due to taxation.[126] With some form of exploitation present, it is understandable that the peasants might harbour some resentment. Josephus also reports on these hostilities: "The Galileans … venting their hatred on one of the cities which they detested" (*Vita*, 375).

The temple's destruction in Jerusalem led to a great social-political-economic and religious transformation. In the immediate aftermath, Palestine was annexed into an official Roman province called Judaea. Schwartz indicates that "the full annexation of *Provincia* Judaea almost certainly meant that the Jewish nation, as an entity whose partial autonomy was recognized

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[121] See Kehoe, 20–21.

[122] Schwartz, 65.

[123] Warren Carter, "Matthew and Empire," in *Empire in the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall; Hamilton: McMaster Divinity College Press, 2011), 90–119, 106.

[124] Safrai, 112

[125] Horsley, *Galilee*, 46, 50. Horsley claims "both cities very likely symbolized Roman dominion in Galilee" (54).

[126] Leander, 165.

by the state, as it had been for five centuries or more, ceased to exist; there was no room for an autonomous nation in a standard Roman province."[127] The Judean annexation indicates that the Jews' previous (semi-) autonomous self-understanding was becoming obliterated as they lost their sovereignty. Adding to their social woes, "Vespasian confiscated and sold off either all Jewish land or all land belonging to Jews who had participated in the rebellion"[128] and distributed it to Roman soldiers and Jewish collaborators.[129] Economically, the destruction of Jerusalem did not facilitate an end to corruption, exploitation, or class divisions. It merely redistributed Jerusalem's wealth towards the ruling Romans.[130] The Romans immediately celebrated quashing the rebellion by manufacturing and distributing coins inscribed with *Iudaea Capta*. Additionally, "Vespasian decreed that the two-denarius per annum tax Jews throughout the empire had previously been permitted to remit to the temple there be paid into a fund called the *fiscus Iudaicus*."[131] This new capitulation tax was punishment for the rebellion, "the half-shekel that Jews throughout the empire had formerly contributed to the Temple in Jerusalem was now collected for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome."[132] John Riches argues that with the loss of a key institution, character, locus, and mark of identity, the temple's destruction was a massive shock and presented a self-identification crisis that desperately required strengthening.[133] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig summarize the overall impact,

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[127] Schwartz, 87.

[128] Schwartz, 87.

[129] Cohen, 319.

[130] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig, *Re-Reading the Gospel of Mark Amidst Loss and Trauma* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 130.

[131] Schwartz, 88–89.

[132] Cohen, 319. Whether or not the tax was diverted to fund Jupiter's temple in Rome in unknown.

[133] John Riches, "Introduction," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*. (eds. John Riches and David C. Sim; London: T & T Clark, 2005); 1–8, 1.

For Israel, the temple housed the wealth of Israel in its treasury and much of its ruling class in the form of the priesthood and temple leadership. And the losses incurred by the destruction of these two significant structures are not only in the loss of life or the physical site but in the identity of the people, they purported to represent, casting a pall of uncertainty about not only one's physical safety but "who we are" as well.[134]

I will now move to discuss the specific social, political, and economic realities that the author of Mark would have faced and why they would lead to sentiments of alienation.[135] The first issue facing Mark was Roman occupation. First-century Palestine was a period in flux. Herod (74–4 BCE) was placed in charge of Palestine by the Romans as a vassal king. Similar to other subservient vassal kings, "Herod was authorized to govern his subjects as he pleased as long as he maintained peace and stability, did not engage in any unauthorized activities outside his kingdom and actively supported Roman administrative and military activities in the area."[136] He was also a massive builder; his building projects included Masada, Herodium, Caesarea Philippi, the harbour in Caesarea, and several additions to Jerusalem's Temple. Herod's supposed reasoning was that his kingdom would have a grandiose capital and win support from Jews and Gentiles as he attempted to appease both populations.[137] However, as Seth Schwartz points out, "the competition between Roman and Jewish institutions was a zero-sum game … The more devotion to the Jerusalem temple and the Torah Herod's investments generated, the more the Jews would experience political marginalization and maladjustment in the Roman system, however much Herod was prepared to invest in the Jews' integration in that system."[138] There appear to be many

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[134] Kotrosits and Taussig, 152.

[135] It is important to note here that I am analyzing Mark as a document written between 70–74 CE. The political, social, and economic conditions of the Historical Jesus, where Mark's narrative is thought to derive from, is not the historical time period under scrutiny.

[136] Cohen, 294.

[137] Cohen, 292.

[138] Schwartz, 69.

reasons why the population in first-century Palestine would resent Herod; he was brutal, had a secret police force, and placed a Roman golden eagle over the temple's entrance. However, Shaye J.D. Cohen claims it was probable that the majority of the population was indifferent to Herod because he accomplished good things for his people as well—a fair distribution of food during famines and not placing any images on the circulating coins.[139]

After Herod's death, his kingdom was divided among his three sons. Antipas inherited Galilee and Peraea, Philip obtained Golan Heights, and Archelaus received Judea. The Romans quickly disposed of Archelaus in 6 CE due to Judean and Samaritan joint petitions. Judea then became annexed to the province of Syria. Therefore Judea was administered by Roman civil servants known as prefects or, after 44 CE, procurators.[140] In 41 CE, Agrippa I briefly oversaw Herod's old kingship until he died in 44 CE.[141] Within the procurators' reign, there were significant problems. Schwartz indicates that "Pilate engaged in constant provocation and the Jews responded, usually but not always, with violence and rioting."[142] The procurators themselves were often brutal, corrupt, and incompetent. As a result, incidents, frequently violent, occurred. Small riots, disturbances, assassinations, banditry, and lootings were all prevalent and were likely an expression of frustration with the status quo. In the fall of 66 CE, procurator Gessius Florus stole money from Temple treasury for perceived overdue taxes, which led to a massive riot and the massacre of a Roman garrison in Jerusalem.[143]

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[139] See Cohen, 295–296.
[140] Schwartz, 70.
[141] Cohen, 297.
[142] Schwartz, 73.
[143] Cohen, 302.

Right before the start of the rebellion, noticeable tensions escalated between Greeks and Jews[144] along with internal Jewish strains.[145] Bradley Ritter argues that after Herod's death, Greek and Jewish cultural divisions in Caesarea became more apparent and raised divisions between the two groups.[146] The Jewish population protested the desecration of a Torah, obtained control of the agora through violence, and then became victims of Greco-Syrian soldiers pillaging their houses and possessions.[147] Additionally, Jerusalem turned into a type of welfare state. Labourers had little work or worked only on small projects. The lack of employment led to many peasants to flee to Jerusalem to turn on the aristocracy and priestly elites in the city.[148] However, discontent was also prevalent within the aristocracy as Roman procurators were becoming the local leaders, depriving the nobility of their rule. This confusion put the aristocracy in the awkward position of being identified with Rome but having no power to respond to the peoples' needs, fears, disgruntlement, and anxieties.[149] During the onset of war, uprisings and violence occurred all over Palestine. Of the two major urban centres in Galilee, Sepphoris remained loyal to Rome; Tiberias partially rebelled but rejected Jerusalem's leadership according to Josephus.[150] This chaotic setting led to a large number of refugees entering Jerusalem from the countryside. Rome restored order in the country relatively quickly under Vespasian except for in Judea, meaning that people still wanting to rebel fled to Jerusalem.[151] In Jerusalem, numerous revolutionary groups vied for power.

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[144] See Schwartz, 69–75.

[145] See Schwartz, 73. Schwartz describes intercommunity violence in 52 CE, with the Judeans and Galilee versus the Samaritans, "which was quelled with difficulty and led to the disposition of the procurator and the arrest and execution of many leading figures on both sides."

[146] See Bradley Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire: Rights, Citizenship and Civil Discord* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 245.

[147] See Ritter, 246–248.

[148] Cohen, 310.

[149] Cohen, 311.

[150] Schwartz, 81.

[151] Schwartz, 82.

Eleasar, son of the high priest Anania, led a priestly revolutionary party but soon found

themselves facing other groups like the Sicarii, whose main target was the aristocracy.[152] The

"radical" groups ultimately gained control, and in 69 CE, they started battling each other.

Schwartz indicates that "the intense fighting among these various groups had disastrous

consequences. Large stocks of grain and other provisions were destroyed. When the Roman siege

began in earnest in 70 CE, a famine soon ensued."[153] When Rome besieged Jerusalem, it cut off

its supplies and any means of escape. Finally, in mid-August, Vespasian's son Titus burned the

temple in Jerusalem. "The siege ended in utter destruction: the city was razed to the ground, and it

seems unlikely that many Jews were left alive in Jerusalem or its immediate vicinity … the usual

fates of Jews caught in Jerusalem and its vicinity were death."[154]

The general economy in pre–70 CE Palestine is a subject of debate with no clear

consensus. Philip Harland notes that there are generally two problems with attempting to describe

the economy in Roman Palestine. First, the ancient sources are incomplete, disjointed, and slanted

towards one perspective. Harland elaborates on why the biased viewpoints are essential to note:

> Generally lacking are literary sources representing the perspectives of the peasantry; most
> sources available for Palestine, perhaps with the exception of some strata of the synoptic
> Gospels, represent elite perspectives on economic and other conditions, perspectives that
> were sometimes characterized by a negative view of the peasantry or "people of the
> land."[155]

The other difficulty is the absence of reliable information in ancient sources. Ancient historians

did not concern themselves with economic matters just because "modern concepts of economy

and economics did not exist in antiquity."[156] In general, three approaches to the economy stand

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[152] Cohen, 314.
[153] Cohen, 316.
[154] Schwartz, 83, 84–85.
[155] Harland, 522–523.
[156] Harland, 523.

out—a type of ancient free-market economy,[157] Roman monopolizations,[158] and a more highly

localized economy based upon regional trade and self-sustainability.[159] Concerning trade, primary

access was via the Mediterranean; harbours and port cities were vital. Therefore, large

construction projects primarily centred on these maritime trade hubs. Despite overarching

differences, scholars tend to agree that the economy in Roman Palestine was agrarian (wheat

being the vital primary commodity that could be grown in every region in Palestine),[160] "based

primarily on the production of food through subsistence-level farming by the peasantry,"[161]

increasingly urbanized, and characterized by an exploitative relationship between city and country

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[157] See Safrai.

[158] See K.C. Hanson, "The Galilean Fishing Economy and the Jesus Tradition," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27 (1997): 99–111. Also see Levy, 63–66, for an interesting argument on how Rome maintained a type of monopoly. Levy suggests Roman conquest, or "the rights of conquest," played an important role. For example, he describes Pompey's proclamation "of having raised … 340 million [sestertii] after the conquest of Syria" (Levy, 65). Additionally, after the "rights of conquest," older tax systems possibly continued while new systems were imposed (Levy, 63).

[159] See Horsley, *Galilee*. Harland notes, however, that "a distinction should be made between evidence of trade within Palestine and trade on a more international scale; it is the degree of international trade that is most debated" (518), whereas Horsley places more emphasis on localized trade (66–87).

[160] Safrai, 115.

[161] Harland, 515. It should be noted here that there is a continuous debate regarding how much the peasants had to produce, provide to benefactors, and pay in tax and rent. In other words, the debate revolves around how much exploitation the peasants suffered. For example, Richard Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008). Horsley also argues that increasing urbanization contributed to the peasants' economic burdens (46). Warren Carter concurs with Horsley: "In Rome's agrarian empire, a small group of about 1 to 3 percent of the population controlled the power, wealth (land, slave-labour, rents, taxes), and status, consigning the remaining 97 percent or so to relative powerlessness and degrees of poverty … There was no middle class, and little opportunity (apart from trade or patronage) for economic advancement." See Carter, 94. Udoh, on the other hand, argues that while acknowledging the hardships of the peasantry, the economic burdens are exaggerated. For example, he argues that the cost of the temple tax on people was negligible. It was not a burden but was seen as necessary because of its economic importance for the temple and the state (87).

or urban and rural. To repeat previous arguments, the last point here is essential as it suggests a distinct social dichotomy.

A lingering debate regarding a "middle class" in the Roman socio-economy is prevalent and important. In general, Roman hierarchy is thought of as a social structure consisting of a small group of elites and an exploited lower or peasant class.[162] However, "this dualism is sometimes overemphasized to the extent that the lower classes appear as a homogenous, plebeian mass … [ignoring those] who do not seem to fit neatly in either the 'elite' or the 'lower class.'"[163] Kehoe argues that there were "middle men" (*conductores*) who collected crop rents from peasant tenant farmers (*coloni*).[164] Levy concurs by submitting that there were "small-scale tax farmers."[165] In other words, a sort of three-tier economic hierarchy emerges—landowners, *conductores*, and *coloni* (or tenants). This structure contrasts slightly with the basic earlier two-tier Greek economic setup.[166] Despite the apparent ubiquity and recognition of crop "middle men," it is still unclear how economically viable they were, how much wealth they maintained, and where exactly they

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[162] See Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 66. Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie describe the "elites" as the Pharisees and legal experts who exploited the rest of the Palestinian population. "The rest of the characters in Mark's narrative world, including Jesus and the disciples, are people who live at or below a basic subsistence level, *for there is no middle class*" (66, emphasis added). I would argue, however, that Mark's text does including middle-class figures, the tax collectors dining at Levy's house, for instance (Mark 2:15–17). They do not appear to have any elite ties, they eat with particular members of the local population, and they are viewed with suspicion by other members of the community.

[163] Sarah E. Rollens, *Framing Social Criticism in the Jesus Movement* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 3. Rollens outlines why describing "peasantry" as a cultural type is problematic. "First, this conception runs the risk of assuming an essential constitution of peasants across time and space" (14–15).

[164] See Kehoe, 5, 11, 21, 23–25.

[165] Levy, 82.

[166] See Applebaum, 79–96. Especially see Applebaum's discussion on the practice of Greek temples leasing their land to tenants for a percentage of the harvested crop (89).

would land on an economic income scale. The issue of the land/crop "middle men" also does not provide any aid for interpreting Mark's text as it does not help explain the development and production of documents. More relevant is the issue of other "middle-class" groups, or "middling figure(s) of ambiguous class affiliation."[167] In a critical study, Sarah E. Rollens argues that academic, or intellectual, groups are not an over-encompassing objective category, but are instead a function.[168] While "traditional" intellectuals are products to reinforce or codify official state law and policy, "organic" intellectuals (usually representing special interests) also function as middle-class figures, "based on the role one plays in creating new ideas, directing social groups, or otherwise facilitating the emergence of social movements."[169] The organic intellectual is "a *structurally marginal* figure who occupies a pivotal position between the elites and the non-elite population—whether it is the peasantry, the rural or urban poor, or more generally, the lower classes of a given society."[170] The point here is that there do appear to be fringe-elites and "middle-peasants," and members may work with peasant populations but reside in upper-class urban areas.[171] Others might stem from a more impoverished population but become trained in literacy and employed in an urban centre, thus becoming a "transmitter" between urban and rural communities.[172] Mary-Ann Beavis' study[173] supports this notion. Beavis states that the literacy rate in the first century CE was rising, resulting in school systems spread throughout the Roman

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[167] Rollens, 5.

[168] Rollens, 49. For an opposing view, see Horsley, *Jesus*, 27–28. Horsley argues that literacy was strictly an elite phenomenon.

[169] Rollens, 50.

[170] Rollens, 53 (original emphasis).

[171] For example, Rollens states that tax collectors could fall into this category, 58.

[172] See Rollens, 54–55.

[173] Mary-Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4.11–12* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

Empire.[174] Moreover, these educational systems were widely accessible to people of "all social classes."[175] Overall then, the concept of "middle class" in antiquity can be perceived as a fluent category.

With all this evidence in mind, I would locate Mark in an urban setting somewhere in Upper Galilee/Southern Syria. Arguments for an Upper Galilean/Southern Syrian location are convincing. However, situating Mark in an urban centre is vital as, throughout his text, he portrays his more "urban" proclivities and sensibilities.[176] Additionally, urban centres were early hubs for the Jesus movements. Paul's letters indicate to us that his *ecclesia* was exclusively an urban phenomenon. As Rollens notes, "Within Paul's letters, it is evident that the communities are comprised of urban figures, whose livelihoods are not directly tied to agricultural activities."[177] An argument for an urban position is essential because, throughout early Christian texts (Mark included), peasant or agricultural cultures and lifestyles are portrayed with a reified lens.[178] For instance, Jesus' parables in Mark primarily occur in a rural setting where (usually) the socio-economic disempowered gain some restitution. This focal lens leads some scholars to insist that the early Jesus movements in Palestine were from the rural peasantry. Certain scholars also assume that rural proclivities were based entirely on subsistence. However, they were also wary, or outright hostile, of "outsiders," tax collectors, and merchants.[179] For example, James C. Scott

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[174] Beavis, 21–22.

[175] Beavis, 22

[176] I will discuss this more in detail in Chapter 2.

[177] Rollens, 19.

[178] For example, especially see Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987). Horsley discusses perceived rural perceptions with the Kingdom of God motif as an egalitarian movement, one that eradicates peasant exploitation—cancelling debt, for example.

[179] This point, however, seems to contradict early Christian texts. Mark, for example, takes pains to belabour a more idyllic cosmopolitanism.

states that rural peasants had a "traditional distaste for buying and selling."[180] While perhaps

certain saying traditions stemmed from rural settings, the overall assumption that early Christian

textual writers were rural mouthpieces is problematic. In general, it does not aid in the

examination of textual composition and interpretation as it marks textual authors to be no more

than messengers who, for one reason or another, highlight perceived rural sensibilities. It appears,

as Rollens convincingly argues,[181] that arguments proclaiming rural authority based upon a

perceived rural egalitarian mentality have fallen into a glamorized trap. Urbanites are perceived as

power-hungry, corrupt, and exploitative elites. There is no mention, or comparison, to poverty

within urban centres.

Conversely, ancient rural populations have come to be seen as noble defenders of equality

and tradition—virtuous and exploited. The problem with "virtuous peasant traits" is one that

Samuel L. Popkin labels "the myth of the village."[182] This myth idealizes and romanticizes rural

lifestyles meshed with a perceived "village" morality.[183] As Rollens notes, this moral system

assumes "that in times of hardship peasant villages will rally to support weaker members, on the

basis of consent to a village-wide ethical code."[184] William P. Browne and J. Norman Reid

examining discourses of rural America concur.[185] They state,

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[180] James C. Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition, Part II," in *Theory and Society* 4.2 (1977): 211–246, 231.

[181] See Rollens, 33–43.

[182] Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

[183] For example, see Horsley, *Jesus*, 210–223. Using James C. Scott, Horsley vehemently argues that rural villages had an overarching and universal moral code that was lacking in urban centres.

[184] Rollens, 37.

[185] See William P. Browne and J. Norman Reid, "Misconceptions, Institutional Impediments, and the problems of Rural Governments," in *Public Administration Quarterly* 14.3 (Fall, 1990): 265–284.

Both academics and policy-makers are inclined to accept these conditions as an unavoidable rural paradigm. We perceive that there is a generalized belief that small governments, operating as they do in resource-rich areas, will eventually solve their own problems by applying their own human capital, perhaps using some minimal level of external support … we recognize that such conclusions rest on mistaken assumptions about rural America and its governing institutions … There exists a decided tendency to romanticize rural life for its virtue and isolation rather than inventory its conditions objectively and systematically. Citizens of the United States have constructed myths about things rural owing to their long frontier and agrarian history and relatively recent status as a farm society.[186]

Mark embraces a rural-urban dichotomy. As Rollens has demonstrated, however, romanticized rhetoric of perceived agricultural ethics and lifestyles does not indicate or suggest a rural setting. Some scholars have noted that romanticized rhetoric of rural lifestyles was primarily a post-Enlightenment response to industrial urbanization.[187] However, whenever rapid urbanization occurs, reified perceptions of agricultural standards follow.[188] In general, Mark, I think, acts following this pattern. Within the text, rural centres are significant and highlighted.

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[186] Brown and Reid, 266–267.

[187] See Liana Vardi, "Imagining the Harvest in Early Modern Europe," in *Agrarian Studies: Synthetic Work at the Cutting Edge* (eds. James C. Scott and Nina Bhatt; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 105–110.

[188] For a contemporary example, CBC's *Heartland* depicts a romanticized rural Alberta. With modernity continuing the trend of urbanization due to immigration and more vocational opportunity, *Heartland* reifies the rural lifestyle and perceived ideals. First, the setting is entirely Caucasian (except for one Indigenous vet). The primary concerns for the characters are maintaining a robust familial unit, aiding their community (neighbours), equestrian competitions and competence, and caring for animals. The characters have ample relaxation time, showcasing a "slower" approach to life in contrast to the hectic urban "rat race." The only portrayal of work is a picturesque scene of herding cows from one field to another with the scenic Rocky Mountain foothills in the background. There is no mention of the inevitable slaughtering of such animals or any other form of farm labour. Also reinforced are traditional gender roles. A divorced mother has time to start two successful businesses, but her main contribution to the familial setting is cooking and cleaning while maintaining her beauty. Additionally, on one particular occasion, the divorced mother's ex-husband wants to relocate his family to Vancouver. This decision leads to more tension as his (ex-)wife and daughter would be uprooted from their family and horses. Overall, the television show *Heartland* is a clear example of the romanticized rural myth reconciling the perceived incongruity of a lost constructed version of "tradition."

Conversely, the most significant "Jewish" centre, Jerusalem, is depicted as corrupt, hostile, or indifferent to Jesus. Following Rollens' argument, I place Mark within the "fringe" middling position—a "lower-level" intellectual (meaning not an official temple scribe) who is literately competent, appears to be disillusioned with urban socio-economic disparities,[189] had interactions with rural populations, and held romanticized perceptions of rural ideas, moralities, and livelihoods.

Another argument for rural textual composition arises from Mark's descriptive agricultural details, especially within the parables.[190] For example, the parable of the sower (Mark 4:19, 13–20, 26–29), the mustard seed (4:30–32), and the vineyard/tenants (12:1–12) all describe agricultural performances in great detail. Conversely, I suggest the opposite. Mark's use of rural imagery correlates with the romanticized rural myth. The author employs a descriptive framing technique to emphasize and glamorize the teaching parables. Describing a reciprocal relationship between rural populations and middling intellectuals, Rollens argues that when the "organizer," or composer,

> … uses "terms and symbols" that resonate with the peasantry, it will be more successful. This often means that a framer must utilize rural imagery, among other things. Another way to achieve credibility and success is to capitalize on the hinge figures which connect

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[189] See Rollens, 51–52. Rollens provides some brief statistics of socio-economic categories in urban antiquity. The concept of Mark being disgruntled with urban economic polarities fits with the argument that he still held an idyllic cosmopolitan hope. *This notion would suggest that Mark was attempting to work through a social incongruity where his idyllic cosmopolitan view was not translating into* reality. Romanticized rural ideals and imagery would be appealing to rectify this discrepancy—the maintenance of prophetic and Mosaic tradition blended with a "new" universalism.

[190] For example, see Theissen, "When we add that all the parables in Mark come from the agrarian world and deal with sowing and reaping, harvests, and vineyards, we find ourselves in a deeply rural milieu" (238). Also see Sean Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 39–41. Freyne states, "The images … have a distinctly rural colouring … Though cities are mentioned, the perspective is outdoor and rural for the most part …" (39, 41).

urban and rural populations and use their established ties to the native peasantry. This ensures that the mobilizing figures are well-known and trusted in the villages.[191]

In Mark's case, an urban middling intellectual with ties, or knowledge, of rural practices utilizes agricultural descriptions to explain and authorize his constructed discourse to other intellectuals. Having vivid details of country practices, rituals, myths, and labour techniques in a narrative does not immediately suggest a rural setting. On the contrary, providing intricate details of certain particularities appears to suggest explanatory rhetoric. Why would a population already familiar with their traditions and practices need to be reminded of their traits, mannerisms, and exactitudes? Detailed descriptions are more often employed for audiences unfamiliar with such methods. Mark's parables explain to intellectual urban audiences the particulars and complexities (whether it be labour techniques, political situations, or merely structural systems) behind the parables.

Mark's Community/Audience

Examining date, location, and socio-economic matters ignites a debate regarding "who" the gospel was written for—Jew or Gentile,[192] urban or rural, or a specific "Markan" community. This argument, I think, tends to be too simplistic and dualistic. In Mark, Jesus travels extensively into Jewish areas of Galilee and Jerusalem and Gentile areas such as the Decapolis. As Sean Freyne argues, "Movement into Gentile regions seems relaxed and informal

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[191] Rollens, 68–69.
[192] Arguments range on both sides. For a primarily "Jewish" audience, see Horsley, *Jesus*. For a Graeco-Roman audience, see Nickle, 61, and Mary-Ann Beavis. Beavis concludes that the framing, style, and rhetoric "would have been attractive and instructive to Graeco-Roman audiences" (175). Education methods also included training in *chria* and rhetoric (25–31).

… This listing of Jewish and non-Jewish territories without any concern for their differences shows that as far as the author is concerned, such distinctions are unimportant."[193] Also throughout Mark, the author does not seem to favour a particular "group." Jesus' feeding miracles (6:30–44 and 8:1–11) occur in both Jewish and Gentile regions of Galilee. Six stories in between these feeding stories deal extensively with identity, explicitly belonging or not belonging to Israel. Mark envisions a different Israel than the previous Pharisees.[194] Mark 7:24–30, the narrative of the Syro-Phoenician story, has often been employed to suggest that Mark's message was primarily for Israel. However, Jesus' hostility at first against the Greek woman is incongruous of his usual demeanour. Jesus says to her, "Let the children first be satisfied, for it is not ideal to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτῇ· Ἄφες πρῶτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα, οὐ γάρ καλόν ἐστιν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν). Mark appears to be employing this narrative as a condemnation against his perceived antiquated views of "elite" temple rhetoric. Jesus' positive response to the woman's wise answer also reflects Mark's approval and proclivities: "And he said to her, 'Because of what you said, go, the demon has come out of your daughter'" (καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· Διὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὕπαγε, ἐξελήλυθεν ἐκ τῆς θυγατρός σου τὸ δαιμόνιον). Perceived "outsiders" can understand cosmopolitan ideals. Being a member of the "new" Israel is now not merely limited by nationality or ethnicity. In other words, it is plausible, if Mark did have some audience in mind, that he was writing for both Jews and Gentiles, not one or the other. W.A. Such claims that this "leads us to the probability that Mark was … writing to a community containing a mix of Jewish and Gentile Christians."[195] Charles A.

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[193] Freyne, 35, 36.
[194] Kotrosits and Taussig, 63.
[195] W.A. Such, 173. Although I would quibble with Such's assertion of a *Christian community*, I think the primary point here is valid.

Bobertz also concludes that "Jews and Gentiles at the common table—that is, the restoration"[196]

and self-identification and social reconciliation to societal incongruities.

The overwhelming scholarly arguments suggest that Mark was either addressing his own

"Christian" community or was a literary mouthpiece for a specific community.[197] For support,

scholars use the example of the disciples' failures to understand Jesus' message. This argument

either serves as rhetoric against "other" or "wrong" communities or teaching devices to indicate

how to be a "proper" disciple.[198] Again, this argument presumes clear-cut theological or

Christological distinctions and divisions. Many scholars argue that Mark's composition was a

response to ubiquitous persecution.[199] This persecution "came from both the Judean and the

Roman authorities."[200] In response, Mark's "purpose" was to provide his community (or

"Christian" communities in general) hope and encouragement against persecution. Rhoads,

Dewey, and Michie state, "Mark composed his Gospel, in large part, in order to give people

courage to live for the rule of God despite opposition and threat."[201] For example, Roskam

employs the textual pleading for Jews to flee to mountains.[202] However, in following the

surrounding narrative, Mark is instead attempting to incite Jerusalem, and its surrounding areas, to

leave the vicinity due to the ongoing chaotic situation. This call was not merely limited to

persecution against the "Christians," but included all Judeans. In general, scholarly suggestions of

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[196] Charles A. Bobertz, *The Gospel of Mark: A Liturgical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 102.

[197] See S.H. Smith, 22; Roskam, 16–17; and Nickle, 65.

[198] Osvaldo D. Vena, "The Markan Construction of Jesus as Disciple of the Kingdom," in *Mark* (eds. Nicole Wilkinson Duran, Teresa Okure, and Daniel Patte; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 71–99, 75–76; W.A. Such, 206; Carmody, 27.

[199] For example, see Horsley, *Jesus*; Roskam, 27–74; W.A. Such, 28–29, 63–66.

[200] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 2.

[201] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 2.

[202] Roskam, 87.

early Christian persecution is exaggerated, perhaps due to the growing emphasis and rhetorical glamorization of martyrdom. Early persecution was confused,[203] localized, and sporadic.[204] There were no empire-wide pogroms. As mentioned earlier, the date of Mark's composition (the reign of Vespasian) does not correlate with extensive persecution. Later persecution only became more prevalent, but was still overemphasized, during the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE). More textually telling is that Mark in no way suggests highly active persecutions or pogroms, and Jesus' disciples were not subjugated to any trials. They were also not marked as targets by any form of Roman authority. The only occasion that could resemble any kind of communal persecution is Peter's denial (Mark 14:66–72). There are numerous problems with depicting this scene from a persecution perspective. First, Peter was the only one present, and there was no community. Second, and perhaps more importantly, is that Peter was not being questioned or interrogated by any form of authority. The High Priest's little servant girl saw Peter and suggested he was part of Jesus' movement. Right after, the girl saw him again (she made no mention of seeing him before to anyone) and stated the same thing, which led the people standing around to ask as well. In general, there is no indication that even if Peter had admitted to following Jesus that he would also have been placed on trial or even faced hostility from the general crowd.

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[203] For example, see *Pliny, Letters* 10.96–97. Pliny confesses his confusion on what crimes Christians are committing: "I therefore do not know what offences it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent." Trajan's response to Pliny is significant: "… it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age." It should be noted that this correspondence was in 111–113 CE—40 years *after* Mark's composition.

[204] See Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 145.

Scholarly arguments against the preconception of a specific Markan, or other early communities, are rising and convincing. Despite problematic assertions of a "universal" Christianity, Richard Bauckham breaks with the traditional "Markan community" convention.[205] Robyn Faith Walsh, however, provides a more appealing objection. She dismisses the idea of a pre-existing community as Romanticism.[206] She equates the sudden appearance and continued acceptance of a specific Christian community to the "Big Bang":

> Implicit to this theory is the premise that Christianity as a social phenomenon materialized in a manner otherwise unprecedented for a new religious movement. Certainly, for there to have been thousands converted or "turned" in a single day, as claimed by Acts 21:20, the projected rate of growth of the movement would have to have been nothing short of miraculous. In terms of the texts that document this Big Bang, it is a standard claim among scholars of early Christianity that a "community" is the proper social context for imagining their composition. Usually, the writer is described as belonging to a discrete community of Christians that possesses its own particular theological outlook. As such, the author, the proverbial voice of this group, has developed his thinking within a very specific environment and therefore writes his gospel (or other Jesus material) reflecting—either indirectly or, as is more regularly thought, directly—the interests and holdings of that community.[207]

Stanley Stowers also highlights an essential feature in biblical studies, one that highlights and reifies a supposed community. He states that "Classicists do not approach Vergil's or Philodemus'

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[205] See Richard Bauckham, "For Whom were Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 9–48. Despite my disagreement that the Gospels were written for universal or general "Christian communities," I think Bauckham is on an interesting path. He states that scholars who equate the Gospels with particular audiences are reflecting more upon Paul's epistles. The Gospels are not direct letters; therefore, the problem is confusing the genre of the texts (26–28). David C. Sim "The Gospel for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham," in *JSNT* 84 (2001): 3–27. Sim is critical of Bauckham's position and proclaims that there is no evidence supporting the idea that the Gospel writers portrayed concern with a larger social circle than their own specific communities (14). The problem here, however, is that the same criticism can be applied in reverse—there is also no evidence suggesting particular communities.

[206] Robyn Faith Walsh, "Q and the 'Big Bang' Theory of Christian Origins," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 483–533, 486.

[207] Walsh, 489–490.

writings as the products and mirrors of Vergil's or Philodemus' communities."[208] In other words, other historical documents do not have the same attachments as biblical text, especially regarding potential audience or community members.

Overall, suggestions of a clear audience, whether urban or rural, Gentile or Jew, are too simplistic and textually contradicting. In his text, Mark makes a great effort to portray his gospel as universally inclusive. The question of Mark's audience does not have to be perceived in terms of "community." Walsh states,

> One place to begin a new historical analysis…is by looking at Mediterranean and West Asian literary practices in the Roman imperial period. For example, with literacy the purview of so few, we know that those with enough training to produce their own writings often circulated works within networks of fellow writers and associated literate specialists. The goal of this exchange was to solicit comments, critique, and discussion from social peers, making this a formative network of fellow, elite cultural producers (adapting terminology from Pierre Bourdieu). If we accept this as normal activity among writers in antiquity, why would it not be the same for the writers of Jesus material?[209]

Walsh makes a vital point. As I hope to show throughout this project, Mark was attempting to reconcile his alienation and recently jumbled socio-cultural self-identification. His engagement would have been with fellow reconcilers. Intellectuals were trying to make sense of their newly found social incongruities. Issues such as displacement, alienation, and lost social institutions would have been significant concerns for the majority of the Jewish population in Palestine, not just early Christian writers. The resulting intellectual debates resulted in a plethora of reconciliation attempts, Mark merely being one of many. In other words, Mark was engaged in a mental reconciliation attempt. His solution became the Gospel according to Mark.

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[208] Stanley K. Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 247.
[209] Walsh, 487.

Conclusion – Mark: The Middling Creative Scribe and Rhetorician

One thing nearly all scholars agree upon is that the Gospel of Mark is a narrative, one that encompasses major and minor characters, settings, plot, rising action, a climax, and an ambiguous conclusion. Despite arguments on potential sources for Mark, it is clear that his compositional narrative was his own. Therefore, it is self-evident that Mark is a creative figure. The question of *how* original Mark was still lingers. Etienne Trocme combined two popular Jesus discourses—a loose overall narrative and perceived oral teachings:[210] "… enquiry into the sources of Mark is a repeated observation of the Evangelist's attempts to collect, sort out, and arrange his material … Mark must have appeared to them above all as an organizer of material who had produced a coherent literary work from the chaos of tradition."[211] In other words, Trocme is arguing that Mark was not a particularly creative author and created very little, or nothing at all. His creativity was restricted because he was merely a source for "older" Jesus traditions. Since Mark was simply a compiler, according to Trocme, there "is no reason to exclaim at the versatility of his literary genius!"[212] Moreover, Trocme states that "Mark was a clumsy writer unworthy of mention in any history of literature."[213] His writing is "wordy," repetitious, and obscure.

Keith Nickle, however, directly counters the argument of seeing Mark only as a compiler:

> Some scholars badly undervalued Mark's literary achievement. They simplistically described him as being little more than a collector of the oral traditions about Jesus. His contribution as editor was thought of as mainly that of stringing the beads of the oral tradition into a narrative necklace. Scholars now generally recognize that view to be a serious underestimation of literary ingenuity and theological investment which Mark brought to task.[214]

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[210] Etienne Trocme, *The Formation of the Gospel of Mark* (trans. Pamela Gaughan; London: SPCK, 1975), 31.
[211] Trocme, 68, 73.
[212] Trocme, 71.
[213] Trocme, 72.
[214] Nickle, 62.

Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore also argue that previous scholarship does not grant Mark with enough creative literary credit; the "early snapshot of Mark presents him as a scribe—an accurate scribe, but one whose talents are otherwise limited. The towering figure of Peter overshadows him."[215] Anderson and Moore make an interesting and convincing point. Since Mark (the author and the text) was traditionally associated with the grand figure of Peter, it makes sense that the mythic figure of Peter eclipses the actual textual author. Imposing mythic characters, transcending their creators, appear to be shared in literary history. For example, the mythic narrative of Troy usually invokes images of grandiose (and perhaps romanticized) characters: Paris, Helen, Menelaus, Odysseus, Agamemnon, Hector, Priam, and Achilles. Homer takes a back seat to his narrative. In Norse mythology, myths are categorized as being "true" ancient belief narratives involving popular characters, such as Thor and Odin, instead of a creative endeavour by Snorri Sturluson. As a result, Norse mythologies are perceived to be "true" ancient narratives in which its popular characters (Thor, Odin, Loki, etc.) are seen as separate from their composition in the *Eddas* and especially from their compositional author. Contemporary examples are more difficult because writers are now more attached to their creations (perhaps due to financial reasons and copyright laws). J.K. Rowling, however, can be used as a loose example. Her creation of Harry Potter and its surrounding universe has become a cultural phenomenon. Although Rowling is now a literary giant, this pales in comparison to the "household" ubiquity of Harry Potter.

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[215] Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, "Introduction: The Lives of Mark," in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 3.

Screenwriters are a more pertinent example. As Dawsey states, "While millions recognize Tom Hanks, not many recognize Robert Rodat, who wrote the screenplay for *Saving Private Ryan*."[216]

Conversely, many scholars[217] are now arguing for the recognition of Mark's creative narrative. As Malborn states, "Mark is a storyteller—and a masterful one."[218] William Arnal's essay "Mark, War, and Creative Imagination" also encourages readers to consider the importance of Mark as a creator:

> It is important to be clear about just how creative a product his "gospel" really is … Mark actually required *no* narrative source, *no* extant tradition in which Jesus acted in any way whatsoever toward any tree whatsoever, *no* fragmentary "reminiscence" from an earlier passion narrative or an earlier version of the temple episode. Rather, Mark has sayings, traditions about Jesus the teacher, which he transforms into narrative embodiments of the behaviour of Jesus the son of god.[219]

If scholars consider Mark's creativity, then this can provide better insight into the author's themes, sentiments and proclivities.

Returning to Arnal's "double exile" argument mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, if Mark is a socially marginalized figure, which I think he is, then marginalization would provide an additional opportunity for creativity. Rollens' arguments regarding "middling-intellectuals" as socially marginalized figures offer further insight. Rollens states, "One of the most consistently documented characteristics of middling figures is that they are structurally marginal. Structural marginality refers to the location of these figures as peripheral to the major groups in any given society."[220] The creative benefit for structurally marginalized intellectuals is that it provides an

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[216] Dawsey, 16.

[217] For example, see Mack, especially 321–323; and Roskam.

[218] Malborn, *Mark & Method*, 47.

[219] William A. Arnal, "Mark, War, and Creative Imagination," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 401–482, 405, 409 (original emphasis).

[220] Rollens, 53.

opportunity to develop perspectives outside the status quo as the dominant population would feel no inclination.[221] Marginalized intellectuals have access and exposure to more ideological materials and thought patterns than more static people do. This aids, or perhaps even generates, their creativity: "It is precisely their social position that fosters creativity ... it seems clear that occupying a structurally marginal position has the potential to engender in an individual a kind of creativity that is not likely from a more dominant position."[222]

Perhaps the most frustrating verse in Mark is 15:21: "And they conscripted Simon of Cyrene, one who was passing by coming from the field, the father of Alexander and Rufus" (Καὶ ἀγγαρεύουσιν παράγοντά τινα Σίμωνα Κυρηναῖον ἐρχόμενον ἀπ᾽ ἀγροῦ, τὸν πατέρα Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ῥούφου). The vexing question is who are Alexander and Rufus? Why mention a character (Simon) in relation to his sons? Adela Yarbro Collins claims that "The brief reference to Simon is best understood as historical reminiscence."[223] Most commentaries tend to completely ignore these complex characters or conclude that Alexander and Rufus must have been involved, or at least known, to Mark's community. Arnal states,

> Two things are especially notable about this characterization of Simon. The first and most obvious is that describing this person as "the father of Alexander and Rufus" without further specification of *their* identities suggests very strongly that these two characters are people known to Mark's target audience and most likely are themselves members of that audience.[224]

Richard Westall provides a somewhat different perspective. Westall suggests that Simon was an obscure historical figure who embodied the three dominant cultures in Palestine—Jewish, Greek,

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[221] Rollens, 61–62.

[222] Rollen, 63.

[223] Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 111.

[224] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creativity,* 478.

and Roman.[225] Simon was a Cyrene Jew. Nevertheless, based on the evidence of his son's names,

he would have obtained Roman citizenship and embraced Greco-Roman integration but had

somehow fallen out of favour.[226] Westall concludes,

> It would appear that [Simon of Cyrene] was not merely another witness to the crucifixion
> of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, he was a privileged member of the Jewish community who
> had been treated in scandalous fashion by representatives of the Roman state of which he
> was also a member. Preservation of the historical memory of Simon of Cyrene is rooted in
> the fact that he was a Jew of the Diaspora who, despite his having acquired the Roman
> citizenship, had been placed on a par with a provincial from the rural backwater of Galilee
> … From a detailed consideration of the names of his two sons and the community of his
> origin, [Simon] emerges as a paradigmatic figure for the Diaspora as it manifested itself in
> the early Principate. The period was one of ferment and social upheaval. At length Jews
> had begun to acquire the citizenship of the Hellenic cities in which they resided, and
> acquisition of the citizenship of Rome rapidly followed.[227]

An interesting difference between Arnal's and Westall's interpretations is the character focus.

Arnal, I think, is more perplexed (rightfully so!) with the identity of Alexander and Rufus. On the

other hand, Westall is more concerned with the figure of Simon and his relation to state and

cultural structures. However, it appears that this quick reference is another example of Mark's

compositional creativity. First, the names themselves bring forth questions. Why does a Jewish

man named Simon have a son with a popular Hellenized name (Alexander) and another son with a

Latin name (Rufus)? Westall's explanation of obtaining citizenship rights is overreaching,

especially considering that Alexander and Rufus were very recognizable and prevalent Hellenic

and Latin names. It seems to me, then, that Mark was not pinpointing anyone in particular, but

instead, was using common names to emphasize his idyllic cosmopolitan ideals.

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[225] Richard Westall, "Simon of Cyrene, A Roman Citizen?" in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte,* 59.4 (2010): 489–500, 489.
[226] Westall, 494.
[227] Westall, 499–500.

Besides the puzzling naming scheme, why do Simon, Alexander, and Rufus have to be historical figures that are somehow "known"? Plenty of other characters in Mark have brief mentions or appearances, but they are not subject to as much scrutiny. Even the seven disciples, in their entirety, have only one reference—Mark 3:16–19. Mark 10:46 mentions a blind man, "Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus" (ὁ υἱὸς Τιμαίου Βαρτιμαῖος τυφλὸς). The question emerges of who Bartimaeus and his father, Timaeus, are. Are they "historical" members of Mark's "community?" Again, Mark 5:22 describes a ruler of a synagogue named Jairus (εἷς τῶν ἀρχισυναγώγων, ὀνόματι Ἰάϊρος). This reference is intriguing because, throughout the rest of Mark's text, he hardly names people (or their parents) that Jesus heals (Mark 10:46 being the exception). So, how does one make sense of this? Does this indicate that Jairus was a historical person? One who was perhaps a well-known synagogue leader who later "converted" into Mark's community? I would hesitate to make these conclusions. Instead, Jairus in the narrative seems to function as an original character, one created by its author. Indeed, Mark names characters at pivotal moments in his story. Right before introducing Jairus, one of Mark's more scrutinized scenes occurs, namely, the legion narrative. Immediately after Jairus moves into the background, Jesus fully displays his power by raising the dead (Mark 5:39–42). Similarly, Bartimaeus also receives his sight right before Jesus enters Jerusalem. Bartimaeus even follows Jesus along the road into Jerusalem right after his vision returns (Mark 10:52): "And immediately he receives his sight, and followed him [Jesus] in the road" (καὶ εὐθὺς ἀνέβλεψεν, καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ). Mark appears to give readers subtle hints to focus their attention. Named characters usually indicate an essential part of the narrative. Another example is John the Baptist. Moreover, the climax of Mark's narrative, the Passion, is teeming with named minor characters—Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, Judas, Barabbas, Simon the Leper, and of course, Simon, Alexander, and Rufus.

The end of Mark's narrative also provides the reader with five new characters—Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome. Previously, there is no mention of any of these characters (something the interpellator of Mark recognized, adding 16:9). Mary, the mother of James and Joses, is mentioned in the exact way Simon, Alexander and Rufus are referenced. Does that indicate James and Joses are Markan community "members"? Moreover, Mary Magdalene and Salome are utterly devoid of character information. Does this also mean that they are known figures in Mark's "community"? To reiterate, the timing of named characters is critical. These characters only appear right after Jesus' death and once again during the resurrection scene. By including named characters and figures, Mark instructs the reader to pay attention—an important part is incoming! With the inclusion of named characters, the narrative has more memorial, evocative, and graphic power.

Mark's creativity is a vital claim for my overall project and serves as a general undercurrent. Throughout this examination, I will attempt to show how Mark utilizes his creativity to express his sentiments and proclivities. Overall, this project will rely on the view that Mark is a post–70 CE composition in urban Southern Syria or Upper Galilee. The author himself was a middling-intellectual scribe who was dislocated by the Jewish uprising. Since he was an intellectual, he actively engaged in debate with other intellectuals attempting to reconcile their newly found social, institutional, and self-identification incongruities. As Mack argues, Mark "was composed at a desk in a scholar's study lined with texts and open to discourse with other intellectuals."[228]

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[228] Mack, 322–323.

Chapter 2

Nation, Identity, Place, and Exile

"There's nobody more English than an Englishman who no longer lives in England, and our home was a shrine to all things English."
– Mike Myers

As mentioned in the introduction, the concepts of "nation" and "identity" are highly dubious and continuously fluctuate. Scholars have consistently debated these terms. According to Rodgers Brubaker, the problem with these terms is that they are directly or indirectly employed in a "reifying manner, in a manner that implies or asserts that 'nations,'… 'and identities' 'exist' as substantial entities and that people 'have' a 'nationality,' … an 'identity.'"[1] Essentially, Brubaker is arguing that it is not the terms themselves that are problematic, but *how* the terms are utilized.[2] Concepts such as nationality, nationhood, identity, ethnicity, and culture "exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, classifications, categorizations, and identifications. They are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world—not ontological but epistemological realities."[3] However, since my project relies extensively on these challenging concepts, it is essential to provide an outlook of how I utilize and understand these terms.

This chapter, therefore, will be dedicated to the examination of various theories regarding nationhood, nation, and nationality. Then my focus will turn towards an analysis of the concept of identity. The final conceptual term I will examine is exile. Exilic literature can be included under

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[1] Rodgers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 32–33.
[2] Brubaker, 32.
[3] Brubaker, 79 (original emphasis).

the umbrella of post-colonial literature. They both tend to resemble a type of resistance literature against the socially dominant or hegemonic discourses. Exilic populations are also usually forced into their new socio-cultural setting.[4] Whether for reasons of violence, economic hardship, or persecution, the one consistent factor is an involuntary dislocation. The importance of such literature is evident; exilic literature provides scholars with insights on social groups, community affiliations, and political and systemic prejudices, which could have otherwise escaped critical analysis. Shuyu Kong argues that exile provides opportunities for unique or different "perspectives on literature, identity and their homeland."[5] I would also add that an exilic author can offer alternative discourses within, or even opposed to dominant "insider" discourses. "Outsider" positions can arguably grasp and exhibit systemic fractures in which "insiders" are usually unaware or actively advocating.

Finally, the concluding section of this chapter will illustrate how the concepts of nation, identity, place, and exile are vital for investigating Mark, namely, how Mark displays notions of lost identity and inclinations for intercultural relations. Continuing and expanding upon my arguments from Chapter 1 regarding Mark originating from an urban intellectual setting, I will argue that he constructs or imagines an intercultural environment throughout his text that is reminiscent of intellectual idyllic cosmopolitan constructive discourses.

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[4] To be clear, I am not proposing that all forms of exile are "forced," and there are no voluntary forms of exile. However, this project specifically focuses on forced exile. Therefore, my theoretical bases will focus on these particular variations.

[5] See Shuyu Kong, "Ma Jian and Gao Xingjian: Intellectual Nomadism and Exilic Consciousness in Sinophone Literature," in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 41.2 (June 2014): 126–146, 127. I am not suggesting that this theory is definitely universally "true," but I think there is some validity to it.

Nation

Nation, nationhood, and nationality are challenging and contested concepts. T.K. Oommen states that the first reference to nations derived from various Leipzig University professors, who created "nations" to defend common goals. Oommen says that "the term had a restrictive meaning … [being] referred to [as] an interest group or union."[6] However, in general, Oommen argues that *nation* has typically been conceptualized as "(1) a group of foreigners, (2) a community of opinion, (3) an elite, (4) a sovereign people, and (5) a unique people."[7]

Stemming from Hans Kohn,[8] scholars have attempted to narrow down the category. Epifanio San Juan Jr. argues that in post-colonial theory, *nation* and *state* are often muddled terms. *Nations* are generally perceived as smaller, local communities, whereas *states* are the overarching political realms being governed by common law,[9] though both nations and states work in conjunction. *Nations* (a *Volk* held together by common kinship, territory, sentiment, and history) create their political states to protect and maintain their *national* identity.[10] When combined, the modern notion of the nation-state is developed. In attempting to describe *nation*, the separation of political and "local," or cultural, spheres is common. In general, two prevalent distinguishing classifications emerge, namely "civic" nationalism and "ethnic" nationalism. Mainly, "civic nationalism is defined as belonging to a political community, state, and territory,

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[6] T.K. Oommen, "Demystifying the Nation and Nationalism," in *India International Centre Quarterly* 29.3/4 India: A National Culture? (Winter 2002-Spring 2003): 259–274, 259.

[7] Oommen, 260.

[8] See Hans Kohn, *The Ideal of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Collier Books, 1944).

[9] See Epifanio San Juan Jr., "Nation-State, Postcolonial Theory, and Global Violence" in *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural* Practice 46. 2 (Summer 2002): 11–32, 15–16.

[10] See Oommen, 260.

whereas ethnic nationalism is based on a perception of blood relation and common descent."[11] Brubaker also provides a brief outline of civic and ethnic nationalism: "Civic nationalism, characterized as liberal, voluntarist, universalist, and inclusive; and ethnic nationalism, glossed as illiberal, ascriptive, particularist, and exclusive. These are seen as resting on two corresponding understandings of nationhood, based on common citizenship in the first case, common ethnicity in the second."[12]

Generally, civic nationalism is the result of a political state's construction. In other words, nations are primarily political occurrences. A nation is perceived as a culture directly correlated with political sovereignty.[13] The primary emphasis of civic nationality revolves around citizenship: the idea that nations are composed of people being connected through political mechanisms and institutions.[14] This argument suggests that the foundations for peoples' identities are linked and depend upon the notion of citizenship. However, the entire classification of the "civic" nationalism category is equivocal. Understanding civic nationalism as ahistorical and acultural robs nations of their specific, and fluctuating, history and homogenizes a group of people under the generalized banner of "citizen." Additionally, for this project, the concept of civic nationality is not entirely viable due to the perception that it results from modernity and liberalism.[15] As Oommen argues, "The nation as a community of citizens, that is a political entity, is a creation of the French Revolution."[16]

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[11] Azar Gat with Alexander Yakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 260.

[12] Brubaker, 133.

[13] See A. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985), where the nation is described as "the cultural sensibility of sovereignty" (219).

[14] See Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996), 52–53; Gat, 7.

[15] See Gat, 1; Canovan 9–10, 37–47; Brubaker 133–134; Anderson, 11.

[16] Oommen, 260.

Comparatively, the ethnic nation is a nation composed of a politically conscious "ethnic" group that is ethnically homogenous—a relatively small group that "shares common cultures and traces descent to a common ancestor."[17] In a similar vein, Clifford Geertz describes ethnic groups being committed to various forms of ''primordial attachments." Defining ethnicity, he states that it

> … stems from the "givens"—or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed givens of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves.[18]

Azar Gat, however, takes the concept one step further by arguing that "ethnicity made the state and the state made ethnicity."[19] Seeing this contradiction, Gat provides a brief qualifier: "ethnicity has always been highly political, ever since the emergence of the state and even before. By *ethnicity, I mean a population of shared kinship (real or perceived) and culture* …"[20] Gat argues that common kinship (ancestry) and culture tie people together, resulting in the rise and mobilization of "ethnic" political institutions and nations.

The problem, however, with the concept of an ethnic nation is the assumption that people or humanity are somehow naturally divided into various "groups" and somehow gain a political consciousness to build a state. It assumes an ethnic/cultural staticity, the perception that group commonalities are unique and unchanging. However, as Oommen argues, cultural dynamics are continuously changing, as "they are constantly exposed to alien influences through migration and

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[17] Oommen, 262.
[18] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 259.
[19] Gat, 3.
[20] Gat, 3 (original emphasis).

colonization."[21] This statement indicates that ethnic identity is continually transforming.

Moreover, due to migration, dislocation, and replacement, "ethnic" nations are usually

"multinational."[22] Oommen explains the ramifications of multination states:

> Once a multinational or poly-ethnic state emerges and consolidates, it becomes a reality-in-itself, and the coexistence and interactions of its different nations or ethnic groups produce certain emergent properties, which gives a new meaning and a collective self-definition to the constituent units.[23]

The idea of an axiomatic ethnic group tied to kinship groups is problematic simply

because the kinship groups are also imagined or a created construction.[24] One particular problem

is that the concept of ethnicity produces highly emotional sentimental attachments. Anthropologist

Michael M.J. Fischer argues that ethnicity is "a deeply rooted emotional component of identity."[25]

However, Azade Seyhan argues that the concept of ethnicity does not explicitly "refer to a stable

ethnic identity but rather to a culturally constructed concept regulated by specific historical

conditions."[26] Moreover, she states that ethnicity is dynamic, continually being "reinvented and

reinterpreted by individuals in every generation."[27] In other words, ethnicity is a dynamic force,

one that is continuously reimagined and reconstructed every generation.

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[21] Oommen, 262.

[22] See Oommen, 264. He argues that multinational "nations" can project or display togetherness through common political goals. These diverse group bonds are solidified due to a common, usually hostile, "outsider." After the shared "outsider" is eliminated, a new collective group identity is formed that comprises the previous diverse communities.

[23] Oommen, 265.

[24] See Canovan, 57–59.

[25] Michael M.J. Fischer, "Ethnicity and Postmodern Arts of Memory," in *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography* (eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus; Berkley: University of California Press, 1986), 195–196.

[26] Azade Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 10.

[27] Seyhan, 66.

Brubaker asks the critical question "What is ethnicity?"[28] The concept is also notoriously tricky to define, leading to the familiar circular definitions that are prominent in the study of religion. While examining the concept of religion, Willi Braun provides the point that using equally mysterious substitute terms to define a concept leads to "explaining *obscurium per obscurius*, to account for one mystery by means of another mystery."[29] The same problem arises while attempting to categorize ethnicity to define a nation. Generally, ethnicity is seen as nation-building, then a nation is perceived as ethnicity. The result is a circular definition, involving conceptually problematic and confusing terms, leading to an unsatisfactory and puzzling conclusion. E.E. Roosen attempts to circumvent these problems by arguing that an ethnic nation cannot be created from nothing, stating, "The mobilization of ethnic groups is only possible because political leaders are able to rely on profound affective factors related to origin."[30] Anthony Smith defines the origins, or "core," of ethnicity to be myths, memories, values, and symbols included in the dimensions of shared history, a myth of origin, culture, and settlement.[31] Other origin categories can consist of shared language, kin, or mobilization through a common enemy. However, the problem of assuming and dividing peoples into determined classifications, despite the insistence of their creation from nothing, remains.

Benedict Anderson's influential book *Imagined Communities* defines nationality as historically fluctuating cultural artifacts that produce sentimental attachments. He proposes a definition of a nation being "an imagined political community … (whereby) communities are to

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[28] Brubaker, 137.

[29] Willi Braun, "Religion," in *Guide to the Study of Religion* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 3–18, 5.

[30] Eugene E. Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis* (London: Sage, 1989), 15.

[31] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 21–22.

be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[32]

According to Anderson, communities were traditionally linked by "sacred languages," employing

examples of Arabic, Latin, and Chinese.[33] Margaret Canovan would classify Anderson's concept

of a nation under her category of "Nations as Cultural Communities," which focuses on nations

being constructed through common culture, but primarily through language and under her

category of "Nations and Subjective Identity," which focuses on nations being within someone's

consciousness.[34] A problem, however, with Anderson's theory is that he assumes a notion of

religion preceded the concept of nation, suggesting that a "sacred" language (incongruent to the

masses) was the primary driving force uniting populations.[35] This argument assumes that

"premodern" people did not have a sense of nationalism and the "masses" were, more or less,

passive spectators. Additionally, the idea of literacy is overemphasized and deceptive because

general populations were mostly illiterate, forcing them to transmit their cultural relevancies in

other various methods, i.e., orally.[36] Brubaker provides a particularly acute critique of Anderson's

theory by arguing that linguistic nationalism is merely another interpretation of ethnic

nationalism:

> When "ethnic" is understood broadly as ethnocultural, or simply as cultural without
> qualification, then conceptualizing the nation as a community of language, demanding
> autonomy or independence in the name of such a community, limiting access to
> citizenship to persons knowing the language, and promoting or requiring teaching,
> publishing, broadcasting, administering, or advertising in that language must be considered
> central, indeed paradigmatic manifestations of ethnic nationalism.[37]

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[32] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 5–6.
[33] Anderson, 13–14.
[34] Canovan, 52–56.
[35] Anderson, 12–19.
[36] Gat, 12.
[37] Brubaker, 140.

With definitional problems attached to the concept of nation, it is difficult to provide a concrete and static definition despite the need for a conceptual understanding. Rather than attempting to provide an all-encompassing and universal meaning, I will outline how I intend to employ the notions of nation, nationhood, and nationalism by providing a fluent and flexible descriptive schema.[38] As Oommen argues, nation and ethnicity "are best viewed in their dynamic and processual relationship."[39]

Seyhan reminds us that the concept of culture is also fluent and is impacted by prescribed cultural memories. She states, "Constructions of cultural memory are subject to political intervention, pedagogical prerogative, ancestral force, [and] community contestation."[40] Bruce Lincoln argues that cultural identities

> Are not simply ascribed or inherited by birth; … they emerge from processes in which people are slowly educated by those around them to make judgments the group considers appropriate about a great host of things, and to make meta-judgments about the relative value to their own and others' judgments.[41]

Lincoln is defining culture as a social and political process. He states,

> Culture is the prime instrument through which groups mobilize themselves, construct their collective identity and affect their solidarity by excluding those whom they identify as outsiders, while simultaneously establishing their own internal hierarchy, based on varying degrees of adherence to the values that define the group and its members.[42]

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[38] I employ the word "schema" here and throughout intentionally. Brubaker defines schemas as "mental structures in which knowledge is represented" (75). They are mechanisms for interpreting the constructions of a social world's ambiguities (78).

[39] Oommen, 273.

[40] Seyhan, 16.

[41] Bruce Lincoln, "Culture," *Guide to the Study of Religion* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 409–422, 410.

[42] Lincoln, *Culture*, 411.

Lincoln, following Soren Kierkegaard, suggests that two components are central to culture, namely aesthetics and ethics.[43] According to Lincoln, aesthetics "include all practice and discourse concerned with 'taste,' that is, the evaluation of sensory experience and all matters of form and style."[44] Shalva Weil and Simona Antofi also argue how language and literature's production of "high culture" can form collective national identities.[45] On the other hand, ethics "include abstract discussion of moral tenets, concrete practice, and casuistic evaluations regarding specific behaviours performed by (and upon) specific categories of person."[46] Lincoln then suggests that religion can play a particular role within these two apparatuses of culture. Religion can connect to either the aesthetical or the ethical in a stabilizing manner.[47] Thus, religions "invest specific human preferences with transcendent status by misrepresenting them as revealed truths, primordial traditions, divine commandments and so forth."[48] Additionally, "religious ideologies regularly offer analyses of the fundamental nature of humanity and of the cosmos."[49] By appealing to the transcendent, religion shields itself and the specific aesthetical or ethical preferences it is cloaking from popular critique and debate due to its perceived nature as "sacred."

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[43] Lincoln, *Culture*, 415.

[44] Lincoln, *Culture*, 415.

[45] Shalva Weil, "The Earth's Inhabitants Scattered: The Relationship between Ethnicity and Diaspora," in *Ethnic Landscapes in an Urban World: Research in Urban Sociology* 8 (2007): 1–13, 7. Weil employs the example of Hebrew being revived as a spoken language to assist in further solidifying a common identity in the state of Israel. In other words, language played a vital role in creating a sense of nationality. Simona Antofi, "The exile literature of memoirs – debates, dilemmas, representative texts, and their formative-educative effects," in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 93 (2013): 29–34. Antofi examines how exilic authors experiment with various identities through the use of languages, especially with regard to one's "native" language and the dominant language of the author's new setting.

[46] Lincoln, *Culture*, 415.

[47] Lincoln, *Culture*, 416.

[48] Lincoln, *Culture*, 416.

[49] Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 173.

From recognized authorities, sentiments drive these religious/cultural discourses. These discourses additionally aid the endeavour of depicting specific moral and aesthetical inclinations as axiomatic. He argues that myth and ritual, stemming from perceived authorities, are two methods that provoke sentiments within populations, driving "cultural" discourse.

With this explanation of culture in mind, I think, a more helpful way to conceptualize nation, nationhood, and nationalism is to see them as a type of mediation between the impersonal institutional attachments and the more personal cultural sentiments held between diverse peoples. On one side, the institutional attachment is what Brubaker calls "state-framed" nationalism, meaning that the "'nation' is conceived as congruent with the state, and as institutionally and territorially framed by it."[50] It is more impersonal and politically based. On the other side, the cultural sentiments link agreed-upon ethics, myths, rituals, and classifications. The "nation" as a mediator acts as a clamp holding together two seemingly incongruent categories. As Canovan states,

> It [nations] turns political institutions into a kind of extended family inheritance, although the kinship ties in question are highly metaphorical; it is a contingent historical product that feels like part of the order of nature; it links individual and community, past and present; it gives the cold institutional structures and aura of warm, intimate togetherness.[51]

The synthesis between the institutional attachments and the agreed-upon cultural sentiments creates a "we" sentiment. This collective sentiment sets the foundation and aids the development of a steady political body and provides a sense of solidarity and validity. It also supports and reinforces the construction of enabling a collective aura of "us."

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[50] Brubaker, 144.
[51] Canovan, 69.

Identity

Another essential and problematic term is identity. Similar to the nation, this concept is highly ambiguous and warrants further investigation. Brubaker outlines five ways scholars have traditionally used identity. Identity is first employed as a foundation for political activities. Secondly, it is thought of as an essential "sameness" within a social group. Third, it is viewed as the root of an individual's self-hood. Fourth, it is thought of as the development of a collective "groupness." Finally, it is viewed as a disjointed modern self, highlighted by competing discourses.[52] All these theories of identity can overlap to a degree, but there are also conflicting models. This conflict leads to tension within the concept itself as it is complex, ambiguous, and fragmented.

Stuart Hall argues that identity is not as multivalent as previously suggested. Hall argues that identity should be thought of as a "'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation."[53] Continuing, Hall states there are two ways of thinking about "cultural identity." First is the idea of a shared culture representing an essential "true self" reflected within a shared history and ancestry underlining superficial differences. Hall's example is the idea of "Caribbeanness" instead of Jamaican, Haitian, Barbadian, and so on.[54] The problem with this interpretation is the assumption of a shared "true," "essential" self, whatever that may be. Classifying a created and debatable concept such as "Caribbeanness" homogenizes various diverse groups of people and places their specific histories under a widely generalized rubric. As Jerome Teelucksingh's article "Scarred and Exiled"

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[52] Brubaker, 33–35.

[53] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Social Theory Vol II: Power and Identity in the Global Era* (ed. Roberta Garner; Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004), 318–330, 318.

[54] Hall, 318–320.

demonstrates, the concept of "Caribbeanness" is plural. Indo-Caribbeans can have vastly different experiences, ideas, sentiments, and assumptions of what "Caribbeanness" is compared to Afro-Caribbeans.[55] Teelucksingh summarizes, "the Caribbean identity is a complex and multilayered one which is composed of such factors as linguistics, gender, politics, race/ethnicity, caste, religion, level of education, social standing, economic status, and geography."[56]

Hall's second position of shared culture recognizes these problems and focuses on the recognition of similarities and differences. Besides, there must be a realization that identity is continually transforming through history. This second position avoids the pitfall of homogenizing identity. Hall states, "Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return."[57]

Hall is quick, however, to suggest that identities do have various forms of sentiments and attachments stemming from real and symbolic historical events constructed and reconstructed through discourses of myth, memory, and narrative. In other words, cultural identity can be perceived of as a "phenomenon by which kingdoms and groups preserved their identity in relation to others."[58] Hall proclaims, "Cultural identities are the points of identification, the courses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, there is always a politics of identity,

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[55] See Jerome Teelucksingh, "Scarred and Exiled: Race and Caribbean Immigrants in Toronto 1970–2004," in *Ethnic Landscapes in an Urban World: Research in Urban Sociology* 8 (2007): 121–161. For example, Teelucksingh explains that the post-colonial terminology of Caribbean compared to West Indies" can hold contrasting impressions, usually indicative of race (139).

[56] Teelucksingh, 139.

[57] Hall, 321. Return here suggests a type of redemptive return to a "Motherland," in this case, Africa.

[58] Weil, 3.

a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin.'"[59] Returning to his previous example, Jamaicans and Haitians are both similar and different concerning themselves and from the perspective of others. They have similar histories of colonization, repression, and poverty. Living in the African diaspora, they can connect through similar displacement "origin" narratives and an idealized mythical notion of their "homeland." But they also have diverging histories within their "new" cultural and territorial surroundings. Therefore, their "new" languages, taxonomies, semantic structures, mythologies, ritual practices, and fine arts reflect their more recent social matrix.

Hall's second position of cultural identity is relatively convincing, but even though agreeing with certain arguments, the notion of searching for a communal identity relating to "origin" is problematic. Jonathan Z. Smith argues that myth is basically "a self-conscious category mistake. That is to say, the incongruity of myth is not an error, it is the very source of its power. Or … a myth is a 'strategy for dealing with a situation' …[60] [Therefore,] myth is best conceived not as a primordium, but rather as a limited collection of elements with a fixed range of cultural meanings which are applied, thought with, worked with, experimented with in particular situations."[61] Bruce Lincoln adopts a similar view of myth. He describes myths "as an authoritative mode of narrative discourse that may be instrumental in the ongoing construction of social borders and hierarchies, which is to say, in the construction of society itself."[62] Origin narratives are specific mythic discourse constructions and reconstructions that reflect someone's

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[59] Hall, 321 (original emphasis).
[60] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 299.
[61] Smith, *Map*, 308.
[62] Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 123.

situation within a fixed location. For example, Historical Jesus scholarship searches for the "authentic" Historical Jesus, attempting to discover the "origin of" or "original" Christianity. The problem is that scholars can shape Jesus into whomever or whatever they please. Each scholar's reconstruction uses specific "cherry-picked" information they deem relevant and "authentic," and ignores, rejects, or dismisses contradictory information as being later theologically motivated interpolations.[63] Overall, I agree with Jean and John Comaroff's statement, "The textual pursuit of the 'real' meaning of an inherently equivocal concept is an exercise in futility."[64]

Brubaker suggests alternative terminologies to "identity." One alternative is "identification" as it avoids a reification of the term and focuses attention on the identifying agents or categories. Additionally, identification is not a static term as specific "identifiers" can passively or forcibly influence and fluctuate.[65] Brubaker's second alternative is "self-understanding." He argues that the phrase better describes "'situated subjectivity': one's sense of who one is, of one's social location …"[66] Self-understanding is more of an individualistic concept. However, people with similar self-understandings can form a collective. Brubaker argues that a "Commonality" of similar attributes assemble a "Connectedness" through linking social ties, finally developing a "Groupness," or a "sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solitary group."[67] Abani continues, "The argument can be made that we do for the most part construct our

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[63] For a great critical insight into Historical Jesus scholarship, see William Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism, and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London and Oakville: Equinox, 2005).

[64] Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* Vol. 1 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 20.

[65] Brubaker, 41–44.

[66] Brubaker, 44.

[67] Brubaker, 47.

identity, and at an even deeper more ineffable level, the self, from our interaction[s] with our [social] environment."[68]

Reflecting on this information, I will utilize the concept of "identity" similarly to Brubaker's second alternative. Identity is a descriptive schema for a group's self-identification connected and reflected through the agents of commonality. These agents of commonality can include mythic discourses, symbols, languages, classifications, shared physical location, culture, and rituals. Using mythic discourse, people can construct, or reconstruct, specific aspects and affiliations within their society. Lincoln explains how myths can be used for creating group affiliations and identities through socio-historical events. Lincoln compares the Nuer people's myth of the First Cattle to the Battle of Montaperti and Swedish resistance to Danish rule. These narratives all have one thing in common: they "recount formative moments from the past, moments in which the enduring tensions that divide rival groups were dramatically at issue."[69] Through discourse, when one recounts these narratives, it reaffirms a connection with one's ancestors and a sense of disconnect from "others." In other words, one's social identity is reconfirmed. As Lincoln states, "through the repeated evocation of such sentiments via the invocation of select moments from the past that social identities are continually (re-)established and social formations (re)constructed."[70]

The influence of violence, conflict, and war are specific occurrences that force populations to reflect upon their perceptions of nationhood and identity. As Brubaker mentions, "it is important to *take violence ... more seriously* in studies of ethnic and nationalist conflict … [while]

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[68] Abani, 26.

[69] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 22.

[70] Lincoln, *Discourse*, 23.

political violence and collective violence should *take ethnicity and nationality more seriously.*"[71] Canovan argues that these forms of hostility will test a nation's solidarity and even raise the intensity of national consciousness.[72] In a similar vein, populations will rely on reified ideas of nationhood and identity to recruit soldiers by attaching high honours upon their social standing. Nationhood and identity can be employed as a method of reflecting and thinking through the complexity of conflict, war, and violence. Additionally, as San Juan Jr. argues, constructing collective nationhood and identity can assist in overcoming various forms of oppression over hegemonic nations.[73] In the same manner that dominant nations can construct discourses propagating and legitimizing themselves as "elites," oppressed groups respond, occasionally employing violence to upset the status quo, by creating their nation for some form of official recognition.[74]

Place

A third crucial term is "place," specifically, how the idea and concept of place are linked with nationhood and identity. In his essay "Here, There, and Anywhere," Jonathan Z. Smith outlines three distinctive methods for examining place. Smith

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[71] Brubaker, 91–92 (original emphasis).

[72] Canovan, 105.

[73] See San Juan, 11–32. Here, San Juan emphasizes multifaceted "nations" and criticizes the idea of race/culture being the primary, if not exclusive, taxon for social constructions of "nation." For example, he states, "If racism occurs only or chiefly on the level of 'intercultural relations,' from this constricted optic, the other parts of a given social formation (political, economic) become superfluous and marginal. Politics is then reduced to an epiphenomenal manifestation of discourse and instrumentalized language-games" (22). In other words, a national collective cannot simply be comprised of culture, but also must include alliances of "politics and economics" (23). Moreover, San Juan Jr. argues that without incorporating additional criteria into the nation, the concept itself simply resembles older conceptualizations, one that has been utilized by the domineering sections of society to pursue their own domestic and overseas business interests (see 24–25).

[74] San Juan Jr., 27.

Proposes a topography in terms of three spatial categories: (1) the "here" of domestic religion, located primarily in the home and in burial sites; (2) the "there" of public civic and state religions, largely based in temple constructions; and (3) the "anywhere" of a rich diversity of religious formations that occupy an interstitial space between these other two loci, including a variety of religious entrepreneurs and ranging from groups we term "associations" to activities we label "magic."[75]

I have described each category elsewhere,[76] but the importance of Smith's descriptive categories deserves repeating. The "here" category is a domestic classification (ancestor burials and veneration for instance) and is maintained through kinship or close communal commitments. "Here" traditions are closely associated with a specific place. Physical dislocation (forced or voluntary) is undoubtedly one of the principal threats to the "here." Smith argues that "forced distance from hearth, home, and especially, the familial burial site is a profound rupture of the presumed endless accessibility of the ancestors, which stands at the heart of domestic religion."[77]

The "there" category is connected to a specific place. This place is usually seen as "sacred" to the community it represents and is the central focal point for their tradition. Eugene Arva declares that physical spaces (in his argument, landscapes) shape and confer identities while acquiring a type of character status.[78] In a similar discussion, Edouard Glissant also describes Caribbean landscapes as fully developed characters. He states,

> The relationship with the land … becomes so fundamental in this discourse that landscape in the work stops being merely decorative or supportive and emerges as a full

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[75] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 325.

[76] See Allan E.C. Wright, *"Better to Reign in Hell, Than Serve in Heaven:" Satan's Metamorphosis from a Heavenly Council Member to the Ruler of Pandaemonium* (Wilmington, Delaware: Vernon Press, 2017).

[77] Smith, *Relating*, 327. In addition, the other foremost threats to "here" stem from forgetfulness (innocent or malicious motivation), various tragedies (war, disease), and natural disasters (see 326–327).

[78] Eugene Arva, "Language of Exile: From Traumatic Memories to Placebo Histories—Magical Realism as Therapeutic Narrative in Caribbean Fiction," in *Exile and Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutty; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 153–164, 154.

character. Describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history.[79]

Temples can be employed as examples; the Temple in Jerusalem seen as the *axis mundi* for second temple Judaism. The "there" is localized, linking people with a specific physical place. The location of the focal point itself is arbitrary. However, it tends to be tied to a mythic narrative(s), outlining the importance of such a place.[80] This intellectually created place then becomes decorated, leading to sacred space designation. Thus, a specific physical space is now identified and labelled with sacred statues. This newly found sacredness now delivers and projects an axiomatic aura due to its relation with particular narratives and myths. Distance is also a leading contributor to "there" traditions. Having a sacred centre ties people living in peripheral regions to a recognized symbol of identity. Motivations of creating a social *axis mundi* are numerous. For one, they can be utilized for social solidarity symbols. Or, in other words, they are a mechanism for social unity and cohesion. People who may have an identity inclination but who reside away from their identification lineage (one example is diasporic communities) can easily conjure an agreed-upon uniting symbol for self or group identification. As David Kertzer suggests, symbols, and the rituals surrounding them, attempt "to tie the periphery to the center."[81] Certain religious traditions have successfully applied this method. For example, the Vatican is seen as an authoritative symbol in Catholicism, and the Kaa'ba can also be perceived as a unifying symbol in Islam. Secondly, uniting symbols can be a deliberate political mechanism. Jonathan Z. Smith states that "there" traditions deal extensively with political power

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[79] Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (trans. J. Michael Dash; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 100.

[80] Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 22, 28.

[81] David Kertzer, *Ritual, Power, and Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 23.

relations expressed through classification systems.[82] Kertzer argues, "Through symbolism we recognize who are the powerful and who are the weak, and through the manipulation of symbols the powerful reinforce their authority … identifying oneself with a popular symbol can be a potent means of gaining and keeping power,"[83] meaning that political power holders need to communicate their perceived power to regions extending beyond their immediate vicinity; Kertzer additionally argues that colonizers continually employed this tactic. He raises the question of how people living in Asia Minor in the first century could feel subservient to the colonial power, Rome, whose physical distance was significant. Certain sections of the outlining population even identified as a part of this foreign power. Kertzer explains that the solution was symbols and rituals, which were employed to serve as constant reminders of their social standing, their imperial ties. With large rites and symbols "in localities scattered throughout the realm, people were better able to identify with the power of the ruler, and, at the same time, the subservience of local authorities to the central ruler was made clear."[84] Besides physical distance, Smith additionally claims that the "there" religions served as a method of overcoming perceived cosmological distance, meaning that the cosmological realm and the terrestrial realm are seen as separate, and the "there" traditions can overcome this mental gap. Symbolic central institutional structures are used as mechanisms of juxtaposing or mediating the cosmological distance.

Finally, the category of "anywhere" is "'neither here nor there.'"[85] It has no tangible attachments, so there is no reason for the tradition to be tied to an explicit place. Smith

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[82] Smith, *Relating*, 328–329.
[83] Kertzer, 5.
[84] Kertzer, 22.
[85] Smith, *Relating*, 330.

demonstrates that in late antiquity, "anywhere" traditions came into prominence. He also outlines

three explanations why, namely a new geography, a new cosmography, and a new polity.[86] New

geography occurs due to issues of dislocation or dispersion. Smith states, "the religion of 'here'

has been detached from its roots."[87] In other words, physical separation has occurred. A solution

is for the newly found social group to associate with a "socially constructed replacement for the

family."[88] The rethinking of group identity no longer hinges upon genealogical criteria but is

now professed as contractual.[89] A second solution is realigning or reinterpreting mythological

cosmologies. Living in a Greco-Roman cultural milieu, it is conceivable that Jewish populations

would have had some perception, or familiarity, with the early version of Ptolemy's

cosmological structure.[90] This structure prescribes that the sublunar realm was populated by

spirits and demons that controlled the terrestrial realm. The superlunar domain, however, was

expressed "as an orderly and harmonious whole"[91] populated by planets and "gods" and

protected from the terrestrial chaos. Additionally, local polis[92] religions were being replaced by

universal deities due to various cultic proclamations of particular deities being capable of

overcoming their cosmological separation from humanity.[93] Or, in other words, "dislocation is

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[86] Smith, *Relating*, 330.
[87] Smith, *Relating*, 330.
[88] Smith, *Relating*, 330.
[89] Smith, *Relating*, 333.
[90] Luther H. Martin, *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6.
[91] Martin, 29.
[92] See Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "What is a Polis Religion?" in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13–37; Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Further Aspects of Polis Religion," in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 38–55. See also Jonathan Z. Smith, "Here, There, and Anywhere," *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 323–339.
[93] Martin, 59.

cosmologized by a new, vertical myth, which overlays the horizontal reality."[94] Overall, the

problem is that people are dislocated from their cosmological homes. Our earthly "fleshy"

vessels are understood to be weak and are susceptible to physical and mental illnesses, death, and

decay. To overcome this problem, people perform rituals that reduce this perceived distance.

Smith also outlines a switch from a "here" and "there" to an "anywhere" cosmology: "Within a

'utopian' world-view, it is [a person] who is out of place, who is estranged from his true home

'on high.' The demons are 'in place'—they have their spheres, their realms, their houses … It is

the [person] who will daringly attempt his own redirection or relocation."[95] One example of a

Hellenized Jew exhibiting this discourse is Philo. Philo suggests there are two distinct sections of

one's "soul," namely the rational and irrational.[96] The rational aspect of the "soul" contains

elements of the divine, or *logos*. The latter refers to earthly matters, which are prone to illogical

passions and emotions. The irrational facet of our being belongs in the undesirable terrestrial

world, whereas the rational part of our being belongs to God in the cosmos. There is an apparent

dichotomy of one's being: one aspect is celestially out of place, or "lost," whereas our "fleshy"

fragment is utterly concerned with hollow terrestrial activities. The individual goal should be to

liberate oneself from the irrational side that is concentrated on earthly matters to enter God's

cosmos.[97] As a result, one transcends into the superlunar sphere and is, therefore, celestially "at

home." Ptolemy's cosmological structure aligns nicely with Middle Platonism in antiquity.

According to Middle Platonism, "human souls … are parts of the Divine that have descended

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[94] Smith, *Relating*, 330.

[95] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," *ANRW* II 16.1 (1978): 425–439, 438.

[96] For a quick reference on this proposal I have used Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 81.

[97] See Tripolitis, 81–83.

into the material world and have become embodied. Thus, the aim of life is to free oneself from the world of matter and to return to the Divine."[98] Istvan Czachesz provides an example through his examination of Paul's epistle to the Romans.[99] Czachesz contends that Paul cries out to be rescued from his "sinful" body and places blame on his bodily "members" being the source of sinful activities.

> Concluding, Smith describes this final theory. A new polity is:

> The new political ideologies, post-Alexander, are the result of the total cessation of native kingship. The unique, mediating role of the king was one of the foundations of the religion of "there." His removal from the scene was decentering. In some Late Antique traditions, the old forms of kingship became idealized objects of nostalgia, as in messianism. At the same time, archaic combat myths were revisioned as resistance myths to foreign kings resulting in new religious formations such as apocalypticism and millenarianism … The model of the distant emperor, mediated by satraps, governors, or vassal kings, played a significant role in the elaboration of the new formations of monotheism, along with the king-gods ubiquitous attendant subordinate and secondary divinities, principalities, and powers. All of these actors were capable of being readily assimilated to the new, expanded cosmography.[100]

Here, the concepts of nationhood and identity categorically emerge and become conspicuous, especially when the loss of place occurs due to exile and dislocation.

The importance of national institutions within a social place or space cannot be understated. A defined place or space is conceived of by classifications, communication, and control.[101] Social institutions play a significant role in all three aspects. Institutions can create classification systems surrounding specific places and social spaces. When social classifications are constructed around an agreed-upon place, various institutions shape, produce, reproduce, and maintain discourses surrounding the constructed classifications. Therefore, a place or space is

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[98] Tripolitis, 41.

[99] Istvan Czachesz, *The Grotesque Body in Early Christian Discourse: Hell, Scatology, Metamorphosis* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 47.

[100] Smith, *Relating*, 332.

[101] Stewart, 52.

defined "through a set of institutions that reproduce certain spatial conceptions and practices and maintain its understanding to the larger public."[102] In other words, the development of institutions aids in the classification process of a set place, or the space communicates these specific classifications, which in turn helps social groups exert a sense of control over said place or space and aids in their identification with that place.

What is Exile?

The conceptual term "exile" at first appears self-evident and explanatory. In general, exile is removal from one's "homeland." Short definitions are reminiscent of each other. For example, Yanick Lahens states, "exile is often perceived as a simple departure from [one's] native country."[103] Agnieszka Gutthy provides a similar brief definition, "Exile has been defined as banishment, or forced separation from one's native country for political, religious, or economic reasons … [It is also] associated with a purely mental state: a sense of separation, terminal loss and loneliness …"[104] Saddik Gohar provides a more detailed definition:

> Exile may be viewed as forced or self-imposed moving away from one's homeland. Thus, exile becomes a signifier not only of living outside one's place of origin but also of the inner conditions caused by such a physical absence. At the same time, exile may also connote the exclusively spiritual, intellectual or even existential condition of someone who is alienated from the surrounding community.[105]

There are, however, variations of exilic discourses. Chris Abani proposes two forms of exilic discourse, namely "positive" and "negative" reactions. He describes "positive" exilic attitudes as a

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[102] Stewart, 49–50.

[103] Lahens, 735.

[104] Agnieszka Gutthy, "Introduction," in *Exile and the Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutthy; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), 1–6, 1.

[105] Saddik Gohar, "Exile and Revolt: Arab and Afro-American Poets in Dialogue," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004), 159–181, 160.

redemptive position, and one that should be celebrated.[106] Abani states, "Proponents on this

positive, even optimistic, side of the debate typically celebrate and even romanticize the position

of the exile, elevating the exilian to global standing."[107] Abani employs the works of authors such

as Salman Rushdie, C.L.R. James, and George Lamming as examples of "positive" exilic

literature.[108] Similarly, Kong discusses how Gao Xingjian and Ma Jian continuously "talked of the

positive impact of exile on their writing and have consciously explored the alternative concept of

nomadism as a creative space and a source of literary inspiration."[109] Romantic discourses of

adoptive countries can also be reinforced through disappointing return encounters.[110] In other

words, an exile returns to their "origin" only to find that their home location is now foreign. The

"origin" is not what or how they remember it being, which leads to sentiments of chagrin or is

somehow anticlimactic. For example, Kong describes how exilic author Ma Jian's short return

visits to China "gave him more of a sense of repulsion rather than a feeling of belonging or

returning home."[111] Abani then describes "negative" reactions as processes of rationalization: "the

construction of a consolation."[112] "Negative" discourses or lost identification responses also vary.

In one instance, the exilic writer emphasizes a type of exclusive reunion with their perceived lost

origin of identification. The other arrangement of exilic discourse is the proposition of obliterating

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[106] Chris Abani, "Resisting the Anomie: Exile and the Romantic Self," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004): 21–30, 22.

[107] Abani, 22.

[108] Abani, 22. Here Abani states that people like Rushdie, etc. "believe exile to be a vital condition for writing, a form of alienation that produces a useful double-mindedness" (22). This directly relates to my previous paragraph, which discusses how and/or why exilic writers can have a different outlook on their new, and dominant, society.

[109] Kong, 142.

[110] See Abani, 27.

[111] Kong, 127.

[112] Abani, 24.

conflicts and differences.[113] Paul Tambori argued that too many exilic writers are trapped in the dichotomy of outrage and nostalgia.[114] Due to this binary, intellectual construction endeavours of new identities are lost. Generally, exilic populations are forced into more urban settings. Urbanization becomes even more prevalent throughout the ancient Hellenized world. However, do exilic authors deriving from a more urban intercultural location differ in their exilic rhetoric/discourses? I will argue that authors who are well-versed in idyllic intercultural rhetoric, due to their familiarity and shared physical location with other cultures and ethnicities, project a conflation of the two seemingly competing discourses. In other words, urbanization produces a socio-identity dichotomy. It aids in creating ethnonational discourses while also attempting to highlight and reinforce inclusive ideals.

Other scholars abandon the term "exile," instead preferring the term "refugee."[115] Weil argues that the term "exile" does not adequately convey the intense trauma and terror that accompany fleeing populations. She states, "The term refugee may be more appropriate to label a group of people who are forced to flee from extreme persecution, or survive a hell that was once their home."[116] Additionally, scholars have also labelled their analyses "trauma theory," not exile studies.[117]

Despite the various nomenclatures, scholarly examination of exilic literature generally focuses on two discourses, namely the lamentations of the exilic writer or the writer's attempt(s)

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[113] See Yanick Lahens, "Exile: Between Writing and Place," in *Callaloo* 15.3 II (Summer 1992): 735–746, 740.

[114] See Paul Tabori, *The Pen in Exile: A Second Anthology of Exiled Writers*. (London: International P.E.N. Club Centre, 1956).

[115] For example, see Egon F. Kunz, "Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory," in *The International Migration Review* 15.1/2 (Spring-Summer, 1981): 42–51.

[116] Weil, 9.

[117] For example, see David G. Garber Jr., "Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies," in *Currents of Biblical Research* 14.1 (2015): 24–44.

to assimilate into their new surroundings through a sense of "universal citizenship." However, scholars have also combined the two, somewhat competing, discourses by forming a space in which the exilic writer incorporates both exile lamentations and attempts to process their new identities. This new "in-between" rhetoric is what Homi K. Bhabha labels *hybridity*. Edward Said provides an example. For Said, an exile is someone

> Neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another … [Moreover, they] cannot go back to some earlier or perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation.[118]

Despite Said's attempt to combine the exilic writer's lamentations with their creative efforts to build a "new" identity, the focus remains on a morose writer whose self-identification constructions are beheld as an afterthought and without much consideration. Similar to Said, scholarly rhetoric surrounding exilic writers, at best, focuses more on one specific discourse, and at worst, completely ignores the other. In other words, one strain of exilic discourse is pushed into the background while emphasizing the other. Exilic writing, I think, is more complex and nuanced. Indeed, lamentations of the writer's exilic situation are prevalent and profound. However, at the same time, the exilic writer engages in a highly creative construction of self-identification and establishment. One discourse being present does not exclude the other, and they can be complementary.

Post-colonial[119] theorist Homi K. Bhabha argues that intermingling discourses of two cultures produce a "third space" called *hybridity.* Hybridity proposes the development of a "'third

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[118] Edward Said, *Representations of an Exile* (London: Vintage, 1994), 36, 39.
[119] The term Postcolonial represents "the continuing process of imperial suppressions and exchanges throughout this diverse range of societies, in their institutions and their discursive practices." Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, "General Introduction," in *The Post-*

space' which enables other positions to emerge"[120] in a usually hostile, heterogeneous environment.[121] Literature from colonized authors resides comfortably within Bhabha's "third space." Colonized discourses, proclaiming axiomatic ideologies, encounter foreign discourses and attempt to assert their doctrines.[122] The negotiation between the two divergent discourses disrupts the colonizer's and the colonized's hegemony and becomes a battle of competing ideologies[123] generating a compromised hybridization, or "new," discourse. Literature from exilic authors resembles the "new" hybridized discourse but is further complicated by a perceived lost national solidarity and physical detachment from their native institutions. A heightened sense of nationality while living under political colonization, exilic authors' rhetoric resembles, or manifests, into a form of resistance literature whereby their writings depict a systematized resistance that is aimed at their perceived national emancipation.[124] Stuart Hall takes displacement narratives one step further by arguing that hybridity produces "new" exilic identities with the intention of recreating a desire to return to their previous (pre-exilic) way of life.[125]

Scott McCraken proposes that people attempting to understand or come to terms with a political defeat, and I would add exile resulting from political failure, deal extensively with

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Colonial Studies Reader (eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 3.

[120] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (ed. Jonathan Rutherford; London: Lawrence & Wishart., 1990), 207–221, 211.

[121] See Leander, 48.

[122] Jean and John Comaroff, 24.

[123] I am employing hegemony and ideology here as defined and explained by Jean and John Comaroff (see 19–32).

[124] Stephen Slemon, "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 107.

[125] Hall, 329.

identity.[126] For example, the Italian poet Dante wrote arguably his most popular epic *La Divina Commedia* after being exiled from Florence.[127] McCracken suggests that "the poetry of defeat might be understood not just as a continuation of conflict, but as a battle over the past, a battle of remembrance."[128] Nationhood and identity can be employed as a method of reflecting and thinking through the complexity of conflict, war, and violence and attempting to build a "new" community and national institutions.

Comprehensive analysis of exile reveals the exilic authors' amplified perceptions of their lost identity and nationalism. These specific sentiments lead to one of the dominant discourses in exile theory, lost identity lamentations. According to Edward Said, exile and nationalism intertwine. Nationalism justifies "a history selectively strung together in a narrative form: thus all nationalisms have their founding fathers, their basic, quasi-religious texts, their rhetoric of belonging, their historical and geographical landmarks, their official enemies and heroes."[129] Pierre Bourdieu titles this collective ethos "*Habitus*."[130] The strong sentiments of constructed histories with ties to a specific territory provide a perceived axiomatic legitimation.[131] As Marta Jimena Cabrera argues, "The notion of dissolution of identity, fuelled by the loss of place (both

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[126] See Scott McCracken, "The Lives of Others: The Defeat of Evil or the Evil of Defeat?" in *Evil, Barbarism, and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830–2000* (eds. Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill, and Bertrand Taithe; Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 246–264.

[127] McCracken, 246.

[128] McCracken, 247.

[129] Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 176.

[130] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). And/or Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[131] See Stanley J. Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 219.

spatially and socially) and the fearful desire for anonymity, is one of the traumas that displaced persons frequently suffer."[132]

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin argue that "a major feature of post-colonial literature is the concern with either developing or recovering an appropriate identifying relationship between self and place."[133] Exiles have a constant need to reconstruct their lost identity through discourses of social restoration due to their detachment from their land, ethnic roots, and institutions.[134] To compensate for being separated from a hefty fragment of their *habitus*, exilic authors tend to create a new imagined world order based upon the heightened preconceived notions of their "nationality" by (re)constructing their national history and national institutions [135] in contrast to colonial discourses.[136] Exilic writers are primarily focused on future restitution and restoration of a perceived idyllic national past.[137] William Safran, discussing diasporas, formulates a set of similar characteristics:

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and

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[132] Marta Jimena Cabrera, "A Sense of Place: Columbian Artists on Violence and Exile," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004), 270–282, 279.

[133] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, "Place: Introduction," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 392.

[134] Said, 177.

[135] Said, 184.

[136] Hans Leander describes "colonial discourse" as "a term that figures prominently in postcolonial criticism, therefore demotes a totality that includes the material and social practices of ruling distant territories as well as the linguistic patterns of thought, attitudes, and values that makes this rules appear natural and self-evident" (11). However, Leander also states that "colonial discourse fluctuates between self-confident universalism and the anxiety of being imitated and mocked" (44). In other words, colonial discourse can be challenged by "colonized" discourse.

[137] Elleke Boehmer, "Postcolonial Writing and Terror," in *Terror and the Postcolonial* (eds. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 146.

therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.[138]

However, Arun P. Mukherjee points out that traditional, post-colonial literature homogenizes distinct authors, groups, etc. into an overarching category of "the oppressed," "the colonized," etc. that disregards cultural and national differences. Additionally, post-colonial theory supposes that the entire corpus of post-colonial literature is directed against the perceived "colonizers." This supposition neglects the internal struggles and hierarchies present within the "colonized" society itself.[139] David Chidester, in his book *Religion of Empire: Imperialism & Comparative Religion*, argues that in 19th-century South Africa, Zulu chiefs and diviners ensured loyalty by struggling against their external enemies and, perhaps more importantly, by eliminating, or subduing, internal dissension by rival subgroups.[140]

One primary focus of exilic scholarly literature is based around examining the author's lamentations of physical and mental/social dislocation. These examinations are essential because lamentations are almost ubiquitous in exilic literature. For example, in her study of Tibetan poetry written by authors living in India, Isabella Ofner states, "we learn from the writings of Tibetans in

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[138] William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (University of Toronto Press, 1991), 83–99, 83–84.

[139] See Arun P. Mukherjee, "Interrogating Postcolonialism: Some Uneasy Conjunctures," in *Interrogating Post-Colonialism: Theory, Text, and Context* (Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1996), 14–17.

[140] David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism & Comparative Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 146.

India that the experience of diaspora is devastating … [They] depict the despair and exhaustion of living in limbo."[141] Another brief example is Douglas Field's essay about the poet Harold Norse. Field argues that Norse's work is "characterized by loss and sadness."[142] A final example can be found in Urbashi Barat's essay "Exile and Memory: Re-membering Home After the Partition of Bengal." Barat uses a Bengali nursery rhyme, written in exile, as an example for the community's lamentations. As he argues, the nursery rhyme "soon became a classic expression of the popular feeling about a newly achieved political freedom: not joy or relief, but, rather, an incomprehension and an anguish that his freedom was gained at the expense of home and homeland."[143]

For a more in-depth example, one exilic writer who primarily displays, and drastically laments, his lost identity, location, and nationality is the Roman poet Ovid. As Juliane Prade states, "Ovid laments the many facets of sorrow and deprivation he faces after being sent away from Rome by (he says) Imperator Augustus … Ovid almost exclusively illustrates exile as simply a painful condition under which he must live."[144] The historical legitimacy of Ovid's exile is well beyond the scope of this project. However, I side with the faction of scholars who argue that Ovid was indeed sent to Tomis circa 8 CE for whatever specificity (subversion or

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[141] Isabella Ofner, "Whither Forgetting: Longing and Loss in the Poetry of Tenzin Tsundue," in *Exile and the Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutthy; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 93–102, 96.

[142] Douglas Field, "Exile, Desire, and Loneliness: Harold Norse (of course)," in *Exile and the Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutthy; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 121–133, 123.

[143] Urbashi Barat, "Exile and Memory: Re-membering Home After the Partition of Bengal," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004), 213–226, 214.

[144] Julian Prade, "Ovid in the 'Wilderness': Exile and Autonomy," in *Exile and the Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutthy; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 7–17, 7, 8.

lewdness).[145] Jo-Marie Claassen explains that Ovid utilized metaphor as a method of emphasizing

and expressing his exile. She states, "A major metaphor in Ovid's exilic poetry is the concept of

'having died' when he was banished."[146] Prade appears to concur: "Ovid encourages [his wife] to

mourn him as if he were dead."[147] Many scholars have investigated Ovid's metaphor of exile as

death.[148] Claassen outlines Ovid's sentiments throughout his work—"Ovid clearly displays his

alienation into his poetry."[149] He exhibits his loneliness,[150] isolation from his identity of being a

Roman citizen/poet[151] and his dispossession of Roman cultural politics.[152] Additionally, as

Claassen shows, Ovid employed physical aliment metaphors to illustrate his position:

"Debilitating physical symptoms reflect his debilitated interior. Physical illness becomes a

metaphor for mental and emotional suffering."[153]

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[145] For a brief overview of these arguments, see Jo-Marie Claassen, *Ovid Revisited: The Poet in Exile* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 2008), 2–10.

[146] Claassen, 196.

[147] Prade, 12. Prade strengthens her argument by recalling how Ovid delineates his proclamation of banishment: "it was as if a corpse was carried to a funeral" (12).

[148] For example, see E. Doblhofer, "Ovids Spiel mit Zweifel und Verzweiflung: Stilistische und literaturtypologische Betrachtungen zu Tristia und Ex Ponto," in *WJA* n.f.4 (1978): 137–138; E. Doblhofer, *Exil und Emigration: Zum Erlebnis der Heimatferne in der Romischen* Literatur (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), 169–173; Gareth D. Williams, *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 12–13; and Jo-Marie Claassen, "Exile, Death and Immortality: Voices from the Grave," in *Latomus* 55 (1996): 576–585.

[149] Claassen, 215. Claassen defines alienation "as a psychological separation from the protagonist's accepted modes of thought" (212).

[150] Claassen, 218.

[151] Claassen, 198. Claassen expands upon what this specific loss would mean to Ovid. She states, "In his loss of opportunities to participate in Roman urban life, this most urbane poet experiences his own metamorphosis into an outcast as a form of depersonalization, a concept inherent in the formal Roman terminology for the loss of civil status preceding exile … personification offers a useful means of conveying the pathos of his psychological reaction to loneliness, imbuing inanimate objects with human qualities, for lack of real human contact" (41).

[152] Claassen, 215.

[153] Claassen, 220.

In her article, "Why Did Ovid Associate His Exile with a Living Death?" Sabine Grebe questions *why* death was a common metaphor for exile in antiquity.[154] Grebe argues that for Ovid, being exiled to Tomis meant traversing from the known world (Rome) into the unknown (Tomis). She states,

> Exile presupposed a crucial liminal distinction between the knowable world, considered the inside, representing an enclosed area of a safe community (life), and the outside, which was characterized by a hostile and chaotic physical and social environment and was believed to be an unknowable world, not unlike death itself.[155]

Claassen agrees, stating "Many exiles use literature to bridge their individual divides from the known."[156] The images that Ovid equates to Tomis' population reinforce his rhetoric. He states that the local community is akin to beasts and the weather is reminiscent of Hades. Tomis is the exact opposite of Ovid's civilized Rome. As Grebe states, "[Ovid] depicts Rome and Tomis as counterworlds to each other. Rome represents safety, civilization, a warm climate, a pleasing aesthetic, and sophistication. Tomis serves as a metaphor for hostility, barbarism, an icy climate, physical ugliness, and savagery."[157]

Secondly, Grebe argues that Roman law itself equated exile with death. She suggests that the state recognized exile as an alternative to capital punishment (especially in regard to citizens), a public/social execution even though the recipient was still physically alive.[158] Robert F. Gorman concurs with this thought. He states, "In Rome, exile was even called capital punishment."[159]

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[154] See Sabine Grebe, "Why Did Ovid Associate His Exile with a Living Death?" in *The Classical World* 103.4 (Summer, 2010): 491–509.

[155] Grebe, 492.

[156] Claassen, 214.

[157] Grebe, 499.

[158] See Grebe, 505.

[159] Robert F. Gorman, "Citizenship, Obligation, and Exile in the Greek and Roman Experience," in *Public Affairs* Quarterly 6.1 (January 1992): 5–22, 8.

Despite the social background of *sacratio*,[160] or the legal order of *relegatio*,[161] what Grebe is

emphasizing "is the fact that, in ancient Rome, there was a strong link between banishment and

death … [and therefore] the poet could only cope with his loss of identity by understanding exile

as a living death." [162] Overall, many scholars, such as Prade, primarily focus on one theme of

Ovid's writings, "the sorrow of the exiled."[163]

Beyond the copious amount of excellent scholarship detailing Ovid's woes of lamentation,

few touch upon his attempt for reconciliation. Perhaps this is simply due to Ovid's wish for

reconciliation relates to desire (and maybe even hope) to return to Rome. As Claassen states, Ovid

"fantasizes about ultimate return."[164] He also utilizes his writing for the nostalgic purpose of

visualizing his beloved city. "Urban scenes are graphically described in … supporting the poet's

thesis that he can actually return to the city by means of his imagination."[165] Indeed, Ovid does

appear to emphasize and venerate his imagination; for example, in *Ex Ponto 4.9.41*, he claims

"*mente tamen, quae sola loco non exulat*" (but keep in mind, which is the only thing/place not in

exile). However, despite these slight exceptions, Ovid's studies stay within the realm of

lamentation exile literature.

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[160] Despite Grebe's convincing argument, namely with regard to place and legal thought, her third reason of influences of "archaic religious background" (see 500–504), which she labels *sacratio*, is less convincing. Grebe bases her concept on the idea of exile being grounded in a purely religious context. She explains, "According to archaic thinking, a wrongdoer was expelled from his community in order to leave him to the vengeance of the deity whose sacred laws he had violated. The expulsion purified the community and protected it from the wrath of the deity" (503). Grebe then assumes this "religious" practice of *sacratio* was the primary influence for banishment under Roman law.

[161] Grebe employs *relegtio* in the same manner as Juliana Prade Prade explains *reletio* as a juridical form of banishment, a temporary removal, or separation from the political/cultural centre, and produces upsetting sentiments (see Prade, 7–8).

[162] Grebe, 506, 508.

[163] Prade, 10.

[164] Claassen, 199.

[165] Claassen, 46.

Indeed, the author's lamentations are a vital aspect of exilic literature. Its importance is self-evident. By examining an author's lamentations, one can obtain a sense of how people can, and often will, cope with a specific (usually distressing) situation. However, the problem with merely focusing on an author's lamentations is that it misses an essential aspect of exilic literature, namely how an author attempts to reconcile their situation. In other words, what methods do exilic people employ to construct their new identity? Despite a primary focus on lamentations within exilic literature, scholars are now also examining exiles' constructions of self-identification and what methods they utilize for their creations. As Ofner asks, "How does the [author] construct [their] identity in the diaspora?"[166]

Idyllic Urban Inter-/Intra-Cultural Rhetoric

Urban space and its continuous fluency are becoming a more significant and fundamental tool for studies in migrants' social inclusion to help explain various social phenomena.[167] There have been numerous studies investigating how refugees, exiles, and dislocated people, in general, navigate their newfound self-identity in the context of large multicultural urban centres.[168] The argument usually revolves around how people leaving more homogenous cultural communities adapt to their new surroundings, often a multicultural urban centre. As Lahens states, "The search for a new center of gravity, for a new point of equilibrium, is certainly one of the major stakes of

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[166] Ofner, 93.

[167] Magnani, 77.

[168] For example, see Weil; Teelucksingh; Natalia Magnani, "Migration, New Urban Ethnic Minorities and the Race/Ethnic Relations Approach in a Recent Immigration Country: The Case of Italy," in *Ethnic Landscapes in an Urban World: Research in Urban Sociology* 8 (2007): 63–95; and May Telmissany, "Difference, Displacement and Identity: Three Egyptian Writers of the Diaspora," in *Exile and the Narrative/Poetic Imagination* (ed. Agnieszka Gutthy; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), 27–40.

the moment."[169] For various reasons (job availability is a significant consideration), dislocated

people tend to gravitate towards larger urban centres, especially if there is a collective community

already present. This new socio-cultural reality forces an occasion for thought, especially

regarding self-identification. As Weil argues,

> The assumption is that ethnicity was not an important variable in ordering social relations in non-industrial societies. Persons went about their business according to the dictates of tradition, and although there may have been group specialization, boundary-crossing was unknown. In the village, borders were more or less watertight. Even in the cities which preceded the age of modern technology, division of space precluded intensive interaction with others out of which ethnicity could take root.[170]

In other words, Weil argues that before dislocation, people living in a standardized social-cultural

community are not concerned with examining notions of culture. They live their lives in

accordance with their traditions. There is no need to rectify cultural differences. However, when

one is thrust into a multicultural setting, how does one react when contacting different (in the

majority) thought patterns, customs, rituals, traditions, and overall social perceptions? In an

analysis of Caribbean migrants in Toronto, Teelucksingh argues that these migrants feel a sense of

loss or a form of "second colonialism," but still accept, adhere to, and are hopeful of Canada's

official multiculturalism.[171] Egon F. Kunz points out, "Monistic societies are less likely to be

hospitable to people who cling to their differing cultures than pluralistic societies of broader

experience."[172] Consequently, I suggest that to negate cultural tensions, the nation, state, and

empire instill an idyllic discourse of cosmopolitan (universal citizen) multicultural society in an

attempt for social cohesion.

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[169] Lahens, 737.
[170] Weil, 4.
[171] Teelucksingh, 130.
[172] Kunz, 48.

As Oommen states, "With the ongoing process of urban industrialisation and the consequent increased movement of populations across cultural regions the conflicts between nationals (insiders) and ethnies (outsiders) are likely to increase."[173] For a multicultural society to function, social cohesion is vital. Therefore, these social orders need to somehow reinforce unifying discourses to combat these foreseen tensions. As San Juan Jr. argues, "The state seeks to mobilize such nation-centered feelings and emotions to legitimize itself as a more inclusive, less artificial reality to attain its own accumulative goals."[174] However, Weil argues that scholars in the 1960s proclaimed that more modern paradigms, such as class, would supersede ethnic categories, or "tribal identities."[175] Despite this idyllic cosmopolitan discourse, within culturally diverse settings, categories of ethnicity are commonly emphasized, reinforced, celebrated, and demonized by the domineering culture. Natalia Magnani provides a concrete example of a state power navigating "difference" with the concession that distinct (mostly ethnic) communities cannot be avoided. Magnani examines Italy's "Reasonable Model of Integration" and how it officially attempts to "reduce the risk of conflicts … Integration was framed as a constructive confrontation between cultures with the aim of reciprocal exchange."[176] In other words, Italy's

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[173] Oommen, 272.

[174] San Juan Jr., 27.

[175] Weil, 2.

[176] Magnani, 72. It should be noted, however, that Magnani romanticizes Italy's migrant population and policy by suggesting that various ethnicities see themselves more as "networks," while ignoring more ethnocultural differences. Therefore, her study can be utilized as an example of an idyllic urban cosmopolitan discourse. Magnani, I think, falls into the trap of attempting to maintain this discourse. Her conclusion resembles the argument I am making here; she is focused on emphasizing idyllic cosmopolitan "successes" while only briefly acknowledging the continuing present racial/ethnic tensions in Italy. To be clear, though, her brief acknowledgment is important and worth noting, "A model of integration based on the valorization of cultural differences, rather than an assimilationist model, can also lead to the emergence of a new ethnocentrism" (89).

official migrant "integration" policy was based upon peoples' cooperation and not cultural absorption or assimilation.

Scholars examining multicultural urban discourse typically focus on the post-industrial era for their inquiries. However, similar urban multicultural discourses are also present in antiquity. Gorman provides a helpful, useful, and illuminating example through his analysis of citizenship in ancient Greece and Rome. He argues that the ideal citizen in Greek *polis* "was a 'Renaissance' man: a farmer or artisan, a citizen/soldier, a philosopher, a deliberator and voter in the public square."[177] Before the Peloponnesian War, citizenship was tightly controlled and exclusive. Additionally, Gorman states that Greeks were wary of foreigners and, in general, did not provide citizenship to "outsiders."[178] Gorman's argument suggests that ancient Greeks lived in more tightly exclusive communities, dependent on their specific *polis*. As Gorman explains,

> A citizen, by definition, was one who participated in the government city. Indeed, the individual achieved his highest fulfillment especially the political life, of the polis. The Greek conception then drove its theory and practice of citizenship. The polis' pervasive and all-embracing influence on the lives of the city protected, educated, employed, fed, nurtured its citizens. The polis was the center of religious, cultural, political activity. It was the quintessential system of cooperation order and justice could be achieved.[179]

Rome, however, brought citizenship to a broader audience. Gorman elaborates,

> The Roman conception of citizenship does not share quite the intensity and exclusivity that the Greeks attached to the notion. In this, a gain and a loss. Lost was the passion and commitment characteristic the Greek conception. Gained was a capacity more flexibly to date foreigners, to tolerate and incorporate alien practices, customs, law, and to develop a universal legal system encompassing not but conferring individual rights. If the Greek conception of citizenship was intensely personalistic, organic and exclusive, the Roman conception was legalistic, malleable, sophisticated, and *cosmopolitan*.[180]

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[177] Gorman, 8.
[178] Gorman, 7–8.
[179] Gorman, 10.
[180] Gorman, 13 (emphasis added).

This flexible system was one that, in general, ancient Greeks would not understand. "Here Rome broke new ground."[181] Since Rome was more than *polis* and also akin to a multicultural nation-state, social cohesion and stability were vital for the empire to function properly. As the empire grew, urbanization also grew. Rome attempted to accomplish balance with more universal institutions and official law:

> As Roman law evolved to handle the requirements of a vast empire, Roman citizenship was gradually extended and diluted. Intimacy was lost in favour of commercial gain, military expediency, and political control. But in the course of establishing an empire, the Romans also developed an elaborate, universal system of law, which accorded not only to Roman citizens but citizens of other municipalities throughout the empire, a codified corpus of rights.[182]

Gorman explains that another major contributor to this cosmopolitan change was due to the rising popularity and influence of the Stoic philosophical group. He provides a comprehensive summary:

> The idea of universal citizenship, as in the Stoic … conception of a universal brotherhood of [humanity], there existed the first seeds of a notion that people might have universal human rights: rights that might exist—potentially or actually—apart from those one received as a citizen of a particular nation … Stoic philosophers began to conceive of a larger society, a brotherhood of [humanity] which transcended the political order and the institutions of state. Political participation, considered by Cicero the duty of the citizen in a commonwealth, was regarded with indifference or distaste by later Stoics who emphasized instead the common elements of humanity, a conception that Cicero, himself, accepted as part of the stoical creed.[183]

In other words, after Cicero, Stoic philosophers tended to disparage politics and, instead, emphasized a universal community of humanity.

Another ancient example from Roman antiquity of state powers advocating for cosmopolitanism was in the ancient city of Cyrene. Noel Robertson studies various inscriptions

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[181] Gorman, 8.
[182] Gorman, 14.
[183] Gorman, 8, 14.

dealing with ancient "sacred law" in Selinus and Cyrene.[184] He states that, in the fifth century

BCE, Cyrene was mainly controlled by the ruling oligarchy, which consisted of the wealthy

landowners who controlled the shipments of grain. Cyrene then underwent significant social

changes due to internal strife. Exiles and various other roving bands fought against the Cyreneian

elite until "the two sides reconciled and agree to live together … a less exclusive regime than

when the wealthy became so hated."[185] Robertson argues that these inscriptions were detailed

instructions for festivals, purification, and sacrifice. The point for my purpose is the "official"

rhetoric of idyllic universal acceptance within their populace. During public sacrifices, "every

citizen [was] welcome or at least accept[ed] … Wood from Apollo's sacred land [was] provided

to everyone, not only to the privileged … The authorities [had] endeavoured to satisfy both rich

and poor and also those between. Some rules will satisfy all; others are alternatives; yet others are

levelling."[186] Another example is seen through the tithing rites of Artemis. The inscriptions also

discuss "mixed relations," specifically Greek and Libyan, which affected many people throughout

the city. By promoting a method of inclusiveness, the doctrine had the intention, or "the double

effect of assimilating the newcomers … and of pleasing everyone else."[187] In general, the table

inscriptions found in Cyrene promote universal social cohesion with "many ritual occasions that

will engage rich and poor, and also new and old citizens."[188] Bradley Ritter reinforces this

sentiment through citizenship. He states there are numerous examples of Judeans holding

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[184] See Noel Robertson, *Reconciliation in Greek Cities: The Sacred Laws of Selinus and Cyrene* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[185] Robertson, 373.
[186] Robertson, 9.
[187] Robertson, 10.
[188] Robertson, 11.

citizenship, the evidence existing through various law documents.[189] Therefore, one can see the

rhetoric of urban cosmopolitan ideology being promoted by social institutions. Indeed, Robertson

also highlights a specific social practice that adapted to meet this ideology. He mentions the

agrarian cults Akamantes and Triopateres as evolving from being defined as largely priestly cults

to announcements "that these cults are now thrown open to everyman without assistance by the

[priestly] clans."[190] Robertson concluded by indicating that the Cyrene inscriptions belonged to

the older oligarchy and were written to meet the increasing need for social unity and solidity.

Their attempts appeared to be fruitful because afterwards, the city was relatively passive and

protected. As Robertson states, "The oligarchy made it so; the rules … devised to this end."[191] In

conclusion, multicultural urbanization provides an idyllic cosmopolitan discourse to establish

some form of social cohesion and stability.

The Creation of the Ethnic-Nation/Identity?

In Walter Benjamin's "About the Concept of History," Benjamin states,

Articulating past history does not mean recognizing it "as it actually was." It means capturing the moment of a dangerous memory. Historical Materialism is capturing a past moment, as the historical subject adjusts to the dangerous moment. A danger that threatens the existence of the recipients and their traditions.[192]

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[189] See Bradley Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire: Rights, Citizenship and Civil Discord* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 187.

[190] Robertson, 287.

[191] Robertson, 374.

[192] Walter Benjamin, "Über den Begriff der Geschichte," in *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 253 (my translation). Benjamin states, "Vergangenes historisch artikulieren heisst nicht, es erkennen 'wie es denn eigentlich gewesen ist.' Es heisst, sich einer Erinnerung bemächtigen, wie sie im Augenblick einer Gefahr aufblitzt. Dem historischen Materialismus geht es darum, ein Bild der Vergangenheit festzuhalten, wie es sich im Augenblick der Gefahr dem historischen Subjekt unversehens einstellt. Die Gefahr droht sowohl dem Bestand der Tradition wie ihren Empfängern."

Stemming from this line of thought, Benjamin produces the concept of "*Jetztzeit*," or "present

time." Benjamin's usage of *Jetztzeit* as a sort of emancipatory, or to use Benjamin's words,

"*Splitter der messianischen eingesprengt sind*"[193] (blasted messianic fragments), can be utilized as

a helpful concept regarding exilic literature. For Benjamin, history is not a linear progression.

Instead, "present time," or the constellation or an epoch, is established and formed through its

previous relationships and is preserved through memory. He states,

> Historism is content to establish a causal nexus of different moments of history. But no
> fact is a historical cause for that very reason. He became that, posthumously, through
> events that may be separated from him by millennia. The historian who assumes it stops
> running through the sequence of events like a rosary. He grasps the constellation into
> which his own epoch has entered with a very definite earlier one. Therefore, he
> establishes a concept of the present as the "present time."[194]

Seyhan argues that the concept of memory is vital for Benjamin, "subject to resurrection or

reconstruction in times of crisis … political persecution and destruction of human lives."[195]

Seyhan's point here is crucial. A jarring *Jetztzeit* is, again, an occasion for thought, a time for

thinking through a situational incongruity. Thus, reconstructions of social systems are reimagined

for current situations. As previously mentioned, tightly knit communities do not need to

emphasize cultural differences. They live their lives and participate in rituals, all without the need

to think through, reimagine, and intensely contemplate their culture and self-identification,

especially in relation to "others." However, through urbanization (forced or voluntary), contact

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[193] Benjamin, 261.
[194] Benjamin, 261. He states, "Der Historismus begnügt sich damit, einen Kausalnexus von verschiedenen Momenten der Geschichte zu etablieren. Aber kein Tatbestand ist als Ursache eben darum bereits ein historischer. Er ward das, posthum, durch Begebenheiten, die durch Jahrtausende von ihm getrennt sein mögen. Der Historiker, der davon ausgeht, hört auf, sich die Abfolge von Begebenheiten durch die Finger laufen zu lassen wie einen Rosenkranz. Er erfaßt die Konstellation, in die seine eigene Epoche mit einer ganz bestimmten früheren getreten ist. Er begründet so einen Begriff der Gegenwart als der 'Jetztzeit.'"
[195] Seyhan, 35.

with other cultures is inevitable. This new situation does provide an opportunity, and perhaps even a necessity, to examine one's cultural self-identification, traditions, and constructions of meaning/perception through observation and comparison. "Particularism, in which specific ethnic claims are voiced louder than ever before … The invention of imagined communities, which are larger than locally based ethnicities … may actually foster the promotion of ethnicity."[196] As Weil argues,

> In some societies, particular behaviours defined as ethnicities formed the basis for the interaction between groups across defined ethnic boundaries … even if modernization is taking place at an extraordinary pace, this does not necessarily mean that ethnic boundaries disappear; they may guide behaviour and reappear as critical symbols of identity even in circumstances where tradition and the so-called culture are being eroded … The relationship between the formation of the nation-state and the emergence of ethnicity is complex … the major issue is the development of the nation-state and the emergence of a new ethnicity in modern times: some claim that ethnicity is in fact the product of the rise of nationalism. [197]

The creation of "ethnic" boundaries in urban centres has two particular roles. First, it creates and reconstructs cultural, "ethnic," self-identity. Oommen elaborates,

> Ethnicity as understood in contemporary social science emerged from the interaction between different peoples; it was a product of conquest, colonization and immigration. Ethnicity implies dislocation from one's original country region, or nation, which is homeland. In contrast, nation invariably alludes to a people belonging to a specific territory whose claim to political authority over it is perceived as legitimate. Ideally, the nation fuses three dimensions: territory, culture and citizenship. That a whole nation can be uprooted from its territory and rendered into an ethnie (a people without a common territory and citizenship) only points to the historical process and possibility of one category being transformed into another. Therefore it is the rupture between territory and culture, which creates ethnicity.[198]

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[196] Weil, 6.
[197] Weil, 2, 4.
[198] Oommen, 266.

As Oommen states, this construction is based upon (re)imagined traditions from their perceived origin location. "Constructing a diasporic identity is *based on* representations of homeland rather than homeland actuality."[199] Weil summarizes,

> Migration to developed countries, be it voluntary or involuntary, can reinforce concepts of racial and ethnic purity and renewed attempts to establish segments of the population with restricted contact with the others. Sometimes the segregation is economic, as with Turkish labourers in Germany; where ethnic groups are most marginal economically, they tend to have the greatest solidarity. However, imputed cultural characteristics may also play their part in establishing the borders of the unit and the putative homogeneity of the group. Migration may lead to the emergence of new ethnicities, both for the migrants themselves and also for members of the host society … The relationship between ethnicity and migration is symbiotic and dyadic. While migration may lead to ethnicity in an era of globalization, ethnicity may also result in an increase in migration, either voluntarily when people in the "Free World" decide to "up and go" or involuntarily when people are forced to flee or are even transported to another destination.[200]

This argument directly links with the second function of created ethnic boundaries, a sense of binding oneself to a broader community with similar traditions and modes of cultural self-identification. "With the formation of the ethnie even in ancient times … [caused] the sudden mingling of different peoples … Nationalism as hegemonic discourse implies a sense of exclusiveness, ethnicity does too, even if it is a lesser political unit. It involves an affective rhetoric of the common glue which binds members together."[201] Overall, when a multicultural state grows and begins formulating itself, "the co-existence and interaction of its different nations or ethnic groups produces certain emergent properties, which give a new meaning and a collective self-definition to the constituent."[202]

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[199] Telmissany, 35 (emphasis added).
[200] Weil, 8.
[201] Weil, 5, 7.
[202] Oommen, 265.

National Identity Constructed by "Intellectual" Creativity

Multicultural nation-states might advocate for an idyllic cosmopolitanism; people within such societies have to adapt and expound this notion of universality. A particular advocacy method is through intellectual discourse, meaning that people who are considered influential intellectuals can disseminate a specific discourse to the general population. Who is regarded as an "intellectual" can vary. In antiquity, social "intellectuals" include, but are not limited to, law scribes, religio-cultural scribes, village scribes, philosophers, writers, historians, and other scholars of various disciplines. Following Seyhan's line of thought, literature is an institution, one that functions as "an expression of human experience."[203] Creative discourses, then, create categorical institutions for thought, morals, and ascetics. As Seyhan states, "narratives (specifically epics and novels) institute and support national myths and shape national consciousness."[204] Intellectuals and artists create cultural links from the past to the present to ensure a discourse of continuity; they are the "chroniclers of the histories."[205] These categories aid in reinforcing or constructing cultural classifications and thought patterns. The dominant discursive institution, however, can be disrupted by new, or even competing, intellectual (i.e., literary) discourses of "outsiders." Telmissany argues that exilic literature creates another form of institution, one that can reinforce or "destabilize the power of institutionalized literature, even if those literatures were produced by ethnic minorities in diasporic contexts."[206] Or, as Seyhan suggests, exilic writers "invite their readers to see culture not as a fundamental model but in its interaction with other cultures."[207]

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[203] Seyhan, 7.
[204] Seyhan, 8.
[205] Seyhan, 12.
[206] Telmissany, 29.
[207] Seyhan, 15.

The need for intellectual creativity has added emphasis for exilic peoples, especially living in a multicultural context as "dialogue between cultures involves real tasks, such as learning the languages, literatures, histories, and political systems of others."[208] Additionally, the confusion and incongruity of self-identification is amplified and needs to be addressed. Working or thinking through self-identity issues commonly results in two discourses. One, emphasizes perceptions of the (re)imagined homeland, or what Milan Kundera labels "provincialism."[209] The physical dislocation from a "homeland" and the resulting social ruptures "lead to an impoverishment of communal life and shared cultural histories. This loss requires the restorative work of cultural memory to accord meaning, purpose, and integrity to the past."[210] This process results in continuous recreations, or "condensed archives of national, ethnic, and linguistic memories."[211] Seyhan explains, "The memory of the single traumatic event that caused the dispersion binds the members of the exiled group together by continuously reminding them of the great historic injustice they suffered … Diasporic communities are committed not only to the restoration and maintenance of the homeland but to its very creations."[212] In other words, by continually reimagining their cultural identity, they are at the same time also creating it.

The second method of reconciliation attempts to fully adopt universality. Michael Hanne proposes that one reason exilic intellectuals tend to gravitate towards universality is empathy. In other words, exilic people can easily self-identify with others in distress due to their own austere

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[208] Seyhan, 7.

[209] See Milan Kundera, *Curtains* (trans. Linda Asher; New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 37–42. Basically, Kundera describes provincialism as "the inability (or the refusal) to see one's own culture in the larger context" (37).

[210] Seyhan, 15.

[211] Seyhan, 13.

[212] Seyhan, 11.

experience.[213] Telmissany argues that this discourse can represent a form of empowerment. He states, "An alternative basis of empowerment is devised to support an allegiance to transnationalism (more in the sense of deterritorialization) rather than to romantic patriotism."[214] Rapid multicultural urbanization quickly aids in emphasizing the need for tolerance, plurality, and universality.

However, the intellectual creativity of exilic peoples can also forge a consolidation of the two seemingly competing discourse. They recreate and reimagine their cultural/ethnic identities while at the same time subscribe to the multicultural cosmopolitanism, usually stressed by their new nation or state. This recreation creates a discourse in which universality is perceived as primary, but also rescues and retains distinct cultural identities. Therefore, one can "fit in" to their new social surroundings while still maintaining a created imagining of their "homeland," a linkage to their ancestors and perceived history. "Identity representations in diasporic writings are thus expressed through transnational imaginary as well as the self-conscious specificity of writers."[215] Seyhan provides a helpful summary:

> As cultures collide, unite, and are reconfigured in real and virtual space in unprecedented ways, postcolonial, migrant, and border-crossing theorists and artists fine-tune received critical traditions in order to safeguard historical and cultural specificities … Multiple migrations end in the loss of our homes, possessions, and memorabilia. When the smoke clears, we are faced with charred pieces of identification, shards of language, burned tongues, and cultural fragments. However, from the site of this fire, the phoenix of a transnational, bi- and multilingual literature has arisen.[216]

Hanne argues that intellectual communities tend to migrate toward each other for various reasons; for example, due to shared interests. Therefore, when intellectuals are forced into exile,

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[213] Michael Hanne, "Creativity and Exile: An Introduction," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004), 1–12, 9.
[214] Telmissany, 34.
[215] Telmissany, 27.
[216] Seyhan, 7.

they will naturally seek each other out. In other words, exilic intellectuals will not merely

immerse themselves in their diasporic community. They will also gravitate towards other exilic

intellectuals, even if the other exiles originate from different "homelands." Hanne states, "Most

had been intellectuals in their country of origin, who subsequently joined or formed communities

of intellectuals in the countries where they sought exile."[217] Kong's article expresses similar

sentiments. Kong states that after the Cultural Revolution in China, many intellectuals

(especially ones critical of the new ideology and government) fled to the West. This exodus

resulted in "the biggest intellectual diaspora in modern Chinese history,"[218] one where they

together engaged in political, autobiographical, and critical discourses dealing with their relation

and identification to their "homeland."

Daniel Bessner also provides an excellent recent example. In his book, *Democracy in

Exile: Hans Seier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual*, Bessner's second chapter, "The Social

Role of the Intellectual Exile,"[219] discusses the general rhetoric of exiled intellectuals.

Specifically, he focuses on intellectual exiles (with primary emphasis on Hans Speier) from Nazi

Germany migrating to America, New York in particular. Bessner states, "New York was

especially hospitable to Berliners like Speier, who found traces of their old lives in the five

boroughs' densely populated concrete geography … New York in the 1930s was home to a

diverse intelligentsia that accepted the émigrés as equals."[220] Speier, among other intellectual

exiles, bought into the perpetuated state ideology of equality/multiculturalism and wanted to

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[217] Hanne, 2.
[218] Kong, 126.
[219] See Daniel Bessner, "The Social Role of the Intellectual Exile," in *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 44–72.
[220] Bessner, 44.

expand upon this rhetoric, to emphasize the benefits of these ideologies. They "denied the importance of particularistic ethnic associations in favour of a secular, cosmopolitan, and universalistic intellectual identity."[221] In other words, Speier and other exilic intellectuals were engaged in rhetorical constructions of identification. Therefore, they are "Considered a product of Identity discourse looking for some important role for intellectuals to play in society."[222]

Large multicultural American urban centres were popular confluence places for new exiles. As Bessner points out, intellectual exiles gathered in large urban centres and began founding new intellectual institutions as it provided them with the opportunity to congregate with like-minded individuals who were treated without bias. It also offered exilic intellectuals an outlet and opportunity for intellectual discourse. Bessner notes, "They provided each other … with ideological support, employment, [and] publication opportunities."[223] For Speier, he found his intellectual "home" in the "University in Exile." This particular institution was known for its cosmopolitan ideology.[224] It, as well as similar institutions, became a significant hub for similar-minded intellectual exiles to debate and socialize. As Bessner states, these institutions gave migrants and exiles a place where they "regularly debated with each other, read each other's scholarship, and attended each other's talks."[225] Their activities emphasized cosmopolitan projects with the hope of becoming a "premier research organization and a symbol of international scientific cosmopolitanism."[226] As a result, intellectuals' fostered and advocated cosmopolitan ideology as a method to "supersede their ethnic identity [and] embrace secular

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[221] Bessner, 48.
[222] Telmissany, 39
[223] Bessner, 47.
[224] See Bessner, 45.
[225] Bessner, 46.
[226] Bessner, 50.

culture."[227] In other words, Speier argues that loyalty should be universalistic cosmopolitanism, directed towards "the community of the spirit, not to particularistic identities."[228]

In general, exilic associations and organizations are mostly found in larger urban centres due to their higher migrant populations, and the perception that urbanization aids creativity. As Lahens argues, "For writers exiled in large cities, the insertion was difficult but fortunate in many regards, for the host country showed itself to be more favourable to creativity."[229] Besides, intellectuals in new surroundings are also able to critically reflect upon their cultural histories, narratives, and classifications without an "official doctrine" being forced into their rhetoric. This newly found intellectual freedom provides the writings with a unique opportunity to reimagine, re-evaluate, and reconstruct their past cultural identities, giving the reader an alternative version to specific cultural background narratives.[230] As Telmissany mentions, the exilic intellectual can "uniquely create a new narrative based on artistic observation rather than on national or provincial belonging."[231] While engaged in reconstructing past national identities, exilic writers can, and often do, engage with their new local surroundings, usually in the form of adopting and advocating the state-prescribed idyllic universal cosmopolitanism.

Mark and Exile

Biblical studies have also utilized "trauma theory" in relation to exile, especially regarding prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible.[232] Additionally, New Testament scholarship is exploring

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[227] Bessner, 53.
[228] Bessner, 54.
[229] Lahens, 745.
[230] See Seyhan, 20.
[231] Telmissany, 39.
[232] For a couple of brief examples, see Garber Jr., "Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies," *Currents of Biblical Research* 14.1 (2015): 24–44, and "I Went in Bitterness: Theological

the notion of texts regarding exile, especially Mark[233] and the Revelation of John. Political defeat, being in exile, and attempting to rethink nationhood and identity due to their situational incongruity directly applies to Mark.[234] The author experienced exile after an actual military and political defeat. Mark displays his exile in his writing through a post-colonial semi-hybrid discourse, the use of "wilderness" imagery, using authority figures to navigate and symbolize dual identity, and engaging in an intellectual identity debate.

The semi-hybridity[235] discourse in Mark reflects his exilic *habitus* and more or less employs a similar formula. Indeed, it incorporates hostile rhetoric directed against the Roman occupiers. However, the majority of the critical material is directed towards internal Jewish divisions and polemics. Despite the tensions between "rural" and "urban" people in first-century Palestine,[236] the internal polemics also resemble a dispute between the various intellectual classes. As argued in Chapter One, Mark utilized idyllic urban cosmopolitan discourse to create a new

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Implications of a Trauma Theory Reading of Ezekiel," in *Review and Expositor* 111.4 (2014): 346–357.

[233] See William E. Arnal, "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Z. Smith* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2008), 57–67, and William E. Arnal, "Mark, War, and the Creative Imagination," in Redescribing the Gospel of Mark (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 401–482, and Burton Mack.

[234] See Arnal's articles for convincing examinations and explanations of Mark of an exilic author.

[235] I employ "semi-hybridity" as there are problems with the notion of a "Jewish" hybridity in the first century: the Romans conquered Palestine at a later date, a substantial geographical distance, the size of population, numerous major cultural and linguistic differences, a strong sense of nationality and nationalism, and the fact that Jews were familiar with living under some form of colonization (see Leander, 161).

[236] See Leander, 164–165. Leander argues that larger urban areas were the centre of visible Roman domination, whereas the country was heavily taxed: "peasants typically spoke vernacular languages and were less familiar with the written word, urban dwellers could often speak Koine Greek and were more accustomed to urban literary cultures … the ability to read was important for the urban elite since it enabled an identification over against the uneducated rustics."

self-identification. Although the author of Mark portrays hostility towards the Roman Empire, the majority of his discourse is aimed at internal disruptions to his idealized "new" institutions. In other words, the text is related to Roman imperial colonization, domination, and hegemony, but it is also a debate with other intellectuals regarding "internal" associations, operations, and identity classifications. Overall, Mark's exilic post-war situation reflects a direct post-colonial experience that enables an occasion for thought. As Smith suggests, "It is the perception of incongruity that gives rise to thought."[237] The incongruent occasion results in mythic narratives that attempt to deal with the new social situation. Exilic mythic narratives test "the adequacy and applicability of native categories to new situations and data."[238] In Mark's case, the dislocating and disorientating occasion for thought resulted in an intellectual debate surrounding self-identification issues.

One feature of exilic writing is "travel literature."[239] Narratives surrounding a character who wanders, especially in the "wilderness." Kong suggests that wilderness is associated with migration and intellectual alienation. He states, "Autobiographical writing [of] the experience of internal migration and intellectual alienation becomes embodied in the image of a wanderer in the … wilderness."[240] In a narrative, a character's wanderings are reflective of the author's "nomadic consciousness and nomadic lifestyle." Kong elaborates,

> By nomadic consciousness and lifestyle, I refer to the ideological and intellectual disengagement and alienation felt by [exilic] intellectuals, writers and artists who were no longer able to be at home in their normal community ... the narrator, a nomadic subject, while travelling afar to find peace and a home in the natural world, is also "roaming discursively" through his own internal landscape. And by the end, these two journeys, external and inward, merge in the realization.[241]

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237 Smith, *Map*, 294.
238 Smith, *Map*, 307.
239 Kong, 129.
240 Kong, 128.
241 Kong, 130, 133.

Additionally, Kong argues that wandering in the wilderness narratives "can serve as a form of critical disengagement through which the individual can escape from as well as resist the state's power."[242] In other words, through the characters wandering, they escape the yoke of imperial power. This liberation is accomplished through "wilderness" narratives due to the perceived more limited empirical power in the "countryside."

Mark also exhibits Jesus as a wandering character. Throughout the text, he is constantly travelling.[243] Jesus is a nomadic subject [written] within a broader global context."[244] However, the concept of "wilderness" (ἐρήμῳ) is also essential. In Mark's first chapter, he employs "ἐρήμῳ" during critical times and events. John arises, pronounces, and baptizes Jesus in the "ἐρήμῳ." Moreover, the "spirit" (πνεῦμα) drives Jesus into the "ἐρήμῳ" for this temptation trial. Jesus passing this trial proclaims him as an authorized figure for identification renewal. Furthermore, ἐρήμῳ has been associated with a form of chaos or social chaos resulting in the exilic author's need to "organize chaos."[245] Mark grants Jesus authority over this chaos, further emphasizing his power over perceived confusion, especially for newly exiled peoples.

Without an authorized character, an intellectual narrative debate is fruitless; it has no merit. For example, in Bessner's article, he argues that Speier had a significant intellectual impact within his exilic community due to his perceived authority on the ideological subject matter. He

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[242] Kong, 142.

[243] For example, Mark continuously employs the phrases "ἐξῆλθεν πάλιν …," εἰσελθὼν πάλιν …." See also Mark 3:7, "Καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ *ἀνεχώρησεν* πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν" (emphasis added); Mk 5:20 and 6:32, "καὶ ἀπῆλθεν …"; Mk 10:1, "Καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἀναστὰς ἔρχεται εἰς τὰ ὅρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας"; Mk 10:17, "Καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὁδὸν …"; Mk 10:32, "Ἔσαν δὲ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἀναβαίνοντες εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα"; Mk 10:46, "Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς Ἰεριχώ. καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ Ἰεριχὼ"; Mk 11:11–12, "Καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα … Καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Βηθανίας …"; and Mk 11:27, "Καὶ ἔρχονται πάλιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα."

[244] Kong, 142.

[245] See Seyhan, 33.

states, "Speier had a unique epistemological authority as the only one to witness Hitler's rise—and the masses' support for it—firsthand."[246] What Speier accomplishes with his authority is vital—he "serve[s] as a symbol that linked two distinct … traditions,"[247] namely intellectual German philosophical thought with American academia. For Mark, Jesus serves as a comparable authorized symbol. He becomes authorized by John and "the Heavens" (Mark1:10–11) to be an authority figure, especially in terms of (re)constructing a new form of self-identity. Also comparable to Speier, Jesus' authority connects seemingly different traditions, Greek and Jewish, into an idyllic form of cosmopolitism. Thus, Mark successfully creates a navigation discourse between two competing identification traditions while still maintaining distinct cultural distinctions.

Finally, Mark displays a need to reorganize social institutions. His attempt at reorganization is accomplished through internal intellectual debate. As Bessner states, "The social role of the intellectual exile consisted exclusively in posing a fundamental critique of reality that preserved and established possibilities for future action."[248] Bessner's usage of Speier again serves as an example by outlining Speier's disagreements and debates with other popular intellectual schools. Bessner elaborates upon Speier's contentions with other exilic writers, especially regarding ethics and universalism. In particular, Max Horkheimer from the Frankfurt School preserves the need to maintain a "German character." This model was in contrast to Speier's universalism. Inter- and intra-cultural animosity will occur during incongruent "occasions for thought." As Bessner states, "Professional rivalries further contributed to intra-exile conflicts."[249]

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[246] Bessner, 47.
[247] Bessner, 59.
[248] Bessner, 65.
[249] Bessner, 69.

However, intellectual debates foster a creative atmosphere. In turn, this produces new forms of narratives. Moreover, creative intellectual discussions provide an opportunity of other intellectuals, readers, and rhetoricians to engage with the narrative and provide self-reflective alternatives or reinforced discourses. In other words, it encourages peoples engaged in debate to actively "participate in the production of meaning."[250] In Mark's case, it produced a reconstructed narrative navigating the new incongruent state of identity.

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[250] Seyhan, 67.

Chapter 3

Alienation, Dislocation, and Disillusionment in the Gospel of Mark

Jonathan Z. Smith states, "For I do believe that religion is, among other things, an intellectual activity ..., it is the perception of incongruity that gives rise to thought."[1] The importance of situational incongruity is that it stresses humans as a contextual, transformative, and interactive species. Since humans are not static, they are always trying to make sense of their world and surroundings. However, the world does not always meet the idyllic standards of people as it can be an unforgiving and hostile place. People have then used various methods to rectify their incongruities. Smith explains,

> Religion is the quest, within the bounds of the human, historical condition, for the power to manipulate and negotiate ones 'situation' so as to have 'space' in which to dwell meaningfully. It is the power to relate one's domain to the plurality of environmental and social spheres in such a way as to guarantee the conviction that one's existence 'matters.' Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence.[2]

Smith analyzes and deciphers mythic and ritual data by situating them within their contextual situational incongruity. Mythic and ritual data are acts of rectifications of the contextual situational incongruity; "it is the relentless human activity of thinking through a[n incongruent] situation."[3]

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[1] Jonathan Z. Smith. "Map is Not Territory." In *Map Is Not Territory*. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 293–294.

[2] Smith, "*Map*," 291.

[3] Jonathan Z. Smith, "When the Chips are Down." In *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1–60, 32.

Smith's idea of situational incongruity can be applied to the composition of Mark.[4] The text itself "reveals the key events marking the transition from one age to another."[5] As previously examined, the social-historical, economic, and questions of self-identity due to the Jewish rebellion and the destruction of the temple led to Mark's situational incongruity. Identity ruptures "become the basis for collective identity … [and] is consistent with processes of identity formation in which trauma is construed as a founding, generative, and integrative identity marker (in the sense that it integrates or brings together several other identity markers)."[6] The text itself "is closely attuned to both large-scale collective losses like the destruction of the temple and … [the] deeply significant pains that accompany, and even constitute, human relationships."[7] A significant sentiment Mark displays throughout this narrative is lamentation,[8] specifically, lamenting lost social institutional representations, symbols, and forms of identity. John Riches provides a potent summery on seeking and exploring identity:

> The contemporary search for identity is conducted in a world where society is undergoing massive change: traditional modes of regulating community life and the life of the individual are being challenged as more and more the economic and cultural processes in which men and women are involved are globalised, stripped of any local significance, and equally of any reference to local mores or traditions (disembedding) … People live

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[4] By no means am I the first to apply Smith's idea of situational incongruity to Mark. See William A. Arnal, "Mark, War, and Creative Imagination," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 401–482. However, my examination will expand on various topics and bring forth new arguments.

[5] James M. Dawsey, *Peter's Last Sermon: Identity and Discipleship in The Gospel of Mark* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 8.

[6] Tim Langille, "Old Memories, New Identities: Traumatic Memory, Exile, and Identity Formation in the Damascus Document and Pesher Habakkuk," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Tom Thatcher; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 57–88, 62.

[7] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig, *Re-Reading the Gospel of Mark Amidst Loss and Trauma* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 42.

[8] Many scholars read Mark sorely as a forlorn text; for example, see Kotrosits and Taussig; John F. O'Grady, *Mark: the Sorrowful Gospel. An Introduction to the Second Gospel* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981).

through periods of unprecedented change and have to struggle to find some basis of trust and confidence in an increasingly unfamiliar world. Their own identity itself becomes a self-regulated project … [In antiquity], "a person's identity was principally defined in terms of their place within a particular community, the role which they filled within the community, their kinship relationships … People tell a constantly revised and revisable story about themselves. They are engaged in a search for themselves which is self-reflexive, where they constantly review and revise their views of their lives and their life-projects.[9]

In other words, Mark extensively wrestles with a crisis of identity. Throughout his text, Mark "masks structural trauma (the transhistorical absence represented as the loss of an original unity or purity) in its representation of historical trauma."[10] Mark follows Smith's pattern of recognizing his social incongruity and proceeds in an attempt of rectification.[11] A combination of incongruent situations, or what Chris Keith labels "*Traditionsbrüche*," calls forth a need for "a textualized Gospel in order to stabilize the tradition into cultural memory."[12] In other words, there is a need for a new socio-cultural institutionalization of memory identification. This chapter will examine the textual manifestations of Mark's incongruity; namely, sentiments of alienation, the physical and emotional loss of social institutions, and a new lingering question of self-identity. Exilic communities, in general, will struggle with the sense of perceived lost identity. They "mourn the absence of a true pre-exilic identity by conflating absence and loss. In other words, these texts produce discourses based in absence."[13] As a result, identity formation is created through separation discourses. Within his narrative, Mark reflects the notion of lost "here" and especially

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[9] John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 17–18.

[10] Langille, 58.

[11] The issue and manifestations of Mark's rectification methods will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[12] Chris Keith, "Prolegomena on the Textualization of Mark's Gospel: Manuscript Culture, the Extended Situation, and the Emergence of the Written Gospel," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Tom Thatcher; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 161–186, 180.

[13] Langille, 61.

"there" institutions. Riches outlines the importance of sacred geographical spaces. Within ancient narratives (he employs Odysseus' *Odyssey* as another example), "territory is portrayed as more than physical geography: it is 'home' and, moreover, a home which lies under the 'sacred canopy' of the gods. It is sacred space, a hallowed and protected haven; but, equally, it can be used in the most terrible punishments which God can inflict on his people: the overrunning by enemies, occupation, exile, desecration of the Temple itself …"[14] For descriptive purposes, I will begin my analysis with William Arnal's examination of Mark as a doubly-exiled author, situated in proximity to Jerusalem, and attempting to rethink and reconfigure his "Jewish" identity in the aftermath of the Jewish rebellion in 70 CE.[15] While Mark is indeed annoyed, or outright hostile, over his terrestrial dislocation, attention should also be drawn to Mark's vexation of lost socio-cultural institutions. He portrays signs of disillusionment and frustration with previously established forms of authority, imperial and local social institutions—the Romans, corrupt temple leadership, and the higher priestly and scribal classes. Mark's disillusionment with institutional bodies does not need to be understood as being bred purely from malice, but more out of a sense of frustration since his known structures of "home" and identity would now be completely unorganized, chaotic, or obliterated after the Jewish Rebellion. Writing in the aftermath of the rebellion, Mark knew that any form of a "Jewish" terrestrial kingdom in the line of their grand tradition had vanished. Additionally, with the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed, he sees the "priestly" establishment in disarray. Arguably more important, however, is Mark's display of

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[14] Riches, 9.

[15] See William Arnal, "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Z. Smith* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2008), 57–67.

questioning self-identification while still demonstrating sentiments of social alienation. Tim

Langille writes:

> The transmission of the real or imagined events can be reactivated and reshaped to such an extent that distinctions between past and present collapse. For instance, when mnemonic communities conflate and/or blur the distinction between historical trauma (e.g., the loss of Jerusalem and the temple) with structural trauma (e.g., the transhistorical absence of an original unity or purity), these communities are haunted by the past by reliving and reshaping it constantly and collapsing the distinction between past and present. The reliving of the past and collapsing of the past and present are trademarks of postmemory.[16]

Overall, Mark reveals social alienation and ethnocultural identity demoralization in his

text. This chapter will begin with an examination of Mark's structural agitation with the Romans.

Then the section will analyze Mark's participation in inter-Jewish polemics in the search for a

new identity; namely through the characterization of previous temple leadership, Pharisees, and

the scribes. The next section will focus on Mark's depiction of the disciples. I will argue that

Mark utilizes the disciples as symbolic representations to display his sentiments of alienation,

specifically, his estrangement from the substantial and influential socio-cultural institution of the

early Jerusalem *ecclesia*. Afterwards will be a section dedicated to Mark's various portrayals of

the temple's destruction and the subsequent consequences. Mark displays mixed emotions

regarding the temple. This section, however, will focus on his sentiments of mourning. Finally,

the last part of this chapter will examine Mark's Passion narrative; specifically, how he displays

his sentiments of loss and alienation in a vulnerable fashion. Through the Passion narrative,

Mark's rhetoric appears to be the most personal indication and demonstration of his grief. In

general, this chapter will address one major theme and disposition in Mark, his immediate and

grating concerns—his socio-cultural identification incongruities. By thinking through and

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[16] Langille, 60–61.

addressing his lamenting sentiments, Mark is provided with a method to confront his trepidations directly.

The Roman Incongruity

Stemming from scholarly examinations of post-colonialism, antagonistic attitudes of colonized peoples towards the colonizers have widely been covered.[17] Eventually, post-colonial theories and methodologies found their way into biblical studies. It is now rare to see scholarly historical examinations without some reference to Rome, imperialism, and post-colonialism (especially in terms of Mark and the Book of Revelation), including copious amounts of scholarly discourses surrounding empire and the "Historical Jesus."[18] However, I will specifically be dealing with Mark's colonial timeframe. The question of the Historical Jesus' stance on empire is misleading and evasive. Since Mark was composed during Roman colonization, utilizing a post-colonial lens is necessary and relevant. Throughout his text, Mark constructs various narratives to emphasize his dislocation due to Rome's geographic military and political control. He also displays an agitation towards Roman systematic structures, government and social hierarchical systems, and colonial power relations.

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[17] In general, Musa Dube provides a brief definition: "Post-colonial literary theory is an umbrella term that covers a multitude of literary practices and concerns of diverse races, empires, colonies, geographical centres, times, and genres. One of its defining characteristics is that it emphasises the pervasiveness of imperialism and relates imperial expansion, impact, and response to certain literary practices and practitioners." Musa Dube, "Post-Colonial Biblical Interpretations," *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 2: 299.

[18] Examples include, but are not limited to, John Dominic Crossan, *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* (New York: HarperOne, 2007); John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 1994); Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); William R. Herzog II*, Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

Similarly to other Judean exiles, Mark shared their sentiments of humiliation and resentment regarding public depictions of Roman dominance.[19] Gabriella Gelardini argues that Mark's rhetoric serves a practical purpose. After the failure of the rebellion, Mark "seeks[s] to subversively destabilize the Roman perspective on the one hand and to stabilize the Judean perspective on the other."[20] According to Gelardini, the Roman centurion's claim in Mk 15:39, "Truly, this person was the son of God" (Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν), underscores a Roman awareness and acknowledgement of Judean power, "a power that potentially could prove threatening or disturbing to the empire."[21] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig, however, provide a convincing alternative to the centurion's statement. Hearing Jesus' cry, the centurion does not proclaim a confession of faith, but is instead mocking Jesus: "The person who headed up the execution, and centurion, has seen how Jesus died, defeated and desperately alone."[22] Kotrosits and Taussig argue that the mocking explanation fits more with the surrounding narrative and correlates with Mark's sentiments of alienation.

Richard Horsley, Gerd Theissen, and Brian Incigneri mainly read Mark as a counter-Roman or imperial text.[23] This interpretation is supported by the Romans who indict Jesus with

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[19] See Riches, 22. Riches cites the exhibits of Temple furnishings, coinage imagery, and the *fiscus Iudaicus* tax as examples.

[20] Gabriella Gelardini, "Cult's Death in Scripture: The Destruction of Jerusalem's Temple Remembered by Josephus and Mark," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Tom Thatcher; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 89–112, 90. It should be noted here that later in this chapter, I will contend the notion of Judean prominence and preservation in Mark.

[21] Gelardini, 109.

[22] Kotrosits and Taussig, 12.

[23] See Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) and Gerd Theissen, "Evangelienschreibung und Gemeindeleitung Titelzusatz: Pragmatische Motive bei der Abfassung des Markusevangeliums," in *Antikes Judentum und Frühes Christentum: Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 389–414; and Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

subversion. Before Jesus' crucifixion, his cross is inscribed with the (ironic) title "The King of the Judeans" (Ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; Mark 15:26). Gelardini continues Horsley, Theissen, and Incigneri's interpretation: "Mark portrayed Jesus as a counterimage to Rome's imperial claims, an anticipated 'ruler and monarch' who would bring deliverance from oppression … a kingdom that opposes the 'gospel of Vespasian's ascension to power' according to Josephus."[24] Mark, as a counter to "Vespasian's gospel" contends that his composition was a direct result of Vespasian's supposed miracles and apotheosis. The term "gospel" seems to support this idea. As Kotrosits and Taussig note, "the term 'gospel' or 'good news' was regularly used to describe the 'great deeds of warring men'—that is, military conquests and the related achievement of cultural domination, particularly those enabled by the Roman emperor."[25] The noticeable difference, however, is that the proper authority appoints Mark's Jesus—namely, God. Therefore, Mark inverts the notion of imperial "gospel." He "deflates the egotistical achievements of Roman domination, instead drawing attention to the violence inherent in those achievements."[26] Gelardini also argues that Mark reinforces Jesus' "claim to power in Jerusalem vis-à-vis the local elites and indirectly vis-à-vis Rome."[27] To support this argument, scholars point to the similar narratives of Vespasian and

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[24] Gelardini, 101. C.M. Tuckett also suggests that Mark's narrative "is a deliberate counter to Vespasianic claims" (192). See C.M. Tuckett, "Christ and the Emperor: Some Reflections on Method and Methodological Issues Illustrated from the Gospel of Mark," in *Christ and the Emperor: The Gospel Evidence* (eds. Gilbert Van Belle and Joseph Verheyden; Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 185–202. Incigneri also provides correlations between Mark's Jesus and the Vespasian narrative to underscore his symbolic inversion.

[25] Kotrosits and Taussig, 34.

[26] Kotrosits and Taussig, 35.

[27] Gelardini, 104. While Gelardini provides an interesting interpretation here, the ubiquitous association and correlation of Jerusalem's elites with Rome is overemphasized. I am more inclined to think Mark's criticism of Jerusalem's elites are more associated with intercultural polemics, a point I will argue in the next section. A more overreaching example is Gelardini's equivalence of Vespasian and Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. She states, "In correspondence with Vespasian's *adventus*, Jesus likewise arrives in Jerusalem with a *great entourage* …" (104, emphasis added). Mark 10:32 makes no mention of a "great entourage."

Mark's Jesus. For example, both descriptions describe healing a blind man (8:22–26) and another

man with a withered hand (3:1–5). In a similar vein, Tat-siong Benny Liew argues that Mark

resisted Rome's imperial systems by directly imitating them.[28] Liew suggests that Mark "(1)

attributes absolute authority to Jesus, (2) preserves the insider-outsider binarism, and (3)

understands the nature of 'legitimate' authority … Mark has indeed internalized the imperialist

ideology of his colonizers."[29] Using this particular criterion, Liew concludes,

> While Mark's Gospel may contain critiques of the existing colonial (dis)order, it also contains traces of 'colonial mimicry' that reinscribe colonial domination. Jesus, as God's son and heir, has absolute authority in interpreting and arbitrating God's will. One's response to this authorized revealer of God's will, then, becomes the new measure by which one's status within the old 'insider-outsider' binarism is determined. Mark's politics of parousia remains a politics of power, because Mark still understands authority as the ability to have one's commands obeyed and followed, or the power to wipe out those who do not. Despite Mark's declaration of an apocalypse, what we have in the Gospel are recurring themes of 'empire' such as tyranny, boundary and might.[30]

However, overall, it is unclear whether Mark purposely utilized Roman apotheosis narratives and

structural systems as a slight against imperialism, or if he was aware of other mythic rhetoric and

applied it to his narrative.

Perhaps the most well-known and analyzed pericope dealing with colonial control is Mark

5:1–13, otherwise known as the "Legion" episode. Anna Runesson describes the Legion episode

as "a situation of colonial oppression; the story is meant to be and describe an act of resistance

against Roman presence in the land."[31] Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah provides a more popular detailed

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Jesus' congregation consists only of his disciples and an ambiguous "they." The "they" is hardly suggestive of a "great entourage."

[28] Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," in *JSNT* 73 (1999): 7–31.

[29] Liew, 13.

[30] Liew, 27.

[31] Anna Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making: Postcolonialism and New Testament* Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 95.

interpretation, stating that Mark employs a metaphor to pronounce the complete obliteration of the Roman forces by retreating to the turbulent waters.[32] However, Sugirtharajah's suggestion of the swine (Roman armies) running "into the sea" (εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν) as an annihilation into mythic primordial chaos waters is misleading as it does not correlate with the rest of Mark's text. Instead, it is more plausible that Mark is using this narrative more as social fantasy and reverie, one in which Roman military controls would move back across the sea, abdicating power, not a complete obliteration.

Whether one sees the sea as the "waters of chaos" or merely an allegory to leaving a physical space is ultimately piddling. In general, the implications of this narrative are clear: Mark is mocking, and even inverting, the so-called *Pax Romana* and implies that Jesus is the national institution of order, whereas the Romans create chaos; they cannot and do not represent structural and systemic regulation. Jesus is rejecting or challenging Roman control over social space. Legion, depicting a Roman military division[33] that occupies Palestine, is placed into a herd of animals deemed "unclean" by Jewish dietary laws. This pig herd is then driven into the sea and out of the occupied territory, enabling a desired Jewish autonomy. It is important to note here that for Mark, reported narratives surrounding "Vespasian's brutal and pitiless invasion of Gerasa, the driving out of Legion from the Gerasa area connects more directly to events contemporaneous for Mark's audience."[34] The aspiration of Mark's author to rid Palestine of occupying Roman forces materializes into an allegorical narrative consisting of exorcizing demonic or outside forces.

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[32] Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 91–94.

[33] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013). Leander convincingly argues that the term legion itself "did not designate a military force in general, but specifically a Roman military unit" (205).

[34] Leander, 214.

Through exorcism, Mark portrays Jesus mending the damage done by imperial domination.[35] Literally speaking, the "man is possessed and pained by Roman occupation."[36] Therefore, he cannot talk himself but is spoken through. This muteness "can be seen as a rather precise image of the alienation of colonized people from themselves."[37] He is possessed by an "outside" force that he cannot control; because of this possession, he is not able to be himself until the outside force is gone or defeated.[38] The Romans are perceived as an "outside" force, "which invade and disrupt human society both in and outside the Land."[39] In other words, Rome is an invading alien force that renders the populace speechless and incapable of public participation. The application of exorcising demons here is essential; Mark uses demons to indicate impurity.[40] More importantly, however, demons are also employed, as Smith Suggests, as a locative category.[41] By using demons in this manner, Mark is implying that Legion is "out of place" or does not belong in that space. This particular metaphor is given more credence since the most crucial legion in first-century Palestine was the Tenth Legion, whose central emblem was a boar.[42] During the time of Mark's composition, the commander of the Tenth Legion had previously been a procurator, and a

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[35] Warren Carter, "Matthew and Empire," in *Empire in the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall; Hamilton: McMaster Divinity College Press, 2011), 90–119, 99.

[36] Kotrosits and Taussig, 50.

[37] Kotrosits and Taussig, 51.

[38] Kotrosits and Taussig, 52–53.

[39] Riches, 133.

[40] See Eric Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2009), 193–195.

[41] See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," *ANRW* II 16.1 (1978): 425–439.

[42] See Hillel Geva, "The Camp of the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem: An Archaeological Reconsideration," in *Israel Exploration Journal* 34.4 (1984): 239–254, 245.

detachment of the Tenth Legion remained in Jerusalem after the city's destruction.[43] Hans

Leander argues for a similar reading Mark 5:1–13. He states,

> The possessed man symbolically represents the suffering of those subdued by Rome. But there seems to be more to this rich, desolate imagery. If the self-immolating demoniac symbolized uncontrolled strength and hypermasculinity, it also represents a critical satire on imperial masculinity itself. Whereas imperial discourse upheld the Roman military as an archimage of masculinity and regarded its victories as decisive for upholding peace and security, Mark depicts it as a perverted hypermasculinity.[44]

Leander's exegesis depicts Mark analyzing, critiquing, and even mocking the Roman imperial

conceptions of power and masculinity. Circulating images and coins, as well as constructing

monuments depicting military victories over subjugated nations, were critical in Roman

discourse.[45] This hermeneutical assertion directly correlates with Davina C. Lopez's critical

examination of Roman gender imagery.[46] Lopez argues that the Romans incorporated gender

personification imagery, such as statues and coins, into conquered territories as visual

representations, reminders, and illustrations of their conquered figures. She states,

> Visual representation offered the Romans a striking way to publicly depict the nations as conquered outsiders incorporated into their territorial empire. The Romans used visual symbols and allegory to portray conquered lands and were especially innovative in this regard. Moreover, Roman visual representation of nations was usually accomplished using gendered personifications … the Romans consistently represented conquered territories and provinces in the form of women's bodies, often displaying several women together in order to depict a collective of conquered territories. The use of ethnic personifications was part of a pattern in Roman visual representation that affirmed imperial ideology in distinctly gendered ways … The Romans/nations hierarchy (or, "Romans on top") was thus communicated by showing female personifications of conquered lands in contrast to their male Roman conquerors.[47]

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[43] Geva, 246.

[44] Leander, 215.

[45] Leander, 215, 157.

[46] See Davina C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

[47] Lopez, 28.

An example of this gendered domination practice is witnessed in a statue of Claudius subduing Britannia in a feminine personification.[48] A more relevant example is the *Judaea Capta* coinage. As Lopez notes, coins provided a reliable symbolic indicator of political and social issues.[49] The *Judaea Capta* is significant because the coinage was widely circulated after 70 CE. The actual coins

> … depict Roman victory and domination over the Jewish people and territory … the majority of the coin types show captured, bound, draped and seated female bodies as well as some captured, seated and/or standing, scantily-clad male bodies. All of the captive bodies, male and female, are thought to be Judean due to their hairstyles, costuming and specific identifiable attributes … On this coin, a palm tree stands in the middle, between a soldier on the left and a sitting woman on the right. This coin commemorates the end of the Jewish war, illustrated by the depicted Jewish woman shown mourning the fate of her people.[50]

Therefore, the imagery of the *Judaea Capta* provided the conquered population with a constant reminder of their failed rebellion and subsequent colonial rule. The powerful Roman military figure is standing over the dominated Jewish woman.

Another major example of Mark's Roman incongruity is 10:42–44:

And Jesus calling to them said to them, "You know that the ones who are recognized to be the rulers of the nations, lord it over them and the great ones coerce them. It should not be among you, but whoever is willing to become great among you, shall be your servant. And whoever wishes to become first shall be the slave of all" (καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς· Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν. οὐχ οὕτως δέ ἐστιν ἐν ὑμῖν· ἀλλ᾿ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν, ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ⸀ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος, ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος⸃).

This passage is a denunciation against Roman, or "gentile," structural systems of government and social power structures.[51] For this passage to be substantial, the surrounding narrative context is

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[48] See Lopez, 2.

[49] See Lopez, 35.

[50] Lopez, 36.

[51] Many commentators portray this narrative as an example of "failed," or "fallible" discipleship; for example, see Mookgo Solomon Kgatle, "Discipleship misconceptions: A social

vital. Mark 10:42–44 reveals Jesus' response to James and John's request (or perhaps demand) of sitting on the right and left of Jesus (Mk 10:35–37). James and John's statement is mirroring a form of (gentile) hierarchical structures, seemingly resembling an oligarchy. They want significant leadership and power roles within Jesus' growing movement. They are only focused upon their selfish desires, prominence, and reputation. Jesus' response is, "You are not aware of what you request" (Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε). Jesus then proceeds to criticize "gentile" structural hierarchical systems in verse 42: "You know that the ones who are recognized to be the rulers of the nations, lord it over them and the great ones coerce them (ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν). He condemns the reigning competitive social structural model, one in which the few elites ("οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν" and "οἱ μεγάλοι") reside, or lord, (κατακυριεύουσιν) over the rest of the population with absolute coercive authority (κατεξουσιάζουσιν). Jesus immediately follows (verse 43) this statement with the assertion that this authoritative systematic method will not be repeated among his followers. Chasing personal prestige through social power, authority, and leadership leads to subjugation, resulting in the unacceptable subordination of the remaining populace.

Finally, the last narrative denouncing "outside" hierarchical power structures is Mark 6:17–29. At first glance, Mark's narrative "interlude" does not appear as condemnation of "outside" social structures. John F. O'Grady outlines a popular interpretation—Mark interrupts his chronological narrative "in order to fill up the time between the sending out and the return of the

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scientific reading of James and John's request for seats of honour (Mark 10:35–42)," in *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 3.1 (2017). However, this narrative does not appear to be a discipleship reproach. Jesus' rebuke is not, I think, placed upon the disciples as much as it is directed towards systematic social structures. In this particular instance, Jesus does not chastise (i.e., use harsh language). There is no admonishment or degrading remark directed at the disciples—"Do you not understand?!"). This lack of debasing is important because Jesus continuously lambasts the disciples throughout Mark's text.

disciples."[52] This narrative interval gives Mark another opportunity to foreshadow Jesus' Passion

episode, which, according to O'Grady, is the primary purpose and focus of the entire Gospel. He

states, "… the death of John the Baptist proleptically points [to Jesus' death]. All these passages

conflate the fate of [John] the Baptist with Jesus."[53] R. Alan Culpepper, however, provides a

compelling counter-argument.[54] Culpepper argues that Mk 6:17–29 is not merely an injected

narrative outlining John the Baptist's execution. Instead, it is a deliberately placed critique of

authoritative social structures, especially regarding "weak," myopic, and brash leadership. Mark

portrays a conflict of competing counterintuitive kingdoms, or social structures. Similar to 10:42–

44, the foundation for the terrestrial leaders and powers are tyrannical, excessive, and impotent.

They are additionally feeble—despite Herod's reluctance to behead John, he is "forced" to by the

rule of his oath. His integrity is on the line, so he is forced to act against his initial hesitancy. In

this light, Herod is portrayed as a weak, powerless, and ineffective leader, but one who has

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[52] O'Grady, 25.

[53] O'Grady, 25.

[54] See R. Alan Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context: Kingdoms in Conflict," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 145–163. It should be noted here that Culpepper does agree with previous scholarly interpretations of John's execution; for example, portraying various metaphorical foreshadowings to Jesus' death and the antithesis of the Last Supper (159–162). However, Culpepper *additionally* includes the cleaver interpretation of this narrative as an overall criticism of systematic structures (162–163). I should also note here that although I am convinced that Mark 6:17–29 encompasses political undertones, I am not convinced with Culpepper's concluding assessment of the "conflicting Kingdoms." Culpepper argues that the warring kingdoms represent "God's, Satan's, and Herod's (and by implication, Rome's) … Herod and Rome, [are] the vassals of Satan's power" (162). The reference to Satan here is vastly overemphasized and more representative of a contemporary image, as an "evil" antithesis to God. It is also not congruent with Mark's very limited usage of "Satan" throughout his text. At the time of composition, the proper noun "Satan" is more reflective of a celestial "tester" of piety, similar to his portrayal in Job. Overall, the conflicting Kingdoms appear to be more representative of Mark's continual critical discourse of his current social governing system.

authority over life and death. McVann summarizes Mark's scathing swipes at Herod's household and leadership:

> An ambitious and tyrannical but weak-willed ruler who married incestuously, unjustly imprisons a holy prophet, lusts after his own daughter … finally dispatches a henchman to kill the prophet in order to save face by keeping a shameful vow. It would be difficult to imagine a more scathing and contemptuous exposé of this, King Herod's latest display of scorn for genuine honour … Mark wants us to understand, then, that the Herods all—husband, wife, and daughter—make up one despicable family.[55]

With all this information in mind, Adam Winn specifically correlates Herod and Pilate with Mark's condemnation of oppressive rules in 10:42. They both have absolute power over life and death and are described as weak-willed leaders (both acquiesce to outside pressures). Winn concludes, "Both Herod and Pilate likely stand as symbols of Roman power. Thus, the unvirtuous Herod and Pilate represent an unvirtuous Rome that oppresses and tyrannizes its subjects."[56]

Emic Polemic Incongruities

It is clear that the irritation and disillusionment Mark exhibits concerning power structures is not limited to Roman power systems. Social hierarchies based upon monetary means, gains, retentions, and possession is also a source of agitation. Mark displays an unfavourable view of previous (pre-rebellion and destruction of Jerusalem's temple) inter-Jewish social hierarchical structures. Plenty of scholarly commentaries of Mark discuss the inter-Jewish polemics. Generally, there is an agreement that Mark was somehow engaged with competing Jewish identity

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[55] Mark McVann, "The Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate: Mark's Warnings about Kings and Governors," in *BTB* 38 (2008): 152–157, 154.

[56] Adam Winn, "'Their Great Ones Act as Tyrants Over Them': Mark's Characterization of Roman Authorities from a Distinctly Roman Perspective," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 194–214, 213–214.

discourses. The aim of this section is not to challenge this particular understanding, as it is clear that Mark does engage with this debate. Therefore, this section will not reiterate the intricacies and proclivities of Mark's Midrash; instead, it will be dedicated to the ramifications of these dialogues, mainly his grievances of alienation, authority, and "insider/outsider" identity classifications. The method in which Mark accomplishes his discourse is through the portrayal of the previous leadership's corruption, leading to the loss of autonomous power.

Mark reflects sentiments of frustration, alienation, dislocation, and disillusionment towards his tradition. His text is rife with inter-Jewish polemics. The notion of an "outsider" in Mark, first appears in 3:31–35, where Jesus' family are thought of as outsiders and his listeners, or followers, are considered insiders. The primary point here is that those people who are privy to Jesus' teachings (or his institution) are, according to Mark, labelled and classified as "insiders."[57] For an improved understanding of inter-Jewish polemics, Smith provides an essential classification of "the other." Usually, the classification system resembles the faulty comparison method of "'theirs is like ours'"[58] in some fashion. Smith suggests that "the other" "is a matter of relative rather than absolute difference,"[59] meaning that people are more suspicious of their "near neighbour" or someone who is "too much like us."[60] Smith explains his logic by noting that "'otherness' is a relativistic category inasmuch as it is, necessarily, a term of interaction."[61] "The other" is determined by the "relation to the way in which we think, situate, and speak about

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[57] See Stewart, 215–216.
[58] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Classification," in *Guide to the Study of Religion* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and New York: Cassell, 2000), 35–44, 39.
[59] Smith, *Relating*, 258.
[60] Smith, *Relating*, 275.
[61] Smith, *Relating*, 258.

ourselves."[62] If people encounter an incongruent situation in regard to "the other," they place and perceive "the other" in relation to their own context.

The insider/outsider classification system in Mark is muddy, especially when attempting to decipher who exactly are the insiders and outsiders. The roles appear to be a fraction clearer when discussing Jesus' main antagonists, the Pharisees and Scribes, but their characterization is not as precise as it first appears. In pre–70 CE. as Horsley states, "given the institutional political-economic-religious structure in first-century Palestine, if there were any representation of Jerusalem interests in Galilee, scribal retainers of the temple-state such as the Pharisees would have been the obvious choice."[63] Mark recognizes and comprehends this relationship. The problem, however, is that Mark is writing post–70 CE, after the temple's destruction. To reconcile the time differential, Mark equates "Jerusalem's representatives" with the pre–70 CE social-political-economic-religious system, a symbolic representation of the previous self-governing system. To reinforce this point, Mark does not appear to be interested in the differences between the various "leadership" groups (Pharisees, Scribes, Herodians, and Sadducees), and there is no indication of group specificities or inclinations. Instead, Mark amalgamates them into one collective category, namely Jesus' opposition. To explain this coalescence, Michael Cook[64] argues that Mark did not know the differences among the leadership groups. The Gospel "did not adequately define and describe them or adequately distinguish among them because [Mark] could not. Moreover, some of the group titles … are merely general constructs."[65] In particular, the

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[62] Smith, *Relating,* 276.

[63] Richard Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 34.

[64] See Michael J. Cook, *Mark's Treatment of the Jewish Leaders* (Leiden: Brill, 1978). Cook, however, is more concerned about hypothetical written sources that Mark could have employed for his construction of previous Jewish leadership.

[65] Cook, 1.

"Scribes," are typically somehow related to each variant because Mark explicitly mentions that the Scribes travelled from Jerusalem (3:22; 7:1). Through a creative narrative method, Mark constructs and conglomerates all distinct "leadership" groups into a consolidated unit of antagonists.

The main point, however, is that each group is an allegory for the now lost social system. But, since Mark was a highly creative writer, the social Pharisees group does not merely equate to previous governing systems. If this were true, it would make more sense for Mark to belittle the Sadducees to a greater extent since they better represented the temple system. Mark's interest in the actual previous leadership is sparse. Only verses 12:18–27 showcase Jesus in direct conflict with the Sadducees, and the narrative lacks the venom compared to other indignations. The Pharisees, however, continued their "Jewish" tradition, which was made accessible through notable rabbis such as Shammai and Hillel. For Mark, then, it is indeed possible that the Pharisee group was the best, and provided the most significant, connection to *current* competing establishments.

Throughout Mark, Jesus is continually involved and engaged in Midrash debates. Through these debates, Jesus represents a new form of identity by reimagining and reclassifying purity laws, sacrality, and communal configurations. Mark compares, through Midrash debate, Jesus' new forms of law and identification with the previous (pre–70 CE) social thought patterns. Predictably, Jesus is victorious. He illustrates his wisdom and knowledge, proving that the old system is broken, lost, and therefore now irrelevant.[66] Staying within Mosaic Law (Mark is careful to do so), Jesus consistently defeats his debate opponents by displaying a clearer and deeper

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[66] It should be noted that this is a reflection of an author living in the post–70 CE world. There is no possible way to determine his pre–70 CE sentiments.

understanding. The insightful arguments provide and prove Jesus' authority in these matters.

Synagogues are utilized in a similar fashion. They are usually linked in some way with the temple.

Mark understands them as being a type of "satellite camp" for temple concerns and

representations. The majority of the synagogues reproduce similar temple purity laws and strict

observance to temple regulations. Additionally, they were run by Scribes who had ties with the

chief priests and elders.[67] Throughout Mark, Jesus is continually entering synagogues and

exorcising demons. As previously mentioned, demonic possessions are important classification

markers in Mark because they challenge perceived "sacred" locative categories. In this way, he

contests rival synagogue institutions being labelled, or classified, as "pure" locations. Mark

directly and purposely places "unclean" demons within a perceived "sacred" space.[68] He then

offers an alternative ethnocultural social institution. Through the narrative figure of Jesus, social

and cultural identity is not marked any more by fixed locations and regulations. The institution

has vacated the "here" and "there" categorical classifications to become a cosmopolitan

"anywhere" institute.

Kotrosits and Taussig argue that Jesus "bases his criticism on the Torah. That is, he attacks

the Pharisees' devotion to Israel with other traditions of Israel … obviously claiming Israel in a

way different than the Pharisees."[69] This insight is essential for Mark's identity discourse. The

Scribes and Pharisees attempt to hold onto a particular classification of Israel and its peoples.

However, in a post-temple world, Mark sees these prior classifications as antiquated. Within

Mark's Midrash debates, the reader obtains an understanding of the occurring inner-identity

polemics. Mark's Jesus displays frustration towards his opponents' antiquated methods of social

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[67] See Stewart, 189–191.

[68] Stewart, 195.

[69] Kotrosits and Taussig, 63. Mark 7:53 can be employed as an example.

order. Jesus, however, is not directly hostile to his opponents, but does show disappointment and laments their "old" stubborn ways. It is not hard then to imagine the actual creative author of Mark concurrently engaging in similar debates with similarly vexed and confused "insider" who is also searching for a new ethnocultural identity.

Besides notions of "purity," one can also perceive a major contention between the debate groups; that is, the proposed admittance of "outsiders," or Gentiles, into a socio-ethnic identity movement. It is clear that Mark is in favour of admission: "Whatever it means to belong to Israel after the destruction of the temple and the desolation of Jerusalem does not entail fear of outsiders."[70] Chapter 7:14–15 and 18–23 proclaim the same message. Outside forces do not defile, or contaminate, someone; personal and communal defilement stem from the insider. Mark emphasizes his frustration towards his debate partners by including Jesus' confounding proclamation: "Οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσύνετοί ἐστε." Kotrosits and Taussig argue that these verses outline Mark's overall thoughts on the matter: "Rather than a threat from a gentile outside, the source of Israel's uncleanness is 'evil thinking' from the inside of people."[71] In a similar argument, Jeffrey W. Aernie describes Mark 7: 24–30 as a subtle rebuke to previous classification ideals of "insider." Arguing that the Syrophoenician women narrative to the previous narrative involving a debate regarding "clean" foods, Aernie states, "Jesus' negative response to the Syrophoenician women does not represent his perception of the situation. In contrast, it represents the negative assumption held by Jewish leaders in the preceding narrative about the distinction between clean and unclean foods from which Jesus intends to distance himself."[72]

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[70] Kotrosits and Taussig, 64.
[71] Kotrosits and Taussig, 63.
[72] Jeffrey W. Aernie, *Narrative Discipleship: Portraits of Women in the Gospel of Mark* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishing, 2018), 76.

Another theme Mark employs to highlight his insider/outsider polemic is family. Kelly R. Iverson states, "Ironically, while Jesus is located in a home, those 'outside' refer not to the crowds but to the family of Jesus (3:32) who believe that he is 'out of his mind' (3:32)."[73] Mark 6:16 exhibits this discourse, although the more striking example of Mark's family rhetoric is found in 3:31–35. Jesus' family saw his actions and teaching as "insane, or perhaps confused. They knew him well and thought he needed help."[74] Readers can easily extrapolate these "concerns" being flung at Mark. However, Mark counters these allegations—he is not "crazy," but justified. As a result, Mark's familial relations have now shifted. Being "rejected" by his previous familial unit, Mark now finds "a new family or household, many more brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers than ever he had before."[75] He illustrates how his new idyllic communal group transitioned into "family" and now proclaims insider status. Combining the two family narratives, Mark laments his previous family (Mark 6:6: "And he marvelled at them because of their unbelief"—καὶ ἐθαύμαζεν διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν). At the same time, however, he begins to transition towards his newly perceived familial unit—an idyllic community. By showcasing this transition, Mark attempts to escape and disregard previous familial institutional units: "Mark's portrait of Jesus rarely places him in a family context, and the only time family as institution is dealt with directly, Jesus is very critical of even the notion of family."[76]

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[73] Kelly R. Iverson, "'Wherever the Gospel is Preached:' The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 181–209, 198.

[74] Dawsey, 74. Dawsey concludes that Jesus' familial rejection was a result of proximity. He states, "the hearers of Mark would have considered what happened with Jesus' family and at Nazareth as human failure of the type that occurs when through too close and association, people don't see what should be obvious" (77). Dawsey makes a similar argument in relation to the disciples and will address this interpretation in the discipleship incongruity section.

[75] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 4, 1981), 227.

[76] Kotrosits and Taussig, 100.

Mark accomplishes these discourses by portraying the previous established orders as corrupt. He is not unique in this sense and possesses knowledge of past prophetic literature. Many Hebrew Bible narratives have also been critical of "Israel's leadership" (Isaiah 5:17 and Jeremiah 2:21, for example). The portrayal of the Temple leadership is one of "protecting their positions, swayed by popular opinion, and motivated by fear."[77] An example of Mark's corruption rhetoric is found in 12:38–44. Addison Wright argues that the widow's experience within the temple is a clear instance and criticism of temple corruption.[78] The widow "had been taught and encouraged by religious leaders to donate as she does, and Jesus condemns the value system that motivates her action, and he condemns the people who conditioned her to do it."[79] Aernie concurs, "Mark 12:41 and 12:42 create a deliberate antithesis between the many rich who offer large amounts and this single woman who offers only a miniscule contribution."[80] The monetary condemnation is more in opposition to the Temple's leadership as opposed to Roman imperialism. The narratives message "is much more of a threat to the … leaders of Jerusalem than to the emperor of Rome"[81] since the episode centres on the Temple's coffers, not Rome's. Jesus challenges the systematic leaders and operations, accusing them of exploitation. In other words, Jesus is criticizing the systematic structures "that make and keep people poor."[82] However, systematic financial exploitation is not Mark's only concern. Jesus does interact and show favour to certain "wealthy" or middling figures, although the major character attribute of these wealthy or middling figures is

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[77] Timothy R. Carmody, *The Gospel of Mark: Question by Question* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 39.

[78] See Addison Wright, "The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament?—A Matter of Context" in *CBQ* 44 (1982): 256–265.

[79] Wright, 262.

[80] Aernie, 87.

[81] Carmody, 39.

[82] Kotrosits and Taussig, 86.

that they are somehow devalued or "shamed" by the rest of society, usually because of their occupation (e.g., tax collector). Therefore, Jesus' rebukes are not only levelled at the wealthy, suggesting that Jesus' main concerns are not exclusively monetary. Rather, Jesus is concerned with self-righteousness, possessive motivations, and hierarchical social orders. As Kotrosits and Taussig note, "Mark's story is very interested in other characters at the edge of society."[83] The people who are known to be "outsiders," usually due to situations beyond their control, are honoured. As Iverson states, "Jesus repeatedly defies purity standards and demonstrates a compassion for the marginalized, including physical contact with the sick (1:29–31, 40–41; 7:31–37; 8:22–26) and dining with tax collectors and sinners (2:15–17)."[84] In general, Jesus favours those who are shunned by other sectors of society. He "is pictured as having … compassion for those who are suffering and marginalized,"[85] an issue that Mark can relate to as well. It is clear "that the Markan Jesus sees issues other than poverty such as rejection of shame …"[86]

Overall, Mark is attempting to justify the destruction of pre–70 CE social systems. Since previous leadership, systemic structures, and institutions were all corrupt, the entire systemic order required transformation. Best notes, "Mark continually emphasizes judgement on old Israel."[87] The social adjustment, however, is not completely celebrated because Mark laments the loss of previous social-ethnic institutions. Throughout the narrative, Jesus attempts to change, or "correct," the corruption, but ultimately fails. A question arises then—what if Jesus was successful in his attempts to alter and remedy the systematic exploitation? The question, however, is ultimately rhetorical. The destruction of ethnocultural institutions did occur as Mark, living in a

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[83] Kotrosits and Taussig, 13.
[84] Iverson, 200.
[85] Carmody, 18.
[86] Kotrosits and Taussig, 87.
[87] Best, 219.

post-destructed world, is acutely aware. The fact that Mark portrays his Jesus attempting to amend the social-structural institutions is telling. If Mark felt no sorrow towards previous institutions, why would Jesus spend most of his "mission" attempting to correct "wrongful" behaviour and practices? In general, despite frustrating insider polemics, Mark does exhibit a sense of loss for previous familial units.

Discipleship Incongruities

Scholarship on Mark's depiction of the disciples is frustratingly sparse, most likely due to their peculiarities—"it is transparent that Mark's portrait of the twelve disciples is immensely complex."[88] Certain scholars have attempted to draw out elaborate characterizations,[89] whereas others appear satisfied with a relatively quick mention.[90] In general, two discourses emerge from the scholarship. Stemming from T.J. Weeden,[91] the first interpretation suggests that Mark's disciples are representations of misguided christologies, usually in relation to some competing community. Mark, living in a post–70 CE world, was somehow encountering christologies that were not congruent to his own. The source of these conflicting christologies may have been within his community, or they could have derived from a competing group or community.[92] As C.

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[88] Aernie, 29.

[89] See Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, eds., *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); C. Clifton Black, *The Disciples According to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989). Black is more concerned here with providing, and critiquing, historical Markan scholarship, especially redaction critics.

[90] See Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998). Mack actually provides a concise rundown of scholarships interpretations of the disciples (79). It is, however, confined to a footnote.

[91] See T.J. Weeden Sr., *Mark – Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

[92] Weeden, 1, 163.

Clifton Black notes, it was "commonplace in certain quarters to speak of the decidedly negative role played by the disciples in Mark and to explain that role, not by reason of any historical or traditional axes that the Evangelist supposedly wished to grind, but in terms of certain antagonistic narrative functions or undesirable theological positions that the twelve were assumed to represent."[93] The problem, however, is the lack of "historical or traditional axes" to grind. At the time of Mark's composition, it is unlikely that highly developed and dogmatic christologies were firmly entrenched. The second interpretation of Mark's harsh depiction of the disciples is a matter of pedagogy. These interpretations argue that the disciples did not arise from polemics "but rather genuinely didactic interest in Mark's community."[94] Slightly following Ernest Best,[95] and more so Robert Tannehill,[96] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon argues that the disciples do not act as "analogs for some opponents in Mark's historical world but the disciples in relation to other followers, to Jesus … as characters and to the implied audience."[97] Mark employs the disciples to emphasize to his community or potential audience how not to act.[98] In agreement, Timothy R. Carmody states,

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[93] Black, 60.

[94] Christopher W. Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark: A Survey of Research from Wrede to the Performance Critics (1901 to 2014)," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 3–34, 17.

[95] See Best. Best argues that despite the lack of "spiritual insight," Mark continually "shows them as recipients of special knowledge. In this aspect again they represent the community which Mark is instructing with Jesus' words and actions. Both the historical disciples and the members of Mark's community receive instruction or revelation which is not normally communicated to the crowd … [and] that shared knowledge unifies a group, serves to differentiate it from those who do not have the knowledge and makes it more conscious of itself as a group" (235–236).

[96] See Robert Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," in *JR* 57 (1977): 386–405.

[97] See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Characters in Mark's Story: Changing Perspectives on the Narrative Process," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 45–70, 64.

[98] See Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, and Stewart.

"Mark is rhetorical and is meant to challenge readers to learn from the failures of the disciples."[99] In other words, if one is acting like the disciples, they are on an erroneous path. Alternatively, one should employ Jesus as their paradigm, not the disciples. In a similar, albeit slightly different argument, Malbon sees the disciples as "flawed," or "fallible," discipleship representations;[100] they function in a complex way as both positive and negative examples of role models."[101] They mean well but ultimately cannot live up to Jesus' standards of discipleship. They are fearful because they continue to lack understanding and complicate matters; their misunderstandings result in more fear.[102] The sequence of misunderstanding and fear is a continuous, vicious cycle, one that reinserts and reinforces itself. Ultimately, Malbon argues, the disciples are portrayed "with both strong points and weak points in order to serve as realistic and encouraging models for hearers/readers who experience both strength and weakness in their Christian discipleship."[103] Aernie adds, "Mark's audience would have heard how Jesus' closest followers became afraid and abandoned him at his hour of trial. They would have heard a story of human weakness and fear— a story of failure and, perhaps even, cowardice—but not of something premeditated and intentional."[104] The major theme here, according to Malbon, is that discipleship is not exclusive, but it is also not an easy lifestyle.[105] James M. Dawsey supplements Malbon's reading: "While

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[99] Carmody, 21.

[100] See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," in *Semeia* 28 (1983): 29–48.

[101] Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 137.

[102] See Malbon, "Characters in Mark's Story," 54.

[103] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 71.

[104] Aernie, 62. While agreeing with Aernie's first assertion, I hesitate to fully agree with his *full* statement. As I will argue later in this section, the disciples' depiction, I think, is premeditated and intentional—not in the sense of the "historical" disciples, but stemming from the author himself.

[105] See Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*, 119.

Jesus defines his messiahship in terms of suffering and death, 'the disciples neither understand (9:32) nor accept this concept of a suffering Messiah (8:32).' In fact, they subscribe to an opposite view of power and glory."[106] Dawsey, however, proclaims the complex nature and the struggles of the disciples would have wrung sympathy from Mark's early audience. He states that Mark's audience "would have sympathized with the disciples' struggle to understand Jesus' true nature during his ministry."[107] This understanding is due to Dawsey's interpretation that Jesus' true "nature" was misunderstood and unrecognized by all of Jesus' contemporaries. Thus, the disciples' plight "provided insight into the human condition when believers come face-to-face with Christ. *If even the disciples misunderstood Jesus, no one of Jesus' day understood him*, they would have concluded."[108] The disciples continued to love, revere, and venerate Jesus. Peter's weeping portrays the disciples' remorse, but also adoration, after denying Jesus three times (καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ δευτέρου ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν καὶ ἀνεμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τὸ ῥῆμα ὡς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι Πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι δὶς τρίς με ἀπαρνήσῃ, καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν; Mark 14:72).[109] But ultimately, because of their human fallibility, the disciples were incapable of embracing Jesus' "nature" and importance.

Although an intriguing hypothesis, the arguments tend to erase or downplay the constant negative depictions of the disciples. This pejorative portrayal suggests and results in Jesus' perpetual alienation. Minimizing or de-emphasizing the negative portrayal contradicts the text. Despite Aernie's interpretation of Mark 16:7, especially arguing the anticipated reconciliation

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[106] Dawsey, 60.
[107] Dawsey, 65.
[108] Dawsey, 66 (original emphasis).
[109] See Dawsey, 25 and 62, for a more detailed explanation.

between Peter and Jesus,[110] the text does not rectify Peter and the disciples in any manner. The disciples, especially Peter, ultimately reject or betray Jesus—there is no "reconciliation between Jesus and the disciples."[111] As Kotrosits and Taussig state, "the disciples do not show loyalty. They forget the devotion they had for Jesus and deny him, also betraying the closeness they had with him."[112] The arguments here appear to be attempting to somehow "rescue" Peter and the other disciples from negativity. Their portrayal is not congruent with other depictions; therefore, an apostolic explanation seems necessary. Mark must have had an ulterior motive, namely an educational one. This "correcting" of the disciples is not unusual. Matthew and Luke are clear examples of attempting to "fix" problematic depictions of highly regarded and esteemed figures in the early Jesus movement.

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[110] See Aernie, 34. Also see 109, where Aernie argues that "the emphasis in Mark 16:8 is on a restricted form of communication and not the woman's universal silence. On this reading, the thrust of Mark 16:8 is not that the women remain in perpetual, disobedient silence, but rather that they spoke to no one *except* the disciples to whom they were sent … The women in Mark 16 demonstrate their obedience to Jesus' surrogate by reporting the reality of the resurrection only to the restricted audience to whom they were sent." Aernie contends that his reading is congruent with the text. He states, "That the women's action in speaking to no one (else) is not an act of disobedience is also supported by Mark's use of the term 'and' to introduce both of the internal clauses in Mark 16:8. The narrative movement does not stress that their departure or their silence was in *contrast* to the command they received to speak to the disciples, for which a clear adversative—'but'—would have been more appropriate" (109). This interpretation requires a rather large assumption to fill the narrative gap. There is no evidence or impression that the women spoke to no one *except* the disciples. Again, this ignores and contradicts Mark's actual text, where it explicitly states the women *spoke to no one*. It should also be noted that this interpretation has other scholarly advocates. See Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*, 115–116, where she argues, "The assumption that the disciples remain in Jerusalem is not shared by the Markan Jesus" due to the prophetic announcements in chapter 13 regarding the disciples.

[111] Dawsey, 60.

[112] Kotrosits and Taussig, 101.

It has been noted that the "crowds" surrounding Jesus have been portrayed as better examples of discipleship than the actual disciples.[113] Women, in particular, are perceived as a counter to the disciples[114] as they show seemly desirable traits such as faith, humility, and their willingness to break social conventions. For example, Aernie argues that "women are exemplars of discipleship." They create an ideal portrait of "*narrative discipleship* … Although their narratives occur in isolated scenes throughout the Gospel, Mark's portrayal of these women function as a cohesive narrative device."[115] The women are portrayed as exemplars, as "Mark narrates key engagements between Jesus and women to emphasize particular qualities of discipleship."[116] Aernie continues by arguing that the women's discipleship does not follow a descriptive path; they do not "follow a single trajectory from positive to negative" as the actual disciples do.[117] Aernie bases his argument on his understanding that Mark concentrates on the meaning of discipleship and how it should be the emphasis for his "community," namely, through participation or action. His overall interpretation is abridged as follows: "Enacted participation in God's Kingdom is the definition of Markan discipleship."[118] Kotrosits and Taussig, however, argue that Mark uses the women to mock the disciples and employs the narrative of the "little

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[113] For example, see Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*. Malbon states, "One expects disciples to be exemplary; their fallibility is surprising. One expects little of the crowd; their followership is surprising" (97).

[114] See Susan Miller, "Women Character in Mark's Gospel," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 174–193.

[115] Aernie, 2, 5 (original emphasis). By narrative discipleship, Aernie implies that Mark employs women throughout his Gospel as a *narrative technique* to highlight how discipleship should be replicated.

[116] Aernie, 37.

[117] See Aernie, 38. Also see 30–34 for Aernie's description of the disciples' transition from positive to negative.

[118] Aernie, 1.

girl"[119] as an example. In Mark 9:14–29, the disciples fail to exorcise a particularly strong "πνεῦμα," or spirit, despite having been given authorization to do so. They are confused about their lack of success but proceed, not by attempting to "understand" better, but by arguing among themselves about "who was the greatest." Kotrosits and Taussig summarize the ramifications: "The disciples too, apparently full of themselves from their healing powers and having a kind of disciples' pissing contest, have their own sense of prowess and dominance undercut. Their healing also has limits, and, in fact, it seems their healing is limited *because* it is too full of their own self-satisfaction and devoid of (submissive) trust."[120] Jesus' response is to contrast his companions' discipleship with the mentality, or disposition, of a child. The "little girl" is a challenge to the disciples, both in age and gender. "This little girl … is depicted as a model of vulnerability, and because she is mentioned just after the valorization of servitude, it implies that she is also submissive, perhaps even the property of others."[121] This characterization, in turn, insults the women as well because it merely depicts all the female characters as being in direct opposition to the disciples. They state,

> Women are still only marginal figures in the gospel … while male characters are almost always named, no matter how tiny a role they have, the women are nearly always nameless … [they] have the primary effect of making fools or questioning the power of men. That even women understand better, or are more reliable than these disciples, seems to be the message of the women at the tomb and the woman who anoints Jesus.[122]

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[119] See Kotrosits and Taussig, 123. It should be noted here that Kotrosits and Taussig translate παιδίον explicitly as "little girl." However, their translation can be argued as problematic as the text does not suggest a gender. For this reason, παιδίον is usually translated as "little child."

[120] Kotrosits and Taussig, 123.

[121] Kotrosits and Taussig, 124.

[122] Kotrosits and Taussig, 124.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza reads Mark in a similar vein. She states, "The name of the betrayer is remembered, but the name of the faithful disciple is forgotten because she was a woman."[123]

Although possible, this interpretation requires qualifiers. There would have to be precise discourses surrounding what discipleship means and what it encompasses or entails in order for corrections to occur. Also, while attempting to avoid the topic of a specific Markan community, this interpretation does require an audience or community with an agreed-upon discourse of discipleship.[124] Furthermore, "there is no explicit declaration of the need for imitation. There are no instances at the story level of Mark's Gospel in which someone who interacts with Jesus is explicitly positioned as a model for imitation."[125] Burton Mack rightly notes that within the early Jesus tradition, there is no evidence or mention of the disciples, there is no mention in either Q or Paul (instead referred to as Apostles). Mark is the first text that places the disciples or discipleship in the form of a narrative.[126] The disciples' backgrounds, occupation, personalities, and, indeed, their entire characterization is based on Mark's creativity. Therefore, I propose that Mark utilized the disciple characters as narrative representations of alienation, specifically Mark's separation

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[123] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 217.

[124] For example, see Paul L. Danove, "The Narrative Rhetoric of Mark's Characterization of Peter," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 152–173. Danove argues that Mark's audience has a distinct vision of Peter and Mark is attempting to unset it in order to prove that even Peter can fail, but he was still redeemed. This implies that "should the real audience recognize similar negative elements in its life of discipleship and the need for a reinvigoration of discipleship, the narrative audience's beliefs provide a guide to correct these failings and a recognition that, even in the context of failure that identifies Peter with Satan, Jesus reinvigorates the original call to discipleship, and, after multiple denials, Jesus goes before and offers an assurance of seeing him" (173). In addition to the problems describes above, this interpretation also assumes there was a prevalent, complete, and agreed upon characterization of Peter.

[125] Aernie, 87.

[126] Mack, 79.

from Jerusalem, the previously perceived "centre" of intellectual, political, and socio-ethnic

creation and a symbolic representation of self-identification.

Concerning "insider/outsider" dichotomies, Mark's depiction of the disciples is also a

muddled classification system. Where do they fit? Without explicitly mentioning "insider" status,

Stewart's analysis suggests a prominent position. W.H. Kelber agrees to a certain extent. He

indicates that at the beginning of the Gospel, the disciples are insiders. They "have been made

privy to Jesus in a way that is unparalleled among the crowds."[127] As the story progresses, their

status shifts; they "are about to forfeit their privileged position as insiders."[128] In other words, the

disciples begin as insiders, then, throughout the narrative, they gradually start to show their

muddled classification—somewhere between an insider *and* outsider. Jesus continues to teach

them privately, suggesting a privileged status. Iverson argues for the disciples' continued insider

status. He writes, "Though the disciples are certainly not the only insiders (see 7:24–30) and

typically do not comprehend the revelation they are given (6:52; 8:14–21, 31–33; 9:30–32; 10:32–

45), they are nonetheless recipients of instruction that is often excluded from others. This two-

tiered distinction is enacted … and emphasizes the disciples' unique calling … throughout

Mark."[129]

 However, the disciples are now noticeably engaged in a more muddy classification. Verses such

as 6:51–52 display Jesus', or Mark's, dissatisfaction. Kotrosits and Taussig explain:

> Unlike other Jesus boat stories, this story has no amazement at Jesus' deed nor any
> resolution. It ends with a strong condemnation of the disciples for not understanding. This
> makes no sense to the disciples or the reader. Two mighty deeds have occurred (the
> feeding and the walking on water), but that Jesus walked on water has not had attention

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[127] Iverson, 191.

[128] W.H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 41.

[129] Iverson, 192.

drawn to it in the story, and the disciples have been judged by the gospel author (not by Jesus) for not appreciating the miraculous feeding in Israel.[130]

Finally, by the end of the narrative, the disciples have lost their insider statues entirely.[131] John Dominic Crossan places the disciples firmly on the outside.[132] Crossan's interpretation is fascinating because he attempts to combine a false christological depiction with some social schism against the early church in Jerusalem. Primarily, Mark's adverse depiction of the disciples stems from theological and social polemics between Mark's community and the community in Jerusalem.

All three interpretations can be supported and contested with textual evidence. Indeed, the disciples do receive some form of calling from Jesus to be witnesses or privileged "insiders." They are given supernatural powers to exorcise demons and obtain (sort of) first-hand explanations of Jesus' parables. Moreover, Jesus separates himself with the disciples from the crowds in order to teach them.[133] Even if they do not understand Jesus' explanations, the fact that they are privy to them is sufficient for some to conclude insider status, though one cannot ignore their defamation. Mark 4:1–20 does not help clarify the situation; after preaching a parable, Jesus tells the disciples that they have been given the secret of the Kingdom of God. Jesus continues by stating that people on the outside will be taught exclusively in parables as "parables are

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[130] Kotrosits and Taussig, 62.

[131] It should be noted that there are contentions to the issue of the disciples becoming complete "outsiders." For example, see Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*. She writes, "How can we be so sure that the disciples are irrevocably outsiders? Or that being insider and being outside are polemically opposed rather than connected in process and in mystery? (121). This explanation lacks persuasiveness. Mark does separate groups into insider/outsider categories. This is shown through the rhetoric against the Pharisees, etc. Also, it is unclear what Malbon exactly means by "connected in process and in mystery." This statement is equally mysterious.

[132] See John Dominic Crossan, "Mark and the Relatives of Jesus," in *NovT* 15 (1973): 81–113.

[133] See Best, 226–228, for a description on how Mark utilizes the notion of "house" in relation to the disciples.

particularly associated with 'outsiders.'"[134] However, immediately after (the very next verse!),

Jesus recites a parable to them, which (of course) they do not understand. In the span of a couple

of verses, the disciples move from being insiders who have been given a vision of the "Kingdom

of Heaven" to outsiders who do not understand the parables. Thus, they continue to be taught in

parables. Paul L. Danove builds upon Malbon's pedagogical interpretation but specifically focuses

on Peter's spiral into being an entirely negative character. He argues that Mark's "audience"

would already have some understanding of Peter's importance within the early church: "The

authorial audience has extensive and predominantly positive pre-existing beliefs about Peter and

holds him in great esteem."[135] Therefore, to some degree, Danove suggests that the audience

would have established identification with Peter. Mark's negative conclusion, however, primarily

functions as discipleship lessons. He states,

> The real audience recognizes similar negative elements in its life of discipleship and the
> need for a reinvigoration of discipleship, the narrative audience's belief provides a guide
> to correct these failings and a recognition that, even in the context of failure that identifies
> Peter with Satan, Jesus reinvigorates the original call to discipleship, and, after multiple
> denials, Jesus goes before and offers an assurance of seeing him.[136]

 With the numerous characterizations of "outsiders," or quasi-outsiders, one has to wonder

who the "insiders" are. It appears the only real insiders are the expected or imagined readers or

early recipients of Mark. They are privy to information (for example, Jesus' baptism) that the

characters in the story do not possess. Presumably, they also have some preconception of what the

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[134] Aernie, 77.

[135] Paul L. Danove, "The Narrative Rhetoric of Mark's Characterization of Peter," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 152–173, 156.

[136] Danove, 173. While agreeing that Peter more serves as a symbolic representation, I disagree with the overall conclusion that his representation reflects the "failings" of Mark's "community." Danove's argument that Jesus reconciles Peter ignores the fact that the two characters do not meet again in the story. This seems to suggest a lack of reconciliation. I will discuss my alternative interpretation later within this section.

story entails before engaging it. The only people who "understand" and are present with the alienated Mark/Jesus throughout the entire story are the readers. As Malbon states, "there are no secrets for the audience of Mark's Gospel."[137] Therefore, Mark has granted readers the means of *potentially obtaining insider status*. The very beginning of the Gospel ensures that the readers are granted knowledge and are cognizant of Jesus' identity. Similarly, the end of the Gospel asks the readers "to complete the story."[138] Meir Sternberg's "reader-elevating" theory[139] supports this idea. Through this narrative technique, the readers (or audience) are placed in an elevated position and given semi-omnipotence, allowing them to extract various meanings and themes. Iverson, and to some degree Malbon,[140] employ Mark's much-discussed "messianic secret" as an example. Iverson argues that the messianic secret is not a *distinctive* theme. However, the notion of *secrecy* is a cohesive motif/strategy that ties together connected narratives: "The repetition of a motif is intentional and is a means by which the author communicates with the audience through the story."[141] By utilizing secrecy within the narrative, Mark elevates his readers by providing them

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[137] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "History, Theology, Story: Re-Contextualizing Mark's 'Messianic Secret' as Characterization," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 35–56, 50.

[138] Yarbro Collins, 138. However, Collins proclaims that the reader should interpret the end as the "fulfillment of the promise of appearances." This interpretation, I think, is problematic. Collins is inserting a proclamation of *how* the reader *should* interpret the text, therefore robbing the narrative of its supposed open ending.

[139] See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 163–172.

[140] Malbon's focus is more on the narrative "tensions" between the narrator and the character of Jesus to preserve the attention on God. See Malbon, *History, Theology, and Story*. Malbon argues that Jesus consistently deflects attention away from himself and projects it back to God. However, the emphasis on "tension" is exaggerated. Although Jesus does deflect attention, I am not convinced this is due to a specific tension between the narrator and character. I am more persuaded by Iverson's argument that Mark's use of secrecy is a conscious reader-elevation strategy.

[141] Iverson, 189. Throughout her article (see 189–196), Iverson provides a compelling argument that the messianic secret is a single motif by providing defining characteristics of thematics within a narrative, including repetition and principles of avoidability, the latter clearly

with knowledge not possessed by the characters in the narrative. This elevation can give potential readers sentiments of power, understanding, and importance. Iverson asks, "Do individuals generally like people who disclose information to them, as compared to others who do not?"[142] The answer, I think, is yes. This particular interaction between the narrator and the readers explicitly cultivates a positive relational exchange. In other words, Mark's technique constructs "a relational bridge between the performer and audience, which ultimately impacts the audience's perception of the narrative. By revealing the 'secrets' of the drama, the performer attempts to foster the mutual trust and admiration that are necessary for the reception of Mark's worldview."[143] However, even though the readers have a "semi-omnipotent" status, they are still guided throughout the narrative by a fully "omnipotent" narrator. The themes are projected from the narrator to the reader through "matters of tone (skeptical, buoyant, fatalistic, matter-of-fact), and 'eye' for a certain kind of detail, and so forth."[144] Therefore, a reader may not even be aware of the omniscient narrator's direction. Despite certain readers being perceived of as more passive agents, the focal point is that Mark is *providing the readers with the means* to become an insider.

Historically, the only information regarding the so-called disciples is from Paul (Gal. 2), where he tells us that they were associated with a Jesus movement in Jerusalem and were most likely recognizable from their names. Before composing his text, Mark and other members in the early Jesus movement would probably be aware of the (authoritative?) aura and discourses surrounding Peter, James, and John. Additionally, the status of Jerusalem as the perceived centre

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proven by Matthew and Luke's compositional changes. Neither identifies Mark's "secrecy" as unalterable. She states, "It seems that neither Matthew nor Luke considered the thematic instances, nor the particular Markan articulation of the theme, to be beyond modification" (195).

[142] Iverson, 203–204.

[143] Iverson, 208.

[144] Robert R. Beck, *Nonviolent Story: Narrative Conflict Resolution in the Gospel of Mark* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 33, 34.

of Israel would have provided an authoritative location for the early Jesus movement as well. The eminence of Jerusalem would have led to a presumed level of distinction within the Jesus assembly. Paul reflects this in his texts as well. Their authority, however, would have made more sense pre–70 CE while Jerusalem was still perceived as the centre. With Jerusalem and the temple recently having been destroyed and virtually deserted, a seemingly vital authority within the early church was either relocated, in disarray, or, at worst, lost. Gerard S. Sloyan writes a similar statement, "A major target of Mark is the Jerusalem community … This would account, in the story of the entry into Jerusalem, for his downplaying of Davidic kingship and the Temple, both presumably favoured by the Jerusalem Christians. It would even explain his unhappiness with Jesus' family and with Peter, representative in Mark's day of leadership in the Jerusalem church."[145]

Placing Mark's composition within this timeframe is beneficial and necessary. Mark's Gospel deals extensively with the theme of alienation and, therefore, the disciples will be examined according to this overarching theme. Jesus is somewhat close to his disciples, but with their inability to comprehend anything, he is also alienated from them. As Kelber states, "Nowhere in the canon does a text generate in readers as much alienation from the disciples as in this Gospel."[146] Reverting to Crossan's analysis, in which the disciples are reflections of theological and social polemics between the author's community and the early Jesus movement in Jerusalem, I tend to agree somewhat. Crossan, however, falls into the common problems of "Christian" community and theological assumptions. As previously argued, Mark associates the Pharisee and Scribe characters within his text as representations of a broken, lost, and perhaps

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[145] Gerard S. Sloyan, *Jesus on Trail* (Augsburg: Fortress, 2006), 31

[146] Werner H. Kelber, "Apostolic Tradition and the Form of the Gospel," in *Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 24–46, 24.

even antiquated Jerusalem along with its temple. It is possible then that Mark is employing a

similar analogy by utilizing recognizable or even famous figures associated with the Jesus

movement in Jerusalem in the new reality of post–70 CE Jerusalem. A similar, but slightly

different, but converging argument has also been made by J. Louis Martyn in relation to Paul's

letters. Martyn argues that when Paul speaks about Jerusalem, he is referring to the church, not the

city.[147] In Mark's Gospel then, Jesus is surrounded by people representing the "old," pre–70 CE

Jerusalem in the form of the Pharisees and Scribes and people representing the "new" post-

destruction Jerusalem in the form of the disciples.

Mark's ending confirms his alienation from Jerusalem's previous centrality; as Carmody

states, it "is not a feel-good story."[148] When Jesus' tomb is opened, a young man (there is no

suggestion of who this young man is) states that Jesus is not present. He instructs the women who

came to anoint Jesus' body to tell Peter. In an interesting twist, the women do not follow through

with his order. "Terrorized by the news and full of fear, they run away and tell no one … He has

risen, but in the end no one knows it, except the terrorized women, who do not follow the strange

young man's directions."[149] The women's silence is suggestive. In the narrative, Peter and the

remaining disciples do not "hear the news." They are ignorant of it. Kotrosits and Taussig label

this episode an "ironic affirmation":

> Throughout Mark's story …, Jesus has instructed his followers 'not to tell anyone.' And
> generally in Mark's story, the characters have disregarded the instruction not to tell
> anyone. Finally, some people (the women at the tomb) have obeyed Jesus' instructions not
> to tell anyone. But this is tumultuous. When Jesus asked people not to tell anyone, they
> disregard him. Now when it is crucial for people to know that Jesus is risen and in Galilee,
> no one (except the women and the readers) ends up knowing.[150]

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[147] J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 26.

[148] Carmody, 58.

[149] Kotrosits and Taussig, 14.

[150] Kotrosits and Taussig, 15.

Malbon rightly states that "characters exist in relation to other characters (and, of course, in relation to settings and the plot as well). A character cannot be understood alone but only in relationships … The disciples are only disciples in relation to Jesus, so the interaction of these characters becomes central."[151] Overall, Mark's characterization of the disciples reflects a deteriorating sense of social ties and identity. Jesus' alienation becomes intensified throughout the narrative, especially towards the city in which the disciples now reside. The disciples "preferred to stay in Jerusalem, closer to the center of power as they understood it."[152] Jerusalem signifies the location of Jesus' death (perhaps a symbolic representation of Mark's social death), the place from which his opponents came, and the setting where he was ultimately betrayed and rejected.

Kotrosits and Taussig summarize:

> Interestingly, Mark portrays both Jesus' deep longing for the disciples to be family for him and the nonfulfillment of this desire. Not only does Jesus say he wants them to be his family, he keeps giving them opportunities to create this strong connection. He sends them out twice as groups to be his representatives. He takes extra time with them when they need additional teaching. He gathers them at his last supper, when he is most threatened. But none of this results in the disciples becoming family for Jesus. Peter, the lead disciple, does nothing right in this gospel, is directly called Satan by Jesus, and ends up denying him at a crucial juncture.[153]

The Temple Incongruity

It is not unusual to see scholars arguing that Mark was entirely hostile towards Jerusalem and the temple.[154] Indeed, in the previous section, I argued that Mark's rhetoric reflected a

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[151] Malbon, *Characters in Mark*, 61–62.

[152] Yarbro Collins, 137.

[153] Kotrosits and Taussig, 108.

[154] For example, see Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus and the Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010). Perrin, however, argues that the Historical Jesus and his disciples were hostile towards the temple. The problems related to Historical Jesus studies is not the topic of this proposal. But simply, there is no definitive method to extrapolate a definitive characterization of

reallocation of sacred space, while still partially lamenting this new reality. The Dead Sea Scrolls also appear to provide evidence that there were various sectarian groups of Jews who, in some way, opposed the temple. James H. Charlesworth, however, provides an alternative argument. He suggests that the pre–70 CE Jesus movement was either indifferent towards the temple or even supported the temple and perhaps sacrificed there.[155] With this in mind, I tend to concur with Kotrosits and Taussig: "The story of Mark itself does not invalidate the temple as such. It rather offers an after-the-fact explanation for a traumatic event."[156] Mark is attempting to think through the temple's destruction, a massive social-ethnic incongruity for many Palestinians. It forces the author and reader to engage with their distressing new reality. In other words, "The ancient reader of Mark is now directed to understand the catastrophic events surrounding the tearing down of the temple by the Roman army and the passions stirred up in the wake of that event … Mark now teaches his readers … what the events surrounding the Roman-Jewish war mean."[157] The gospel re-evaluates the temple's post–70 CE activities before its destruction. Mark concludes, post factum, that it must have been corrupted. Using prophetic tradition, Mark indicates that the temple was "teeming with vendors and bankers who are capitalizing on the temple's prominence as a site of pilgrimage and tourism. Part of a long tradition of Israelite critiques of the corruption of this sacred place, Jesus dramatically overturns the bankers' tables, quoting the prophets Isaiah and

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the Historical Jesus. This also ignores Mark's historical circumstances. See also John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: HarperOne, 1991), 355.

[155] See James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), especially 183–212.

[156] Kotrosits and Taussig, 130.

[157] Charles A. Bobertz, *The Gospel of Mark: A Liturgical Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 149.

Jeremiah."[158] Therefore, Mark "indicates that Jesus' action in the temple constitutes judgement on it and through it on Israel."[159] However, Mark is not overjoyed or celebrating:

> … the story of Mark itself does not invalidate the temple as such. It rather offers an after-the-fact explanation for the traumatic event, one that also tries to make sense of a larger disillusionment around the class divisions and extreme economic inequity of its society … Mark, through the story of Jesus, looks back at the temple before it was in shambles. It was corrupt, Mark decides, and what has happened is a result of the immorality of economic depravities and the self-righteousness of the wealthy and powerful.[160]

Throughout the text, Mark is mourning the loss of Jerusalem and the temple while attempting to overcome this incongruity by exposing the previous corruption through divine denunciation and mandate. Jesus' relationships with the disciples in Mark reflects this attitude because he is continuously alienated from them. Briefly, to quote Kotrosits and Taussig again,

> Interestingly, Mark portrays both Jesus' deep longing for the disciples to be family for him and the nonfulfillment of this desire. Not only does Jesus say he wants them to be his family, he keeps giving them opportunities to create this strong connection … [Peter is misguided] … James and John do not understand Jesus' mandate for this group of intimates to serve one another because they are so caught up in who will rank higher in the end.[161]

This summary pointedly sketches Jesus' complicated relationship with the disciples. The point here is that Jesus is actively seeking a relationship or some form of closeness, but he continually finds himself alienated and alone. This alienation and separation (emotional and physical) that Jesus' encounters with his new community and family is reflective of Mark's alienation and separation from his capital city and the *axis mundi* of his political-economic-social-ethnic institutions. Jesus is alienated from his family whereas Mark is estranged from his metaphorical family. While Jesus' alienation from Peter is especially emphasized, Mark 10:35–45 also suggest

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[158] Kotrosits and Taussig, 129.
[159] Best, 216.
[160] Kotrosits and Taussig, 130.
[161] Kotrosits and Taussig, 108.

that the other "pillars" of Jerusalem's early church, James and John, are no longer allocated special status and authority. This explanation also accounts for Mark's original enigmatic ending in which the women do not tell Peter that Jesus arose. The text does not tell us where Peter is located at this point. Readers of the Gospel have assumed that Peter travelled back to Galilee due to interpolations and tradition. But according to the text, Peter's location is unknown and assumed to be somewhere in Jerusalem still, an assumption made more plausible by Paul equating him with Jerusalem. By silencing the women, Peter (Jerusalem) is unwillingly left behind as the arisen Jesus is already on his way to Galilee. No one is aware of Jesus' presence in Galilee except for the silent, scared women and the readers, thus stripping Jerusalem of insider status and transferring this status to the readers as the new insiders. This transfer simultaneously allocates and validates a location for Mark's institutional revival while referencing Jerusalem's absence and stripping its jurisdiction in the new post–70 CE world. Overall, this description also accounts for the apparent shifting of insider and outsider categories. Previously, Jerusalem was considered to have insider status, but in the post–70 CE reality, its insider status quickly vanished.

Despite inevitable sectarian hostilities, Jerusalem and its temple were essential institutional facets for Jewish social-ethnic identification. The symbolic importance of Jerusalem and its temple should not be underemphasized. They both represented a structural and social-ethnic image of their culture. Additionally, they signified political and monetary self-autonomy through the regulation of their treasury and their semi self-leadership. The Roman destruction of the temple and the sacking of Jerusalem was devastating and a catastrophic loss for the local populace's sense of identity. Kotrosits and Taussig elaborate, "And the losses incurred by the destruction of these two significant structures are not only in the loss of life or the physical site, but in the identity of the people they purported to represent, casting a pall of uncertainty about not

only one's own physical safety, but 'who we are' as well."[162] The loss of both forced Jewish

populations into disconcerting and confusing sensibilities. Kotrosits and Taussig expand,

> [Jerusalem and the temple's destruction led to the] decimation of Israel's leadership. The burning and looting of the temple (a treasury as well as a sacred space) by the Romans was a symbolic and economic catastrophe for Israel. It resulted in shock and intense mourning. For years, even decades after, this brutal Roman reconquering of Israel prompted agonized reformulations of what it meant to be Jewish. The Jerusalem temple was a crucial part of Jewish self-understanding.[163]

Overall, with the destruction of the temple and the city, the need to re-evaluate institutional

identity was vital.

A prevalent scholarly discussion around Mark's attitude towards Jerusalem and its temple

occurs in chapter 13. The resulting discussions usually involve lifting the episode from the rest of

the text and then labelling it "Mark's mini-apocalypse,"[164] an apocalyptic prophecy that will occur

sometime in the future. As Sloyan argues, "Every indication is that in these five passages Mark

viewed it as future, even at the time of his writing. Chapter 13 contains Mark's one

apocalypse."[165] However, apocalyptic literature is a scholarly category and usually involves three

general features—it claims to be a revelation of new or hidden knowledge (typically emanating

from a deity), often uses a prophetic vision formula to see the desired future, and employs

mysterious and symbolic language.

Adela Yarbro Collins questions the assumption of Mark 13's designation as an apocalypse.

She states, "The definition of the genre 'apocalypse' is, of course, disputed. If we take as an

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[162] Kotrosits and Taussig, 152.

[163] Kotrosits and Taussig, 27.

[164] See Chapter 1 of this text for a brief criticism on designating chapter 13, in its entirety, "Mark's mini-apocalypse."

[165] Sloyan, 41. Sloyan interprets the "falling stars" and the people seeing "the Son of Man coming in the clouds" as literal. In other words, Mark was attempting to *literally* describe a divine future reckoning (41).

essential element of the genre, the presence of a heavenly being who mediates between the human recipient of revelation and God, then Mark 13:3–37 is not an apocalypse."[166] One vital point here is that the concept of "apocalyptic" literature is debatable and fluid. In general, perceived apocalypses tend to stipulate a future event, one that will occur relatively quickly, usually within one's lifetime; for example, chapter 13 is regarded as Mark's eschatological reckoning. Although possible, others have interpreted chapter 13 as representing historical and personal events. Yarbro Collins argues that Mark 13:7–8 (ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσητε πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων … ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπ' ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, ἔσονται σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους, ἔσονται λιμοί ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων ταῦτα) references the Jewish Rebellion. She states that the wars, rumours of war, earthquakes, famine, and the birth pangs "either express the insight that the war will be long and hard rather than resolved immediately by divine intervention or indicate that the war has been in progress already for some time."[167] On the other hand, Charles A. Bobertz argues that chapter 13's references allude to Christian persecution: "They will suffer as Jesus here in the narrative will suffer."[168] However, the problem with Bobertz's interpretation is that the "Christians" (besides this being a problematic title for Mark's milieu) were not the only, or even largest, group to suffer persecution and hardship—all the Judean population did. In general, regarding the two outlined interpretations, I am inclined more towards Yarbro Collins' explanation.

The main point here is that people think consciously about describing their specific circumstances. They utilize various methods, such as myth or apocalyptic literature, to help explain their frustrations, emotions, and thoughts. Jonathan Z. Smith states, "myth is a 'strategy for dealing with a situation.'... It is a limited collection of elements with a fixed range of cultural

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[166] Yarbro Collins, 77.
[167] Yarbro Collins, 82.
[168] Bobertz, 150–151.

meanings which are applied, thought with, worked with, experimented with in particular situations."[169] For Smith, the category of apocalypticism is correlated with lost native kingship.[170] For the rattled and bewildered population, this loss results in muddled socio-ethnic institutional categories and identities. Smith's premise can be applied to Mark 13 because Mark is reflecting upon the Jewish Rebellion and its resulting destruction and showcasing his incongruity. Therefore, Mark 13 can be read as a reflection of Mark's past through elaborate symbolic allegories. Using the Book of Daniel as inspiration, Mark relays the devastating process and result of the Rebellion. It is a chapter of lamentation, with only a small glimmer of speculative future hope. Mark is not merely implying a divine prophecy of retribution, but instead, communicates communal upheaval by way of exile and socio-ethnic turmoil.

Throughout the text, Mark displays very little apocalyptic rhetoric, or perhaps even none at all. The "mini-apocalypse" resulted from scholars removing and elevating chapter 13 from its surrounding context. Mark is not entirely "anti-temple." He is not attempting to completely nullify the institution but trying to describe and explain the horrific circumstances surrounding its destruction. As Kotrosits and Taussig argue, "the story of Mark itself does not invalidate the temple as such. It rather offers an after-the-fact explanation for the traumatic event, one that also tries to make sense of a [large] disillusionment … Mark, through the story of Jesus, looks back at the temple before it was in shambles." [171] He concludes that the institutions must have been

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[169] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 308.

[170] See Jonathan Z. Smith, "A Pearl of Great Price and a Cargo of Yams: A Study in Situational Incongruity," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 90–101. Smith explicitly claims that "apocalypticism seems … to be the cessation of native kingship" (94).

[171] Kotrosits and Taussig, 130.

corrupt or corrupted. The ramifications were socio-ethnic and institutional communal alienated exile. Overall, understanding Mark as a book of lamentation and later of reconciliation, chapter 13 can be perceived as congruent with the rest of the text without isolating it in another category.

The Passion Incongruity

Mark's Passion episode has also stirred debate and been variously interpreted.[172] The Passion narrative in Mark continues and articulates alienation as a key theme. It is a story full of sorrow and suffering as Jesus is not in control of his situation.[173] The disciples have betrayed or abandoned Jesus, and the only people present at his crucifixion are located at a physical distance. Jesus is silent and "speaks only once on the cross in Mark, and that is a cry of desperation and forsakenness … a howl of defeat and aloneness"[174] Despite Mark's narrative constructing Jesus as powerful and possessing authority, he ultimately succumbs to a tragic end. Overall, Kotrosits and Taussig summarize Mark's Passion narrative as a text filled with "desperation, hope, violence, partial knowledge, half-drawn figures, surprising help, and disappointment are fiercely entangled in this story's ending."[175] Jesus is a forlorn figure—he is defeated, deserted, and alone.

Jesus' trial, ultimately leading to his crucifixion, is full of noteworthy details. Sloyan makes the argument that Jesus' trial is a post factum dramatization to elicit sentiments of

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[172] For example, Yarbro Collins is more concerned about where the narrative stems from. In other words, whether Mark's crucifixion scene originated from "original" or "secondary" sources (111–114). Sloyan argues that Mark was attacking a "rival" Christology. He states, Mark's "polemic [was] against a false Christology, as he conceives it, consists in subordinating the story of Jesus the wonder-worker to the Passion" (32).

[173] Kotrosits and Taussig, 12.

[174] Kotrosits and Taussig, 11.

[175] Kotrosits and Taussig, 19.

sympathy for an innocent, suffering victim.[176] Sloyan then describes the Passion episode as a

type of propaganda literature against the "religious" and civil authorities because both conspired

against Jesus. He states, "This conjunction of concerns in the mid-first century would then have

yielded the 'conspiracy theory' offered by the Gospels—namely, that of Jewish-Roman

collaboration against Jesus—about his death … [Additionally, it also shows] some kind of

previous collaboration between the religious authorities and Pilate."[177] While an intriguing

possibility, Sloyan's conclusion is not entirely convincing. First, the classification of a strictly

"religious" authority is problematic. Also, instead of merely equating "religious" and civil

authorities as conspiring against Jesus, Mark appears to continue his theme of criticizing an inept

leadership[178] that is continually being persuaded by brash and audacious mobs. Following

Brandon's line of thought, Mark deliberately depicts Pilate as feeble-minded.[179] Mark 15:6–15,

the Barabbas narrative, provides an example of Pilate's weak leadership abilities and its personal

and political ramifications. Being an incompetent leader, Pilate is persuaded to release an

insurrectionist, or one bound to insurrectionists (ὁ λεγόμενος Βαραββᾶς μετὰ τῶν στασιαστῶν

δεδεμένος), over the innocent Jesus. As Sloyan rightly notes, "It is highly unlikely that Pilate

would have released a man guilty of crimes like murder and sedition."[180] Sloyan, however,

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[176] See Sloyan, 14. While agreeing with Sloyan regarding the Passion episode being a post factum dramatization, I would quibble with his conclusion. Indeed, the scene does provoke sentiments of sympathy, but I think Mark is attempting to prompt sentiments for the suffering community as a whole and not simply one individual.

[177] Sloyan, 35, 53.

[178] It should also be noted that Mark does not name "the high priest" or "chief priests" (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς).

[179] See Samuel G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 261.

[180] Sloyan, 51. Sloyan, however, is more concerned about the historicity of the Barabbas story. See 53, where he dives into detail about historical possibilities. Also see 101, where he states, "Because of the Barabbas story's persistence in the tradition, it may have some historical foundation."

concludes, "Conceivably, the Barabbas tale was developed as a paradigm of the actual guilt of sedition in contrast to Jesus' innocence of the charge."[181] Since Mark identifies the "στάσει," or insurrection, as self-evident, his readers would have understood the irony of releasing an insurrectionist—namely, the ineptitude of Pilate. Additionally, instead of focusing on "individual" innocence, a more congruent reading of Mark would be a commentary revolving around communal innocence. Jesus, then, represents the innocent members of the populace who did not partake in the rebellion but were nonetheless being harshly punished.

Crucifixion was a common punishment in the Roman penal system. Mass crucifixions (especially after failed rebellions) were not unusual.[182] Dawsey speculates that "the Greeks might have borrowed the practice of mass crucifixions from the Persians."[183] Quintus Curtius Rufus reports that Alexander the Great crucified two thousand survivors from the siege on Tyre.[184] Kotrosits and Taussig also suggest that the Jewish Rebellion ended with "massive loss of life— including hundreds of crucifixions daily."[185] The goal of crucifixion was palpable and easy for spectators to comprehend. It humiliated the captive, degraded them, and rendered them akin to subhuman.[186] Dawsey elaborates, "When a freedman, foreigner, or citizen was crucified, it signified that person's transition into the category of slave."[187]

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[181] Sloyan, 101.
[182] After the Third Servile War and Spartacus' death, the remaining rebel army (rumoured to number around six thousand) were all crucified along the Appian Way—the road from Rome to Capua.
[183] Dawsey, 82–83.
[184] See Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander* (trans. John Yardley; New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 4.4.17.
[185] Kotrosits and Taussig, 26.
[186] See Dawsey, 87–88.
[187] Dawsey, 92.

Mark's crucifixion scene is significant in terms of showcasing his alienation, disillusionment, and abandonment. Dawsey elaborates, "Mark presents a desolate scene of the crucifixion, without a single follower near Jesus … [Jesus] was misunderstood and deserted by all. Although the temple and government authorities were the most visible actors, all people were involved (and responsible) in his death … No one proved completely faithful. Jesus died alone, misunderstood, abandoned."[188] Malbon concurs: "The crowd is co-opted; the disciples have fled. His followers have failed him; Jesus is alone."[189] In other words, Jesus was utterly separated from his cohorts. Worse, he was relinquished by them. Once again, the disciples are explicit depictions of Mark's alienation and abandonment, symbolized through his narrative Jesus. None of the disciples are present—they have all deserted Jesus in his most dire and vulnerable moment.

Perhaps a more interesting detail of Mark's crucifixion is who was present and supported Jesus on the cross. Besides Roman centurions, Mark notes that the only people present during Jesus' vulnerable, horrid, and isolated moment were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, and many other women (15:40–41). The beginning of verse 40 clearly states that women were the onlookers (Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι). Since the (male) disciples were all absent, women were the only people present to support Jesus. Kotrosits and Taussig suggest that the women's presence places emphasis on loyalty, especially in contrast to the disciples. They state, "They also belong to those with unusual loyalty to Jesus. They are at the crucifixion, the only ones left still attached to Jesus in his most difficult hour. They are much more loyal than the disciples."[190] Why Mark would purposely include only women as the

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[188] Dawsey, 79.
[189] Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*, 95.
[190] Kotrosits and Taussig, 103.

supporting characters is a matter of debate.[191] Kotrosits and Taussig argue that Mark is, once

again, stressing the colossal failure of the disciples. They state, "For the ancient world, women

are not the most reliable witnesses, yet here they are the only ones the story has."[192] By utilizing

women as the main supporting characters, Mark is accentuating that *even* women did not

abandon Jesus; therefore, the disciples were exceptional failures, charged with being worse

devotees than women. However, they are still in the background, located far from Jesus: "The

women who have given Jesus support can no longer supply it. They do not abandon Jesus as

disastrously as the disciples, but at the critical moment they can only stand at a distance."[193]

Others, however, argue that Mark is subverting the "traditional" notion of women being

questionable witnesses; instead, women are the paradigm for discipleship.[194] Joanna Dewey

writes, "The women disciples, unlike the men, do not flee at Jesus' arrest but remain faithful in

the face of possible persecution, watch at the cross, and watch to see where his corpse is buried.

Mark presents the women remaining faithful after the men have deserted Jesus."[195] Dewey's

conclusions appear to contradict each other:

> First, the audience hears the example of the male disciples who failed to grasp the power
> of God and to stand firm at the threat of persecution. The audience has then heard the
> example of the female disciples, who have served and were able to stand firm in the face
> of suffering and persecution, but who, in their turn, fail to trust God's power. All have
> failed in Mark's narrative; it is now up to Mark's hearers to follow Jesus. Third, the
> ending suggests that failure is not the end of discipleship. The fact that the angel instructs
> the women to tell the Twelve suggests that Mark does not view the men's desertion as
> excluding them from God's realm. Neither is the failure of the women at the tomb the end
> for them. Jesus is still going ahead of them to Galilee; they are expected to recover and

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[191] Also see the Disciples Incongruity section above.

[192] Kotrosits and Taussig, 14.

[193] Kotrosits and Taussig, 101.

[194] For example, see Aernie (as noted above).

[195] Joanna Dewey, "Women in the Gospel of Mark," in *Word & World* 26.1 (Winter, 2006): 22–29, 28.

keep following. The very fact that Mark's story is being told suggests that Mark views failure as part of continuing discipleship.[196]

Dewey's third point is the confusing one. The assumption that somehow everything "works out" in the end, despite Mark's text stating the opposite, suggests more of an apologetic addendum. The incongruity of Mark's unhappy ending is too morbid and depressing for commentators, ancient and contemporary. Matthew, Luke, and Mark's concluding interpolator all recognize the problematic conclusion; therefore, a constructed reconciliation is needed to make sense of Jesus' followers' abandonment. Even though many women were present at Jesus' crucifixion and burial, they still failed to deliver the message of the man in the tomb. Mark is clear on this point—they were scared, they fled, and they said *nothing to anyone* (καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν). If Mark wanted a "happier" ending where, eventually, all Jesus' followers did hear from the fleeing women, then why not say so? Why would this vital detail be left out? Indeed, it seems like this postscript would be an essential point. The absence of such a memorandum is more suggestive. Dewey's first and second points are more convincing. Sentiments of alienation are prevalent. Jesus is alone during his crucifixion and death. Additionally, he still appears to be alienated from his entourage post-burial. Mark is, therefore, once again evoking his sentiments of communal dislocation, alienation, and confusion.

Despite the disciples being absent and the "women" being located at a distance, Mark's Jesus does not particularly dwell, or even consider, these absences. The narrator, not the character of Jesus, notes the absences. Consequently, they appear to be an already foregone conclusion, an occasion that has already taken place. The only question Jesus mutters upon his crucifixion is directed at God. In 15:34, Jesus cries out "in a great voice 'my God, my God, why

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[196] Dewey, 29.

have you abandoned me'" (ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ Ἐλωΐ ἐλωΐ λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι; ὅ ἐστιν

μεθερμηνευόμενον Ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με). The significance of this

disparaging call cannot be understated. Yarbro Collins suggests that "it is God's will that Jesus

suffer."[197] While seemingly valid, Mark's Jesus also questions why he must suffer. The fact that

God had "forsaken" Jesus is critical. Not only has Jesus' terrestrial congregation left him, but his

own God has also abandoned him. Mark here questions Israel's God. Why has he abandoned his

people, dislocated them, and created tribulations? Sentiments of dislocation and alienation are

noticeably on display. Kotrosits and Taussig link Jesus' cry with 4 Ezra's communal

lamentations:

> [Mark 15:34] resonate deeply with the lament in 4 Ezra … It is not a coincidence that at
> this very moment the centurion names Jesus as 'son of God,' given that 'sons of God' is a
> term used in the Hebrew Bible to describe, among other things, Israel as a people. Mark
> presents Jesus as a figure to identify with in times of utter crisis and someone whose own
> pained experience perhaps acts as a miniaturized 'portrait' of the massive suffering in the
> cataclysmic years of the Jewish-Roman war.[198]

Conclusion

Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig propose an interesting dilemma: "Mark's sometimes

terrible and unpredictable plot and characters do not fit today's triumphant Christian picture."[199]

The entire gospel portrays Jesus as an alienated entity who is always alone and misunderstood.

Communal comradery has disintegrated and fragmented with no suitable collective replacement.

Throughout the text, "Jesus' family is regarded almost entirely negatively. Israel is not enough,

and the Roman conquerors have nothing positive to offer. The disciples never understand,

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[197] Yarbro Collins, 64.
[198] Kotrosits and Taussig, 30–31.
[199] Kotrosits and Taussig, 17–18.

sometimes deny or betray, and disappear in disarray at the end of Mark."[200] Jesus' overwhelming alienation is similar to the personal afflictions the author would have experienced in the aftermath of the Jewish Rebellion—exile, alienation, and social ethnocultural institutional disorientation. Mark's usage of *phobos* is especially indicative. Commenting upon the importance of this particular word choice, Kotrosits and Taussig state, "[the term] is used dozens of times in the gospel, more than any other book in the Bible. For the majority of the story, nearly everyone misunderstands or is out to get Jesus."[201] Mark indicates that Jesus suffers as he and his people have suffered, and he continually utilizes Isaiah's suffering servant theme (i.e., 52; 13–53:12, 53:6) as a comparison. Through the character of Jesus, Mark inserts a symbolic representation of Isaiah's depiction of communal suffering. Kotrosits and Taussig expound, "Mark's ending is not only heavy with suspense, but … echoes with a traumatic collective loss while making only indirect mention of it … Jesus … is a figure through whom one can process traumatic collective losses, as well as a figure who dramatizes *one's own* sense of precariousness and possibility."[202]

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that Mark displays sentiments of lamentation. In particular, he laments a loss of social ethnocultural institutional identifications resulting in dislocation, alienation, and befuddlement. Mark employs various thematic elements to showcase his incongruities. This chapter began with an examination of Mark's agitation with the Roman systematic, authoritative civic structures. Then the section analyzed Mark partaking in inter-Jewish dialogues—namely, the various polemics regarding the construction of a new identity. Pharisees, Scribes, and temple leadership were utilized to indicate problematic alternatives. The

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[200] Kotrosits and Taussig, 71.
[201] Kotrosits and Taussig, 150.
[202] Kotrosits and Taussig, 149 (original emphasis).

next section focused on Mark's vivid portrayal of the disciples. I argued that Mark employs the disciples as symbolic representations of social alienation and dislocation, specifically, his estrangement from the previous focal location of his socio-cultural institution (Jerusalem). The following section depicted various portrayals of the temple's destruction and the possible ramifications. I argued that Mark exhibits varied sentiments regarding the temple's ultimate destruction with a focus on his lamentations. Finally, the last section of this chapter examined Mark's Passion narrative. My argument indicated that Mark displayed his lamentation sentiments through the Passion narrative and the character of Jesus. Mark illustrates his vulnerability, demonstrating his sorrow and *Angst*. Overall, this chapter addressed a major thematic component—Mark's socio-cultural identification incongruities. By thinking through and addressing his lamenting sentiments, Mark is provided with a method of confronting his trepidations directly.

Through a creative endeavour, the author illustrates his sentimental lamentations using narrative. His method showcases his inventiveness. Sloyan explains, "For long it was thought that [Mark's] sole gift was to string them together like pearls on a string; then his ingenuity as redactor (editor, collator) was acknowledged, and he was credited as creator of a new literary form—'gospel.' Only recently has the scholarly world discovered that his short if wordy Gospel in its articulated parts has the complexity [and creativity] of a Swiss watch."[203]

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[203] Sloyan, 29.

Chapter 4

Rectification of Exile through Reconstructing Socio-Cultural Institutions

Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig's overall argument states:

Mark describes what it means and feel like to be in pain, but importantly, even while it tries to understand the significances and effects of pain and loss, it does so without resolving, redeeming, or justifying much … Mark importantly does not evoke this common ancient understanding of universal citizenship to try to solve or override the problems of fracture. Mark finds hope neither in national institutions or structures themselves.[1]

Chapter 3 showcased Mark's disillusionment with his new post-war realities, consisting of the losses of socio-ethnic identification, the symbolic (physical and discursive) representations of such identities, and communal association. However, Kotrosits and Taussig generally omit a critical element of Mark's Gospel, namely reconciliation. While indeed displaying personal alienation and social disenchantment, Mark also engages in the restitution of these social incongruities. In other words, Mark's Gospel is *not* merely a document of lamentations; it also attempts to reconcile his current social-political struggles. Kotrosits and Taussig, seemingly contradicting their previous assertions, state, "Reparative practices *are themselves* … hope …"[2] The very beginning of Mark's text (1:1) displays his intention of providing "good news" to the reader: "The beginning of the good news" (Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου).[3] By immersing himself in a

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[1] Maia Kotrosits and Hal Taussig, *Re-Reading the Gospel of Mark Amidst Loss and Trauma* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 42, 72.

[2] Kotrosits and Taussig, 153 (original emphasis).

[3] I am interpreting "τοῦ εὐαγγελίου" here as "good news." All translations are my own.

reconcilable discourse, Mark proposes various solutions for his tenacious communal struggles.

Kotrosits and Taussig state:

> Mark' story is littered with destruction. Yet it is not just an account of destruction and trauma. It is also an account of traumatic survival in that it tries to make sense of loss and offers ways of living with loss. It creates space for mourning and contemplating loss, as well as for assembling something new … Mark is thus not only a book dealing with the aftermath of destruction, but one that creates a container and begins the process of provisional reconstruction. [4]

Jonathan Z. Smith's theory of situational incongruity once again applies to Mark. The social incongruity of displacement, his alienation, and loss of socio-ethnic identification all provided an intellectual opportunity, or a pressing need, to reformulate his personal and communal identity. Mark's text is his "relentless human activity of thinking through a[n incongruent] situation."[5] He was not only creating a story for entertainment purposes. As Smith states, "the incongruity of myth is not an error, it is the very source of its power. Or … a myth is a 'strategy for dealing with a situation.'"[6] Therefore, myth is "a limited collection of elements with a fixed range of cultural meanings which are applied, thought with, worked with, experimented with in particular situations."[7] This chapter will emphasize Mark's creative (re)construction processes of social identification. Throughout his narrative, Mark replaces the lost "there" sacred space with a "universal/anywhere" one. Additionally, he adopts an idyllic cosmopolitan template for his redefinition(s) of socio-ethnic identification indicators. To emphasize these markers, Mark reconstructs symbols as rallying points, or totems, for his rectified social identity. Overall, this

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[4] Kotrosits and Taussig, 27.

[5] Jonathan Z. Smith, "When the Chips are Down." In *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1–60, 32.

[6] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Map is Not Territory." In *Map Is Not Territory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 299.

[7] Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 308.

chapter will argue that Mark constructs methods of rectification to overcome his situational incongruities by creating new social identification institutions.

Through his intellectual activity, Mark offers specific discourses that rectify his chaotic world. In other words, the natural and social world is messy, but Jesus can calm the storm. William F. McInerny argues that Mark 4:35–41 should be seen in relation to 1:1.[8] Although I concur with McInerny's overall assessment, his argument relates to the issue of Jesus' identity, which is convincing with regard to Mark's context. However, 1:1 and 4:35–41 also depict Jesus as representing hope and calm among the chaos. Mark 4:35–41 is essential to highlight. While Jesus and the disciples' boat was in peril, the disciples display sentiments of fear and loss: "Master, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Διδάσκαλε, οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα). Jesus' response is one of assurance: "And he said to them, 'why are you scared? How do you not have belief'" (καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὔπω ἔχετε πίστιν). The overall message can be interpreted as Jesus dispelling the chaotic social circumstances. Mark's chaotic sea illustration would resonate with readers experiencing social upheaval. However, Jesus calms the tumultuous storm upon the chaotic sea and provides a composed transition "into the other side" (εἰς τὸ πέραν). Elizabeth Struthers Malbon argues that Mark's sea voyages "elaborate and dramatize both teaching and healing."[9] Through this narrative, Mark sketches "the healing nature of that power in the lives Jesus touches."[10]

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[8] See William F. McInerny, "An Unresolved Question in the Gospel Called Mark: 'Who is This Whom Even Wind and Sea Obey' (4:41)," in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* (January 1, 1996): 255–268.

[9] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103.3 (September 1984): 363–377, 364.

[10] Malbon, *Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee,* 365.

Merrill P. Miller states, "The reproduction of memories and cultural practice is not without invention."[11] Miller's declaration directly links to the Gospel of Mark. Mark was a mythmaker. William Arnal elaborates, "Far from being a source of 'indisputable facts' about the historical Jesus, Mark's framework stories, including the baptism, are instead excellent examples of Mark's mythmaking in its purest and its most sophisticated form."[12] Through a deliberate intellectual process, he creates solutions for communal and socio-ethnic dilemmas. Moreover, Mark creates an *authoritative* reconciliation narrative. Through narrative, an author can deliver authoritative discourses. Gerard S. Sloyan states, "The Gospels were above all a homiletic, that is to say, a persuasive literature."[13] Bruce Lincoln additionally argues that mythmaking can be utilized for "an authoritative mode of narrative discourse that may be instrumental in the ongoing construction of social borders and hierarchies, which is to say, in the construction of society itself."[14] A credible narrative possesses "authority is one for which successful claims are made not only to the status of truth, but what is more, to the status of paradigmatic truth."[15]

Mark, however, is not unique in creating authoritative narratives. Various exilic authors also employ methods for listeners, or readers, to consider and ultimately trust their rhetoric. For

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[11] Merrill P. Miller, "The Social Logic of the Gospel of Mark: Cultural Persistence and Social Escape in a Postwar Time," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 207–399, 228. In Miller's article, he utilizes the concept of "cultural persistence" as a method of showcasing "the range and ingenuity of tactics employed by Jews of the second temple period, in sharp contrast to the notion of inertia to characterize Jewish responses to cultural challenges and threats" (228).

[12] William A. Arnal, "Mark, War, and Creative Imagination," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 401–482, 424.

[13] Gerard S. Sloyan, *Jesus on Trail* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 14.

[14] Bruce Lincoln, "The Two Paths," In *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 123.

[15] Bruce Lincoln. *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 24.

example, Niccolo Machiavelli declares two effective means of acquiring, manipulating, and

perpetuating control of a population, namely, coercion and cunning or trickery:

> Be it known, then, that there are two ways of contending, one in accordance with the laws, the other by force; the first of which is proper to men, the second to beasts. But since the first method is often ineffectual, it becomes necessary to resort to the second. A Prince should, therefore, understand how to use well both the man and the beast … it is necessary for a Prince to know how to use both natures, and that the one without the other has no stability … But since a Prince should know how to use the beast's nature wisely, he ought of beasts to choose both the lion and the fox; for the lion cannot guard himself from the toils, nor the fox from wolves. He must therefore be a fox to discern toils, and a lion to drive off wolves.[16]

I am not suggesting that nefarious purposes were driving Mark (quite the opposite!), but he does

construct cunning and crafty techniques to detail his discourse. Using myth-making, Mark can

camouflage his dispositions through the narrative figure of Jesus—it is not Mark who is

classifying activities and advocating specific communal changes, but the authoritative character of

Jesus. By concealing his proclivities within the discourse of an authoritative figure, early adopters

would view themselves as submitting to Jesus' words, not Mark's. This method provides more

weight, or jurisdiction, to Mark's text. Regarding Machiavelli's lion, Mark also utilizes some

chilling rhetoric (ch. 13). He invokes fear by reminding readers of what they have lost and the

possible ramifications. The sentiment of terror produces imaginary margins in which people are in

constant fear and anticipation for the future catastrophe, which is, essentially, a manipulation

technique.[17] By applying the "lion" method, these motifs would have conjured highly charged

sentiments with an authoritative attachment.

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[16] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (trans. N.H. Thomson; East Bridgewater: Signature Press, 2008), 109–110.

[17] Robert J.C. Young, "Terror Effects," in *Terror and the Postcolonial* (eds. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 309.

The Destroyed Temple Reconciliation

Questions revolving around Jerusalem's temple (and temples in antiquity in general) are largely related to spatial concerns. James H. Charlesworth declares, "For many early Jews, the Jerusalem Temple was the *axis mundi*; that is, the Temple was the center of the world, and the specific spot where heaven meets earth was Zion."[18] In other words, for many first-century Jews, the temple was a singular entity—a physical structure in which their deity resided. As such, early Jewish populations would have found it difficult to "divorce themselves from the symbolic power of the Temple and Zion, because these concepts were formative symbols deeply embedded in documents sacred to them."[19] As Karen J. Wenell rightly states, "In order for land to be sacred, it must be interpreted and communicated as such."[20] Exodus 40:34–38 describes God entering, and filling, a specific tent. 1 Kings 8:10–13 also describes Solomon constructing "an exalted house, a place for [God] to dwell in forever" (8:13).[21] Finally, Psalms 132:13–14 definitively links God's abode with Jerusalem: "For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: 'This is my resting place forever; here I will reside, for I have desired it.'" This passage is significant because God himself declares where he will reside. Each instance presents a spatial argument, one in which "God's presence is uniquely connected with Jerusalem and more specifically with the temple."[22] However, during the first exile, after the first temple's destruction, numerous

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[18] James H. Charlesworth, "Jesus and Temple," in *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 145–181, 148.

[19] Charlesworth, 212.

[20] Karen J. Wenell, *Jesus and Land: Sacred and Social Space in Second Temple Judaism* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 3.

[21] However, it should be noted that 1 Kings 8:27 also proclaims that a single location cannot contain the entirety of God's persona and eminence.

[22] Jonathon Lookadoo, *The High Priest and the Temple* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 206.

commentators did not confine God within the temple's walls. Ezekiel 10:1–22 and 11:22–25 describe God's departure from the temple. Eventually, Ezekiel once again discovers God's presence in Babylon. Nevertheless, the prophet desires to see God return to his original and restored dwelling. Zechariah 2:1–7 and Jeremiah 28 also display the desire for and eventual return of God to Jerusalem. Jonathon Lookadoo provides an overview: "Not everyone understood God to be associated with the Second Temple in this way. However, the importance God's presence dwelling in the temple was shared either as a memory, a current reality, or a hope."[23] Similarly, Francis D. Alvarez states, "The temple, in Jewish belief, is the center of the universe. Its destruction is a sign of cosmic [social and political] upheaval."[24] Although temple sentiments were not universal and static, its symbolic importance was respected. While various individuals or communities contested various aspects of the temple (i.e., corruptness), they still recognized "its symbolic power as a sacred place."[25] Therefore, it is not a controversial statement that the destruction of Jerusalem's second temple caused a serious identification crisis for many in the post–70 CE Jewish population.[26]

To overcome this situational incongruity, Mark creates a rectification for the lost temple. In other words, he reinterprets the notion of "sacred space" and constructs a reimagining of temple sacrality. Throughout the text, in hindsight, he reflects upon and showcases how the temple has become corrupted (11:15–17; 12:1–12; 12:38–44). Despite the lost temple causing an identity crisis, Mark suggests that temple activities and hierarchies had become too concerned with "earthly" matters or "human tradition" ("κρατεῖτε τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ...," 7:8–9;

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[23] Lookadoo, 206–207.

[24] Francis D. Alvarez, "The Temple Controversy in Mark," in *Landas* 28.1 (2014): 115–152, 149.

[25] See Wenell, 30–31.

[26] See Chapter 3 for a more in-depth analysis.

12:38–40), resulting in its divinely ordained destruction (13:1–2). As Wenell states, "When Jesus speaks of the temple's future destruction, this should be seen as related to the tearing down of authority structures that go with the present temple."[27] Richard Horsley states that Jesus and his disciples were "engaged in a renewal of Israel against, and under attack by, the Jerusalem and Roman rulers … [Jesus] marched up into Jerusalem with his entourage, he had condemned the Temple itself in a forcible demonstration reminiscent of Jeremiah's famous pronouncement that God would destroy the Temple because of the rulers' oppressive practices."[28] In a similar argument, E.P. Sanders finds Jesus' Temple pronouncements to be prophetic condemnations against the Temple leadership.[29] Finally, H.N. Roskam summarizes this argument nicely: "Jesus' cleansing of the temple … indicates his rejection of the Jerusalem temple cult and those responsible for it, the Jewish religious leaders, i.e., the chief priests and scribes."[30] While agreeing with Horsley and Sanders's basic point (pronouncements of condemnation), their concerns are primarily focused around the "authentic sayings" of the Historical Jesus. Horsley regards Mark's text as "peasant," or "village," reactions against the Temple's hierarchical structure. Burton Mack, however, inspects Mark's Temple condemnation in a post–70 CE timeframe. He describes Mark 11:12–14 as a symbolic metaphor directed towards the temple, "Not of cleansing, but of

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[27] Wenell, 51.

[28] Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 44. I also think Horsley places too much emphasis on a political, economic, ethnic, and cultural dichotomy between the "Little Tradition" of villagers and the "Great Tradition" of Jerusalem and its Temple (especially see 128, 152–153, 182, 198–202). In Chapter 1, I also disagree with Horsley that Mark represented a "village" voice. Instead, I argued that Mark reflects more urban cosmopolitan ideals.

[29] See E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993).

[30] H.N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in its Historical and Social Context* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 163.

condemnation and destruction."[31] H.N. Roskam concurs: "Mark … created a new literary form to address this crisis, [the Temple's destruction]."[32] Mack and Roskam avoid Horsley's pitfall of projecting Mark's text of actual circa 30 CE sentiments. Echoing Mack, Arnal describes the cursing of the fig tree "as a sort of commentary on the 'temple tantrum' episode that it encloses (11:15–19), presumably in order to evoke the typically Markan motif of Israel's failures and to serve as an *ex eventu* foreshadowing of the destruction of the temple."[33] Arnal continues, "Mark has sayings traditions about Jesus the teacher, which he transforms into narrative embodiments of the behaviour of Jesus the son of god … *Which in Mark is apparently a point about the destruction of Jerusalem being a function of god's judgment*."[34] Robert H. Stein ultimately reaches a similar conclusion,[35] although he is more interested in a "Historical Jesus" examination. Roskam also employs the fig tree episode as an example of Mark's temple condemnation: "Jesus' cleansing of the temple … indicates his rejection of the Jerusalem temple cult and those responsible for it, the Jewish religious leaders, i.e., the chief priests and scribes … He regards the Jerusalem temple cult, therefore, as fruitless."[36] Additionally, Donald Juel interprets this episode as being direct condemnation against the temple's leadership. He states, "The cleansing of the

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[31] Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998), 243.

[32] Roskam, 7. Roskam, however, arrives at the conclusion that Mark employs the temple's destruction as God's reaction to Jesus' death (see 164 & 204). She states, "According to Mark the destruction of the temple was announced by God at the moment Jesus died, as God's revenge for the murder of Jesus … Mark depicts the Roman victory over the Jews as God's vengeance for their murdering Jesus. Apparently, Mark regards the Roman victory over the Jews and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple as an act of vengeance by God" (93). Roskam's conclusion, however, is confusing. She is ignoring Jesus' "prophecy" against the temple in Chapter 13, well before Jesus' trial, conviction, and death.

[33] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 406.

[34] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 409, 409 f.n.29 (emphasis added).

[35] See Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, The Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), especially see 52–54.

[36] Roskam, 163.

temple must in some sense imply the rejection of the official representatives of Israel, the leaders of the temple establishment … the cleansing, interpreted by the cursing of the fig tree, points to the rejection of a particular group within Israel. Those in charge of the temple have borne no fruit."[37] Employing Jeremiah 7 as a sort of template, Mark reflectively (post factum) outlines why the Temple was and had to be, destroyed. The Temple was no longer a house of prayer, but a den of robbers: "And teaching, he said to them, 'Is it not written that my house will be called the house of prayer to all the nations? Yet you have made it a cave of robbers'" (Οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον λῃστῶν, Mark 11:17). Overall, the Temple system was seen to be socially and "financially corrupt and so required destruction. In other words, the Jerusalem temple cult was fruitless.[38] Thus we get an attack on the economic sector, those buying and selling."[39] The point of signifying Mark's post factum condemnation of the temple is to reinforce the point of the author's creative imagination and initiative. As Burton Mack argues, Mark's temple episodes are creative endeavours:

> The anti-temple theme is clearly Markan and the reasons for it can be explained. The lack of any evidence for an anti-temple attitude in the Jesus and Christ traditions prior to Mark fits with the incredible lack of incidence in the story itself. Nothing happens. Even the chief priests overhear his "instruction" and do nothing. The conclusion must be that the temple act is a Markan fabrication.[40]

One method Mark could utilize to rectify the temple's destruction is by illustrating Jesus as an authorized "replacement" for the temple. Indeed, this view is held by some scholars to some

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[37] Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), 131.

[38] Also see Roskam, 163.

[39] James G. Crossley, "Mark's Christology and the Scholarly Creation of a Non-Jewish Christ of Faith," in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey* (ed. James G. Crossley; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 118–151, 129.

[40] Mack, 291–292. Additionally, see Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 424. Arnal argues that the definitive "sources" for Mark's narrative are his imagination, agenda, and reinterpretations of previous traditions motivated by the temple's destruction.

degree.[41] Through mythic narratives, Mark constructs Jesus as a national mediator. His lost "here" and "there" identity and institutions are universalized and merged into a new "anywhere"[42] social institution through the narrative figure of Jesus. It is important to note that employing Jesus as a travelling "central" character would not be unique to Mark. The city of Rome was not always the fixed "centre" of the Roman world/Empire. Emperors were considered to be the symbolic or even the direct, centres of the empire. As Eric Stewart argues, "when the emperor was away from Rome, however, he, not the city, was the geographical locale of power … The center of the empire moved with the ruler … Rather than going to Rome, people would come to him from every part of the empire wherever he might be."[43] For Stewart, Jesus is portrayed similarly. In Mark, people travel from numerous surrounding areas to hear him speak, heal, teach, or to become a part of his congregation; therefore, Mark is indicating that the temple and the synagogues are no longer the fixed "sacred" centres of socio-ethnic identification. Jesus has now become the itinerant "anywhere" centre or the new socio-ethnic institution. Stewart sums this point up nicely:

> Jesus is a traveller and a centripetal force in the Gospel of Mark. People are drawn to him from every quarter of Mark's [geographical] world. As a "travelling" center, the space of

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[41] For example, see Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); Harold W. Attridge, "The Temple and Jesus the High Priest in the New Testament," in *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 213–237. Especially see 222–223, where Attridge argues that Jesus is presented as "a new Torah … [which] moves beyond general evocation of the dwelling of God among God's people to a symbolic equation of the body of Jesus with the Temple." It should be noted, however, that Attridge is primarily relying on the Gospel of John for his argument. Also see Charlesworth, 186. Here Charlesworth declares that "Christian theologians, for most of two millennia, have understandably argued that Jesus eventually becomes the cornerstone of the 'New Temple.' [Since] Jesus is the *axis mundi*, then the Temple is redundant." Charlesworth, however, does not provide any examples for his assertion.

[42] For clarification, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "Here, There, and Anywhere," in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 323–339. Also see my discussion of "Place" in Chapter 2.

[43] Eric Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2009), 172–173.

Jesus' company represents fluid sacred space. It is no longer the temple, which is in any event about to be destroyed or the synagogues … in which Jesus' followers will "gather." Rather they "gather" around Jesus.[44]

Following this line of thought, if Jesus is considered to be the "anywhere" centre, does physical location(s) have any bearing? Willi Marxsen, Christopher Zeichmann, and Stewart provide an affirmative answer. Marxsen boldly claims that the temple is not relevant and is no longer a concern for Mark; instead, Galilee is Mark's focal point. Marxsen states, "Galilee establishes the identity of the now Risen Lord with the earthly Jesus, just as the awaited Parousia, likewise in Galilee, secures his identity with the one who is to return."[45] Zeichmann's essay "Mark's Jesus as Post-War Subject in Pre-War Galilee," argues that Mark's Gospel is an effort to authorize Galilee as a focal point for refugees fleeing from the Judean War and reconfiguring their cultic practices with the loss of the Jerusalem temple. Employing the examples of tax practices, the Temple's replacement, and Capernaum as the preeminent focal point for post–Judean War Jewish activity, Zeichmann states, "Mark is less interested in navigating so-called 'Christian' or 'theological' matters relegated to the realm of belief, than it is querying what practices would constitute a post-War, post-temple, Galilean Judaism and retroactively authorizing them by locating them in the life of Jesus."[46] Concentrating on his latter two points, Zeichmann argues that Mark resituates the "temple's cultic functions onto Jesus' person, Mark's implicit links between synagogues and the temple, and various other elements indicate a recurrent interest in *replacing* the temple."[47] The impetus for this restitution is a deep underlying concern for the destruction of

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[44] Stewart, 211.
[45] Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist* (trans. James Boyce et al.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 215.
[46] Christopher Zeichmann, "Mark's Jesus as Post-War Subject in Pre-War Galilee," *Conference Paper*, 3.
[47] Zeichmann, 9–10 (original emphasis).

the temple and renegotiating temple practices and discourses. An example of this restitution can be seen in Mark 14:57–58. These verses imply that the temple "made with hands," is the lost "there" institution after its destruction; however, a suitable replacement is Jesus' universal "anywhere" institution "not made with hands." The renegotiation of temple practices and discourses is also prevalent throughout the text.[48] Zeichmann's third point, Capernaum being the preeminent focal point for post–Judean War Jewish activity, is also significant. Indeed the underlying motivation for Mark resituating the temple's cultic activities onto Jesus is the temple's destruction, but the fact that Mark is an exile is equally important. Mark not only lost his "there" institution, but he also lost his "here" identity. To overcome this gap, he places a large emphasis on Jesus' activities in Galilee, thereby identifying Galilee, and especially Capernaum, as a new gathering point for displaced peoples. In other words, Mark is attempting to turn his location of exile into a new "home."[49] This explanation is important to note because through the continuing exile, Mark creates a new national "anywhere" institution away from the previous locus of the temple, Jerusalem, and synagogues. Thus, he transitions the "sacred" focal point, he seeks to "… encompass a 'transformation.' The outsider was transformed into the powerful insider; the peripheral became central, displacing the previous center to the periphery."[50] Mark's transition of the sacred space is convincing as he does appear to engage in spatial redefinition. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon states, "Galilee—not Jerusalem—is the sphere of culminating action … and

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[48] See Stewart, 195–200. Stewart outlines the renegotiation of Jesus' idea of purity contrasted against temple purity laws.

[49] William A. Arnal, "The Gospel of Mark as Reflection on Exile and Identity," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (eds. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2008), 57–67, 66.

[50] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Conjectures on Conjunctures and Other Matters: Three Essays," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford and Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 17–98, 38.

Galilee—not Jerusalem—bears the positive connotations within the pair of spatial terms. In these two ways, the traditional (Jewish) valuation of Galilee and Jerusalem is reversed in the Markan narrative."[51] Arnal parallels Malbon, "*Mark is engaged in redefining Jewish space. More than this, the distinctive or surprising feature of this redefinition is the inversion of the expected valences of Judea versus Galilee as instances of Jewish territory*."[52]

At first glance, the argument of Jesus directly replacing the Temple is fairly convincing and holds certain sway. However, it does have problems. First, nowhere in the text does Mark claim that Jesus proclaimed himself to be the "new Temple." Crossley bluntly states, "There is no indication that the Markan Jesus intended his death as replacement of the Temple."[53] Second, such an assertion is not consistent with previous Jewish scriptures where king or messiah figures are described more in terms of rebuilders (2 Sam 7:13; Zech 6:12). Both passages refer to a future king who will build the temple. As Juel states, "There were Jews who believed that the Messiah would build the temple."[54] Although certain texts mention that a "messiah" figure will rebuild a temple (2 Sam 7:13; Zech 6:12), *they do not proclaim that the character will themselves become the temple*. Mark follows a rebuilding pattern, albeit in a slightly altered manner. He does not proclaim that Jesus himself will build another physical temple. Indeed, the misunderstanding during Jesus' trial confronts this issue. Mark 14:56–59 brings forth accusations against Jesus, and Mark 14:58 states that "many" people heard him proclaim the destruction of the temple and that he would rebuild it in three days (ὅτι Ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι Ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλ ον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω).

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[51] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 153.

[52] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 476.

[53] Crossley, 129.

[54] Juel, 199.

Interestingly, Mark notes that these accusations were conflicted and based upon "false testimony." However, he does not clarify what exactly the false statements were or what exact allegations diverged. The reader is left to wonder what was misrepresented. Were the "many" or "some" simply lying, motivated by their agendas? Since the Temple was already destroyed at the time of Mark's composition, perhaps the reader would understand that Jesus himself did not destroy it. They would also recognize that the temple was not rebuilt, especially after three days. Therefore, Jesus did not rebuild a physical temple. What Mark does accomplish is a portrayal of Jesus as a (re)builder, or mediator, of another "anywhere" socio-ethnic institution by shaping and constructing "anywhere" self-identifications, usually referred to as the "Kingdom of God."

This criticism, however, does not take away from Malbon and Arnal's overall argument of Mark engaging in the redefinition of sacred space. John Riches also claims that Mark is reconfiguring the "notions of sacred space."[55] Indeed, understandings of sacred space are altered and modified through time because socio-cultural interpretations are not static entities. However, Mark abandons the notions of a sacred physical space, "which locates God's presence in particular cultic sites, and chooses instead to see the presence of God as Disembedded, not limited but irrupting wherever the Gospel is preached and heard."[56] Continuing, Riches points out that the Temple is torn, removing the cultic boundaries. This imagery enables "the new sense of identity … closely tied to this new sense of sacred space."[57] One crucial aspect of Riches' argument is that the idea of sacred space is more aligned with identity, removed from physical confines. Therefore, I think Smith's spatial category of "anywhere" is more relevant to Mark than physical locations.

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[55] John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 117.

[56] Riches, 149.

[57] Riches, 142–143.

In his book *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*, Smith examines the Book of Ezekiel,

arguing it is essentially a "mapping" of social configurations explicitly dealing with the

dichotomy of the sacred/profane and pure/impure.[58] By inserting power structures, Ezekiel

"establishes structures of relationships that were capable of being both replicated and rectified

within the temple complex … [However], the hierarchical relations of status *do not* require

centralization in the temple. The system can be decentered."[59] This second point is worth

emphasizing. With hierarchical firmly entrenched power structures, the social systems can be

replicated away from a central (temple?) location. Smith elaborates on the social configuration:

"As we have seen, these maps allow a prescission from place. They could be thought about in

abstract topographies; they could be transported to another place; they could be extended to other

sorts of social space; they could become sheerly intellectual systems,"[60] especially regarding and

relevant for dislocated, exilic, and diasporic populations.

Instead of Jesus himself directly replacing the Temple, others have argued that Mark

establishes his, or the overall "Christian," community as the new Temple. Timothy Grey suggests

that the previous temple is withering away, and a new place, composed of prayer and forgiveness

will succeed it. This new "place" is the Christian community, as Grey states, "The supplanting of

the temple by the community, begun in [Mark 11:12–25]."[61] In other words, the community itself

is, or replaces, the destroyed Temple. Juel proclaims that "Mark seems to view the Christian

community as a replacement for the temple."[62] Charlesworth argues that "Mark seems to propose

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[58] See Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 47–73.

[59] Smith, *To Take Place,* 73 (my emphasis).

[60] Smith, *To Take Place,* 109.

[61] Timothy C. Grey, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 2008), 53–55.

[62] Juel, 167.

that the true purpose of the Temple as the house of prayer calls for fulfillment not in a building, but in a community … Mark may allude to the fulfillment of true Temple worship by the replacement of the Temple with Jesus' disciples."[63] Ernest Best relays a similar argument: "In 14:58 this anti-temple polemic is balanced by a promise about the new community expressed in terms of a new temple … Within v. 17 we note the contrast between 'my house' and 'den of robbers' and the reference to 'my house' as 'a house of prayer for all nations.'"[64] Scholars who hold this view rely on and cite 1 Cor 3:16, 1 Cor 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16, various Qumran texts,[65] Hebrews, and even the epistles of Ignatius.[66] For example, Georg Klinzing examines different temple imagery in the Qumran texts and concludes that early Christians adopted the community as temple imagery from Qumran literature.[67] In regard to Pauline literature, Lookadoo argues that although the Corinthians are referred to in the plural, jointly they encompass God's particular temple. God resides in the Corinthian community, establishing "them as God's people and temple."[68] Paul's interest lies primarily in communal unity. One method for developing unity is through symbolic metaphor. Lookadoo continues, "The connection between a unique God and the importance of single representative elements remains and binds the people together in unity …

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[63] Charlesworth, 184–185.

[64] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 4, 1981): 216, 218.

[65] For example, see Juel, 159–168, where he states, "The [Qumran] Scrolls provide evidence of pre-Christian use of community-as-temple" (159). Also see George J. Brooke, "Eschatological Wisdom and the Kingship of God: Light from some of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Teaching of Jesus?" in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey* (ed. James G. Crossley; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 45–61, especially 53.

[66] For example, see Lookadoo, especially 100–262.

[67] See Georg Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1971).

[68] Lookadoo, 207.

one of these objects is the temple."[69] Paul, therefore, "employs the temple metaphor to portray

unity in the congregation."[70] In a similar assertion, Charlesworth states, "Paul takes cultic

language out of the cult and moves sacred space from Temple to the individual."[71] Finally, W.D.

Davies proclaims, according to Paul, "The whole community constitutes the shrine or temple of

God … [Paul] is anxious to emphasize that God no longer dwells *with* his people in a tent or

temple, but actually dwells *in* them."[72]

Although considering early "Christian" communities to be the new Temple is intriguing, in

Mark's actual text, evidence of such a correlation is lacking. First, as others have convincingly

argued, Mark's adherence to a specific community is problematic.[73] Arnal points out that Mark's

emphasis "is on Jesus as a transformative epic character, a focus that directly and necessarily

dictated his own generic innovations. *Mark does not appear to be deeply rooted in any*

identifiable 'Christian community' formation at all."[74] Additional, Robyn Faith Walsh astutely

argues,

> The notion that the practices, interpretive innovations, teachings, and literature of what
> comes to be known as Christianity emanated from an identifiable, powerful genesis is
> central to the idea of the early Christian big bang. Implicit to this theory is the premise that
> Christianity as a social phenomenon materialized in a manner otherwise unprecedented for
> a new religious movement. Certainly, in order for there to have been thousands converted
> or "turned" in a single day, as claimed by acts 21:20, the projected rate of growth of the
> movement would have to have been nothing short of miraculous. In terms of the texts that
> document this big bang, it is a standard claim among scholars of early Christianity that a
> "community" is the proper social context for imagining their composition. Usually, the
> writer is described as belonging to a discrete community of Christians that possesses its

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[69] Lookadoo, 247.

[70] Lookadoo, 247.

[71] Charlesworth, 192. Charlesworth's main argument here is that despite Paul's rhetoric
of a communal temple, the temple itself and "the sacred cult" were still important for Paul.

[72] W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial
Doctrine* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1974), 186–187 (original emphasis).

[73] Especially see Stanley K. Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of
Early Christianity," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 238–256.

[74] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 463 (emphasis added).

own particular theological outlook. As such, the author, the proverbial voice of this group, has developed his thinking within a very specific environment and, therefore, writes his gospel (or other Jesus material) reflecting—either indirectly or, as is more regularly thought, directly—the interests and holdings of that community. The result is an approach that accepts communities as a fundamental and axiomatic element of the compositional fabric of early Christian literature. Moreover, these writings are understood to reflect not only the collective perspectives of these communities, but also to document strands of Jesus tradition that have been faithfully passed on by generation after generation of early Christians."[75]

Instead of focusing on Mark's "Big Bang" community, emphasis should be directed towards Mark's endeavours to solve his situational incongruities. As Arnal rightly indicates, "Mark provides so little information about his audience that we cannot even be sure that he has *any* discrete group in mind."[76] The second problem is, unlike Paul and the author of Hebrews, Mark makes no mention, explicit or implicit, of Jesus' followers or community becoming the new Temple. As argued in Chapter 3, the notion of community is instead something Mark is longing for as he continually portrays Jesus as isolated, alienated, and misunderstood.

Whether intentional or not, Mark's "Kingdom of God" rhetoric appears to rely on an institutional belonging—more akin to an "anywhere" Temple.[77] The title itself, "The Kingdom of God" (τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ), speaks volumes. God resides within his kingdom, similar to his previous residence with the temple. As George J. Brooke states, "The temple is described as the 'Temple of the Kingdom' not least because as in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* that is where God's kingship, his sovereignty, most clearly resides."[78] "Kingdom" denotes a sizeable socio-

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[75] Robyn Faith Walsh, "Q and the 'Big Bang' Theory of Christian Origins," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford, Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 483–533, 489–490.

[76] Arnal, *Mark, War, and Creative Imagination*, 473.

[77] For clarification, it should be noted that I am not suggesting that the Kingdom of God directly *replaces* the temple. Rather, I suggest it is more a *reimagining* of the lost temple.

[78] George J. Brooke, "Eschatological Wisdom and the Kingship of God: Light from Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Teaching of Jesus?" in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel*

ethnic institution, though Mark transforms its spatial arrangement and the entrance criteria from a nationalist perspective to "righteousness."[79] Mark makes this point clear in 12:28–34, where entrance into the Kingdom of God relies on the "greatest commandments"—to love God and your neighbour. This practice and mentality is more vital than "burnt offerings and sacrifices." Therefore, God's residence does not have a physical barrier, guarded by priestly authorities, "but was available simply through right [thought and] worship."[80] Christopher R. Matthews provides a critical point to Mark's compositional timeframe: "It would be remarkable if the political history of the Levant and its surroundings did not assure an ever-present unconscious fatigue with respect to this 'long history of hegemonies.' In such a context a mythic appeal to a kingdom of god would be a most 'attractive' counterpoint to the incongruity presented by reality."[81] Again, Mark's incongruous reality is the loss of the "there" temple. If the temple's destruction was one of Mark's primary situational incongruities, which I suggest it is, he puts forth his reconciliation right at the beginning of his text, namely, in the form of "the kingdom of God." Mark 1:14 states, "Jesus [went] into Galilee proclaiming the message of the kingdom of God" (ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον [τῆς βασιλείας] τοῦ θεοῦ). Additionally, Mark 10:13–16 and 10:23–27

Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey (ed. James G. Crossley; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 45–61, 54.

[79] Although it should be noted that various scholars primarily view the Kingdom of God as a political mechanism. For example, see Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); William Herzog II, *Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000); and David R. Kaylor, *Jesus the Prophet: His Vision of the Kingdom on Earth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). Overall, these scholars argue that Jesus, or in this case Mark, "preached and taught a message that was thoroughly political" (Kaylor, 3).

[80] Brooke, 54.

[81] Christopher R. Matthews, "Markan Grapplings," in *Redescribing the Gospel of Mark* (eds. Barry S. Crawford, Merrill P. Miller; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 169–180, 177–178.

both employ rhetoric akin to entering an "anywhere" institution; i.e., "entering into her" (εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν). Bruce Chilton argues that for certain Jews in antiquity, God's "kingdom is transcendent in space."[82] Employing various Psalms as intellectual background for such views, Chilton states,

> Ps 145 anticipates a universal acknowledgement of the kingdom because, in its conception, the divine rule even now extends to every place and creature … [The] final image of the Psalm (145.21), that all flesh should bless the holy name of the LORD, is an ideal that is realized for the moment only within the place of his holiness. But the coordinate of transcendence makes the locality of the Temple a model for what the entire creation is to be. What is local, in Zion, is the pattern for what is to be universal, throughout creation … Mark has Jesus specify the extent of God's establishment of the kingdom (Mk 11.17).[83]

There have been many arguments revolving around the notion that Jesus' Kingdom of God rhetoric was eschatological.[84] Christian eschatology has usually been interpreted as an "end of the world" scenario. However, within Mark's timeframe, this reading can be seen as anachronistic, a later Christian interpretation incorporated into the text. At first glance, Mark 13:29–37 appears to resemble later Christian eschatology. Indeed, one can see how easy this representation can be made. A (mis)reading of Alvarez seems to confirm this argument. He states, "Eschatology refers

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[82] Bruce Chilton, "The Aramaic Lord's Prayer," in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey* (ed. James G. Crossley; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 62–82, 75.

[83] Chilton, 76, 78.

[84] For example, see George R. Beasley-Murray*, Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986): Timothy Grey, 94–155. Overall, Grey argues, "The temple theme in Mark is deeply eschatological" (196). Also see John A. McEvoy, "Realized Eschatology and the Kingdom Parables," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9.3 (July, 1947): 329–357. McEvoy is responding to Charles H. Dodd's argument, that the Kingdom of God is already present in the material world. See Charles H. Dodd, "The Thesis of Realized Eschatology," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* V (1943): 396–440. Concluding, McEvoy states, "A kingdom of God which would be inaugurated only after [Jesus'] death and at the end of the world which He expected soon to come. Christ's ministry would be, then but a preparation for this purely eschatological kingdom of God" (356).

to a time in the future when the course of history will be changed—no one knows exactly when or precisely how—to such an extent that there is an entirely new state of reality about which the only thing certain is that it is new … The whole of Mark therefore can be seen as a process of inauguration, the establishment of a new period."[85] Alvarez provides a good counter-argument, "Jewish eschatology is not about the end of the world … Jewish eschatology is centred on the faithfulness of God to his covenant with Israel … and seemingly restored upon the return of God's people to Jerusalem … Jewish eschatology looks to the future."[86] Alvarez's argument is more in line with Mark's concerns and compositional timeframe. As a result, Mark 13:29–37, does not need to rely on the notion of a future apocalyptic eschatology.

Throughout his text, Mark speaks about the Kingdom of God primarily through parables and abstract aphorisms. Mark 4:1–32 is a primary example. First, Mark declares that people who are "sown" on "good soil" bear fruit and have been given the secret of the Kingdom of God. He contrasts the people who know the Kingdom of God with others who have no roots. They desire wealth and earth desires and could potentially lead to a "socio-cultural system which undermines Israel's quest for Torah obedience,"[87] a condemnation (against the previous temple authorities) that he repeats throughout the text. Nicholas Perrin argues that the people "sown on shallow soil refers to those who after a promising start eventually cave to external political pressures."[88] Immediately after, Mark likens the Kingdom of God to a sprouting seed that should be harvested, or attended. Then the parable of the mustard seed also equates the Kingdom of God to a seed that grows to become the most magnificent shrub where birds can take refuge and build their home.

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[85] Alvarez, 128–129. Alvarez, however, is not advocating a Christian eschatology.
[86] Alvarez, 125–126.
[87] Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Priest* (London: SPCK, 2018), 107.
[88] Perrin, *Priest*, 105. Perrin states that the "external political pressures" primarily consist of persecution.

The seed metaphor, especially in regard to the mustard seed, resembles the rhetoric of an "anywhere" temple, an allegorical institution where people can build their new homes and take sanctuary. The symbolic seed "can be seen as initiating a redemptive-historical … setting the stage for the [anywhere] temple."[89] Robert Bach argues that Jeremiah's use of "plants" and "building" metaphors is derived from salvation rhetoric, resulting in a restoration prophecy, especially in terms of the community.[90] Shozo Fujita, through his intertestamental examination, makes a similar argument, stating that "the metaphor of God's people as his plants are further detected in Jewish literature of the intertestamental period."[91] Examining the Psalms of Solomon 14:3–5, Fujita concludes that "renegade Jews, do not flourish by being cut off from the source of living water, the Law, and will wither and be plucked up. By contrast, the righteous plants are privileged to share a portion in God's paradise forever … The Law like water nourishes them as thriving plants. The metaphor of plant thus carries various ideological assertion."[92] Mark 12 (the parable of the tenants) also utilizes agricultural allegory. However, the ending of this parable is vital—namely, Mark's change of symbolism. As Alvarez notes, "But Jesus suddenly switches metaphors at the end of the parable. He shifts from agricultural to temple imagery."[93] Overall, the "plant" metaphor resembles a community. Mark appears to continue this metaphor—a perceived community is cultivated by "water" (becoming or remaining "righteous") and is, therefore, able to enter into the Kingdom of God. By employing temple language and imagery, Mark is able to

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[89] Perrin, *Priest*, 108.

[90] See Robert Bach, "Bauen und Pflanzen," in *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Uberlieferungen* (eds. Rolf Rendtorff and Klaus Koch; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins 1961), 7–32.

[91] Shozo Fujita, "The Metaphor of Plant in Jewish Literature of the Intertestamental Period," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 7.1 (1976): 30–45, 30.

[92] Fujita, 30, 33. Although Fujita eventually arrives at seeing the community-as-temple.

[93] Alvarez, 146.

reimagine place and construct a new locative reality, namely, an institutional "anywhere"

kingdom.

Jesus: Authority Reimagined

With the Temple's destruction, the authoritative socio-ethnic institutional hierarchies were

also eradicated. This incongruity brings forth another concern for Mark, one that requires

rectification—the loss of institutional representatives or representation and the need for

restoration. As Edwin K. Broadhead states, "The priestly image of Jesus seems most relevant to a

post-70 community which has witnessed the traumatic destruction of the temple at Jerusalem."[94]

Indeed, other early Christian texts and epistles deliberated on this incongruity and ultimately

constructed a rectification by slotting Jesus into the role of a high priest figure. The book of

Hebrews is the most obvious example. But Oscar Cullmann suggests, "The High Priest concept is

not only present in Hebrews, but lies also behind the Christological statements of other New

Testament passages."[95] Broadhead submits that previous Markan scholars have discounted Jesus'

priestly functions.[96] However, the concept of Jesus as a high priest figure is not universal and has

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[94] Edwin K. Broadhead, "Christology as Polemic and Apologetic: The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," in *JSNT* 47 (1992): 21–34, 32. However, it should be noted that Broadhead's conclusions are problematic, namely, the notion that Jesus is in direct conflict with Judaism. For example, Broadhead states that Jesus' new form of worship relied on compassion and "deeds of mercy over rituals" (32). Broadhead's view obviously sees Second Temple Judaism as a static entity and ignores the various cultural customs and thought.

[95] Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A.M. Hall; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 107.

[96] See Broadhead. Broadhead, however, argues that the priestly characterization of Jesus is based upon a Christological theme. He concludes, "This priestly Christology proved decisive for the life of the believing community. In the midst of historical and social trauma, images of Jesus as the priestly servant of God provided both answer and explanation—both polemic and apologetic" (34).

its detractors. Crossley states, "There is not one unambiguous mention of Jesus as priest in Mark."[97] In a similar argument, John W. Baigent claims,

> Ideas are expressed in various parts of the NT which do indeed bear a distinct affinity to the high priest concept of Hebrews. Some statements could imply that the author had the beginnings of such a concept, or are consonant with the possibility that he held such a concept. Some statements could even have sparked off, or been the spring-board for, the development of the high priest concept of Hebrews. But no reference which we have examined compels us to attribute to the writer a priestly concept of Jesus.[98]

However, in his statement, Baigent does acknowledge the possibilities that Hebrew could have utilized other texts for its conceptual high priest construction.

The book of Hebrews explicitly situates and consistently denotes Jesus in the role of the high priest (τὰ ἀρχιερεὺς). For example, Hebrews 3:1 clearly labels Jesus as such: "Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus" (κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν). Ross E. Winkle declares, "The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only New Testament document that explicitly calls Jesus Christ a high priest (ἀρχιερεύς), and it does so repeatedly in an attempt to explicate his priesthood and priestly ministry."[99] Attridge continues this line of thought and argues that the concept of Jesus as a high priest, to a community, is the most prominent and vital motif in Hebrews. For his argument, he outlines several points:

> The central image of the text is of Christ as a High Priest, the unique high priest, systematically distinguished from high priests of flesh and blood. It was their responsibility to mediate between God and humankind (5:1–4) … If the death of Jesus was a sacrifice, it must have required a priest to perform it and one who functioned in this

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[97] Crossley, 143.

[98] John W. Baigent "Jesus as Priest: An Examination of the Claim that the Concept of Jesus as Priest may be Found in The New Testament Outside the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Vox Evangelica* 12 (1981): 34–44, 39.

[99] Ross E. Winkle, "'You are What you Wear': The Dress and Identity of Jesus as High Priest in John's Apocalypse," in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity* (eds. Henrietta L. Wiley and Christian A. Eberhart; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 327–346, 327.

capacity was none other than Jesus himself … it is analogous to the sacrifice performed once a year on the Day of Atonement, not by ordinary priests, but by the High Priest.[100]

Patrick Grey adds to Attridge's argument, indicating that "Coinciding with the image of Jesus as priest in this verse is the image of Jesus as brother of the faithful."[101] Brotherhood and empathy, argues Grey, are requirements for the high priest. His argument relies on various constructions of "brotherhood," especially from a Greek discursive perspective. He states,

> Hebrews weaves together a wide range of concepts related to the role of brother in the Hellenistic world—inheritance, affection, trustworthiness, sympathy, moral uprightness, accountability, guardianship—to develop the image of Jesus as high priest … His fitness as a priest uniquely able to deal with the sin underlying their fear of death in 2:14–18 informs a vision of Christian hope that derives from and issues in recognizable cultural formations intersecting at several points with the concerns and assumptions of the Hellenistic milieu in which it was written.[102]

At first glance, Clement appears to adopt Hebrews' image of Jesus as a high priest directly.[103] However, Gerd Theissen argues, "The Epistle to the Hebrews and 1 Clement are literarily independent of each other and that their commonalities are traceable to their drawing upon a common tradition."[104] Whether Clement relies on Hebrews or not is not a significant concern for this examination. What is important is the fact that both utilize and portray a similar image of Jesus as a high priest. In other words, the critical point is that even though the texts slightly vary on the functions and depictions of Jesus as a high priest, the overall concept is shared. A common theme in both portrays Jesus as an authoritative mediator figure. William L. Brownsberger describes Jesus' mediation as a connector of distant realms. He states, "In a general

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[100] Attridge, 228.

[101] Patrick Grey, "Brotherly Love and the High Priest Christology of Hebrews," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112.2 (January 1, 2003): 335–352, 335.

[102] Patrick Grey, 350–351.

[103] See Judith L. Wentling, "An Examination of the Role of Jesus As High Priest at the End of the First Century," in *Proceedings* 5 (1985): 136–144, for an in-depth analysis.

[104] Gerd Theissen, *Untersuchungen zum Hebräerbrief* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1969), 33–37.

sense, of course, mediation implies the affinity of one agent with two realities."[105] As Judith L. Wentling says, "In Clement's view, Jesus, as High Priest, had become intercessor for all of God's people for all time … Jesus was seen by both the Epistle to the Hebrews and 1 Clement as a covenant mediator. His function as High Priest is to mediate the covenant relationship between God and his people."[106] Besides Hebrews and Clement, Lookadoo provides an extensive examination of Ignatius' discourse of the "paired metaphors: the high priest and the temple … [And] the temple and the metaphor of the high priest should be read together."[107] In terms of this topic, he argues that "When Ignatius refers to the high priest, he refers to Jesus himself,"[108] even though Ignatius only explicitly makes this claim once (*Philadelphians* 9.1). Finally, John Paul Heil argues that the Gospel of John also portrays Jesus as a high priest figure. He states that "Johannine Jesus does function as a high priest, not in the systematic and sweeping manner of the Letter to the Hebrews, but in a more subtle and symbolic way … the high priesthood of the Johannine Jesus is ironic, recognized not by the characters in the narrative but only by the reader."[109] Graeme Milligan provides a more sweeping argument: "Nowhere else in the New

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[105] See William L. Brownsberger, *Jesus the Mediator* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2013), 153. It should be noted that Brownsberger's argument relies on the notion of Jesus mediating an ethereal realm with a terrestrial realm. While possible, Brownsberger too often relies on an ambiguous notion of morality being the separator and bridge between the two realms.

[106] Wentling, 137–138. Her comparison here is primarily concerned with Christological variations. Wentling concludes, "This study suggests a developmentally simple High Priestly Christology for 1 Clement and a more sophisticated High Priestly Christology for Hebrews." (141)

[107] Lookadoo, 2, 101.

[108] Lookadoo, 69.

[109] John Paul Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57.4 (October 1, 1995): 729–745, 730. The Gospel of John, however, is well beyond the scope of this examination. The point is simply to highlight other "Jesus as High Priest" discourses.

Testament are the titles Priest or High-Priest applied to Christ, though the underlying thought is to be found, more particularly in the Johannine writings."[110]

How does this information relate to Mark? I am not suggesting that the author of Hebrews, Clement, or Ignatius directly lifted their "Jesus as high priest" characterization from Mark. Instead, the point is that Jesus' depiction as a "new" form of high priest was found in early Christian texts and, therefore, one would think, also established the idea in early Christian discourse. Seemingly, in a conscious effort,[111] Mark utilizes known authoritative imagery to emphasis Jesus' power, not as a traditional high priest, but as an allegorical symbol of authority. In his portrayal, Jesus does resemble a high priest in various facets. This is evident because socio-cultural institutional authoritative figures had now been vanquished for Mark. Mark does not intend for Jesus to replace or supersede the previous authorities, but his portrayal is more in line with a reconciliation of lost status and a reimagining of the continuation of the socio-cultural institutional body. Equating Jesus with a high priest effectively provides an influential symbol by utilizing available and known authoritative tropes. For Mark, symbols of socio-cultural institutional power would be defined by priestly imagery, status, and duties. Mark uses all these available symbols. By associating Jesus' dress, classification debates, and performance with specific attire, classifications, and functions, Mark provides further evidence for Jesus' authority. These symbols of authority would have been easily recognizable within a first-century context. Therefore, through priestly language and symbols, Mark demonstrates Jesus' authority without the need to specifically label him as a customary "high priest."

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[110] Graeme Milligan, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh, 1899), 107.

[111] Perrin sees a conscious effort by Mark to identify Jesus with the high priest. Using Daniel, Perrin argues that Mark appropriates the "Son of Man" as an eschatological priest (see Perrin, *Priest*, 167–189). He states, "Jesus' identity as the eschatological high priest in the making …" (279).

Clothing, ornaments, and other regalia all provide identification markers. Grace Q. Vicary indicates that dress is the primary method for first impressions. She states, "In random public encounters, clothing is usually perceived before voice can be heard or gestures and facial expressions seen. Thus clothing and adornment, as they modify appearance, become a universal, primary, nonverbal communication system."[112] Candida R. Moss labels clothing a "social skin."[113] As a result, clothing can be utilized to communicate social rank, social roles, dispositions, occupation, [114] and even indicate oppressors and oppressed.[115] Diana Crane states that clothing "performs a major role in the social construction of identity."[116] Of course, identification through clothing is not a modern phenomenon and has been present throughout history. Jopie Siebert-Hommes argues that clothing imagery was vital for ancient Near Eastern peoples: "authors and writers often intentionally make use of special details about dress and garments to convey certain information about the main characters."[117]

Employing the book of Revelation, Winkle concludes that the author also sees Jesus in a priestly role. For his analysis, Winkle examines high-priestly imagery, especially in regard to clothing. Overall, his argument suggests that Revelation does "provide evidence of the role-

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[112] Grace Q. Vicary, "The Signs of Clothing," in *Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Nonverbal Communication* (ed. Fernando Poyatos; Toronto: Hogrefe, 1988), 292.

[113] Candida R. Moss, *Divine Bodies: Resurrecting Perfection in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 96.

[114] For example, see Richard Wentz, "Clothed in the Beauty of Possibility," in *Parab* 19 (Fall 1994). Wentz argues that people who wear uniforms for their occupation are easily identified by their attire. He states, "The little boy is given toy soldiers and astronauts for his birthday. He knows those persons by their clothing" (80).

[115] For example, see Wendy Lucas Castro, "Stripped: Clothing and Identity in Colonial Captivity Narratives," in *Early American Studies* 6.1 (Spring, 2008): 104–136.

[116] Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1.

[117] Jopie Siebert-Hommes, "'On the Third Day Esther Put on Her Queen's Robes' [Esther 5:1]: The Symbolic Function of Clothing in the Book of Esther," in *LDiff* 3.1 (2002): 1.

related identity of Jesus as high priest in Revelation."[118] Notably, Winkle states, "two dress

elements in Rev 1:13 are indicative of a high-priestly, role-related identity for Jesus: the foot-

length robe and the golden belt/sash."[119] Winkle also notes that the absence of clothing is just as

notable for identification purposes. He states, "Nakedness has been commonly understood to be

symbolic of the loss of personal identity and thus shameful … [And] in Revelation it is the

absence of dress (3:17, 18; 16:15; 17:16) that constitutes the basis of either a condemnation or

judgment (3:17; 17:16) or a warning (3:18; 16:15)."[120] Mark's Legion exorcism resembles this

discourse. When the man was possessed, Mark never mentions any clothing or lack thereof;

however, after the man was exorcized, Mark explicitly states that the man was in his "right mind"

but also "clothed" (ἱματισμένον). It seems odd that Mark would mention this after the exorcism,

implying that the possessed man was naked beforehand, showcasing his indignity. Dietmar

Neufeld also sees clothing in Revelation playing a vital role in identification. He argues,

> Under the cover of clothing, a person's identity is either revealed or disguised … Clothes
> and accessories make gods and heroes immediately recognizable. At times gods are
> pictured dressed in robes of the commoner, and at other times clothes and accessories
> provide important clues to their identity (winged shoes worn by Hermes; the lion-skin of
> Heracles; the aegis for Athena) … [and] provide symbols and cues about social hierarchies
> within a community … Clothing and ornamentation serve an important function in the
> Apocalypse. Through items of covering and decoration are revealed not only the identity
> but also the levels of loyalty of the citizens of the earth. In addition, apparel and decoration
> clearly delineate boundaries on issues such as who is in/out, pure/impure, and what is
> honourable/dishonourable. The author desires to make absolutely explicit both the values
> he holds dear and those he despises.[121]

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[118] Winkle, 329. For example, Winkle examines the long robe in Revelation 1:13 as
priestly imagery (339, 341–342).

[119] Winkle, 346.

[120] Winkle, 336–337 (original emphasis).

[121] Dietmar Neufeld, "Under the Cover of Clothing: Scripted Clothing Performances in
the Apocalypse of John," in *BTB* 35 (2005); 67–76, 67–68, 75.

The importance of Winkle and Neufeld is that they provide an important examination of clothing imagery and its significance for social identification. As Christine Palmer argues, "Ceremonial dress especially has the power to fashion a unique identity that bridges the worlds of human and divine."[122] Even though Mark's text does not include as much ornamentation imagery as Revelation, it does reference dress on several occasions. For example, Perrin draws attention to Mark 9:2–5 and argues that Peter declares and acknowledges Jesus' priestly status.[123] Specifically, Jesus undergoes a transfiguration: "The garments of him became radiant, very white, such as no one on earth is able to whiten (τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι). The colour and condition of Jesus' clothes are central. Cecilie Brøns states that "Clothing regulations demonstrate that the most important thing to emphasize was the colour of garments, not their type, fibre, or any other quality."[124] Additionally, Moss argues, "White robes play a striking role in identifying divine figures."[125] The emphasis on pure white (cannot be bleached) is not unique, but does indicate statues, one who has permission to enter "sacred space."[126] A white robe also appears in 16:5, where "a young man" wearing a white robe was sitting in the tomb Jesus' was buried. The fact that Mark indicates what this young man is wearing (there is no specific reference to who this young man is) is significant. It suggests status and authority to him. Usually, Jesus' garb is described simply as "clothing" or it is indicated that Jesus dons a "cloak." However, in an intriguing development, Jesus' clothing also possesses

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[122] Christine Palmer, "Israelite high priestly apparel: embodying an identity between human and divine," in *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity* (ed. Megan Cifarelli; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2019); 117–127, 117.

[123] Perrin, 78.

[124] Cecilie Brøns, *Gods and Garments: Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th to the 1st Centuries BC* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 331.

[125] Moss, 99.

[126] See Brøns, 331–335, and Moss, 102–107.

divine power emanating from himself: "And Jesus immediately knowing that power had come out of himself" (καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν, Mark 5:30). This power, or force, can heal people simply by them touching it (i.e., Mark 5:25–34). Palmer, through her examination of Mesopotamian adornment ritual, provides an explanation. She states that physical objects can be "perceived as more than a representation of the divine, but as an actual manifestation of the presence of deity as its epiphany."[127]

Right before Jesus' trial, "a women" provides a "service" to Jesus, namely, she pours an expensive ointment over Jesus' head. Although others lambast her for wasting the ointment, Jesus claims she has provided a great kindness to him. The woman's act can be viewed "as some sort of royal or messianic consecration."[128] Oil anointment for designating priestly status is found throughout the Hebrew Bible. For example, Leviticus 8:30 describes Moses consecrating Aaron by sprinkling oil. A similar occurrence transpires in 1 Samuel 10:1 when Samuel pours oil over Saul's head and declares him "ruler over his people Israel … Now this shall be the sign to you that the Lord had anointed you ruler over his heritage." As Palmer states, "Ritual identity is constructed for the high priest through ceremonial investiture."[129] Thomas G. Weinandy also notes, "Pouring the ointment upon Jesus' head, as traditionally practiced throughout Israel's kingly history."[130]

Clothing also plays a vital role in 14:63–64. Perhaps foreshadowing 15:38, the high priest tore his clothes, accusing Jesus of blasphemy. The high priest's reaction appears excessive and

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[127] Palmer, 124.
[128] J. F. Coakley, "The Anointing at Bethany and the Priority of John,' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107.2 (June 1988); 241–256, 248.
[129] Palmer, 117.
[130] Thomas G. Weinandy, *Jesus Becoming Jesus: A Theological Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 2018), 292.

overly dramatic for the scene. According to Perrin, Jesus' blasphemy charge was retribution for cursing, or challenging, the high priest. He states that this is "clear grounds for blasphemy according to common Jewish interpretation of Exodus 22.27."[131] The high priest questions Jesus "more or less asking, 'Jesus, do you claim to be the rightful eschatological heir to my priestly office?' … For directly challenging the sanctioned priest's authority, Jesus is found guilty of blasphemy and executed."[132] The high priest and Jesus were both claiming high priest status, and Mark concludes that "Jesus is the true high priest *and* Caiaphas and his heirs are not,"[133] though the fact that Mark never mentions Caiaphas by name is intriguing. He only refers to "the High Priest." Since Mark was composing his text post–70 CE, perhaps he was not aware who the high priest was. Maybe he deemed including Caiaphas' name to be irrelevant for his time. However, the fact that Jesus is forced to undergo a trial should also be emphasized. Mark resembles Joshua's trial in Zechariah 3. Joshua also has to prove his competence, merit, and virtue to become the high priest of Jerusalem. Eventually, he is deemed capable and granted the position of the high priest to "rule [God's] house and have charge of [his] courts … and invite others to come under your vine and fig tree."

Another critical occurrence where clothing plays an important role is 15:17–20. After Jesus' trial, Roman soldiers dress him in a purple cloak and place a crown of thorns on his head (καὶ ἐνδιδύσκουσιν αὐτὸν πορφύραν καὶ περιτιθέασιν αὐτῷ πλέξαντες ἀκάνθινον στέφανον). As Allan T. Georgia states, "So, in the text, the robe and crown were put on Jesus solely for the act of mocking him."[134] After mocking Jesus' supposed kingly status, the soldiers strip Jesus of the

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[131] Perrin, *Priest*, 276.
[132] Perrin, *Priest*, 80.
[133] Perrin, *Priest*, 277.
[134] Allan T. Georgia, "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power," in *JSNT* 36.1 (2013): 17–38, 30.

purple cloak and dress him in his own clothes (καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ, ἐξέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν πορφύραν καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ἴδια). Georgia argues that this scene imitates the Roman triumph ritual, where "This re-enactment of victory and performance of war suggests the central role that the visibility of defeat served, but it also illustrates how spectacle resulted in the symbolic ambiguity between foe, victor and victim."[135] Georgia concludes that Mark employed this scene, and the colour purple specifically, to underline Jesus' state as a royal figure. He states, "After all, those whom Rome deems worthy enough to parade, mock and berate are kings, rivals and threats."[136] Indeed, purple was directly associated with Roman rulers, wealth, and honour, and most Markan commentators make a similar interpretation to Georgia. Mark was influenced by Roman symbols of power. But if he intended to suggest Jesus' royal status and mock the Roman ritual, why did Mark mention that Jesus was stripped of the royal clothing? Why did the Roman soldiers take the time to strip Jesus of the purple robe and dress him in his standard attire? What is missing from Markan commentators is a comparison to Daniel 5:29, where Daniel is anointed by Belshazzar with a purple robe and a gold chain. In a state of fear, Belshazzar appoints Daniel third in line for the Babylonian kingdom (perhaps to make amends); however, despite Belshazzar's act, he still dies. Daniel's anointment was irrelevant to Belshazzar's fate and Daniel's status as a servant of God. Daniel did not need a royal proclamation from an earthly, and oppressive, kingdom for his prophetic status to remain steadfast and intact. As commentators are aware, Mark was fond of utilizing Daniel in his text. It would not be a stretch that Mark had Daniel's book in mind for this scene. Jesus, being stripped of symbolic royal garb and returned to his regular attire, illustrates the insignificance of royal declarations and anointments. Jesus does not require them to

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[135] Georgia, 23.
[136] Georgia, 32.

fulfill his designated role. As a result, Mark conveys the importance of Jesus fulfilling his role (his crucifixion) in his regular dress.

Another method that Mark utilizes to exhibit Jesus' status and authority is redefining socio-cultural classifications and discourses through renegotiating ritual, notions of pure/impure, and the covenant. Usually, Mark employs various Midrash debates to illustrate Jesus' wisdom, acumen, and knowledge of such topics. Unsurprising, Jesus always displays his sophisticated perceptions and is victorious in all contentious internal polemics. Throughout Mark, Jesus' encounters with the Pharisees and the Scribes usually involves some form of debate revolving around purity classifications or national traditions.[137] It is clear that Mark is well versed in Mosaic Law and prophetic literature and justifies his interpretations, dispositions, and proclivities. Once again, Jesus is consistently triumphant in these Midrash debates by proving his superior knowledge of Mosaic Law and prophetic literature. Mark goes to great lengths to specify how the systems of classification of the Pharisees and Scribes (temple) are antiquated, corrupt, or merely misguided.[138] While Mark is looking back at the temple's practices and classification systems, he concludes that there needs to be a reimagined and reworked social-cultural institution. By using Midrash debates, Jesus' institution is authorized by the divine; he even is granted the ability to

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[137] See Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 201.

[138] Much has already been written about this concept. However, for an overview of reclassifying the concepts of pure and impure, see Stewart, 179–200. Stewart outlines the renegotiation of Jesus' idea of purity contrasted against the perceived purity laws of the temple. Stewart argues that Jesus rejects the notion of "sacred space" related to purity laws, Sabbath observance, and sickness/healing. He "challenges the claim of the temple authorities over the space of Judea and Galilee around the issue of purity" (197). As a result, "Jesus creates his own spatial practice" (180). Overall, Stewart concludes, "Jesus rejects the fixed sacred space represented by the temple and the synagogues. It is to be replaced by a fluid sacred space centered on the person of Jesus" (199). Stewart's argument is convincing. However, as previously argued, Mark does not flatly reject "sacred space" but reinterprets it. With a loss of "there" as the centre, "sacred space" is renegotiated into an "anywhere" category.

appoint others for priestly matters such as exorcisms (Mark 3:14–15). Thus, this authority and

status are communicated to the contemporary audiences with whom Mark engages; for example,

Mark 5:21–43 rewrites a purity law regarding a hemorrhaging woman, as opposed to Lev. 15:25–

30. Additionally, Mark 2:15–17, 2:18–22, and 7:1–23 involve concerns related to the notion of

"purity" within food laws; certain scholars have suggested that Jesus ignores purity laws and

declares them void.[139] However, as many scholars have pointed out, Mark's concerns over food

laws have a foundation and correlate with several Jewish interpretations.[140] Eyal Regev provides

an explanation for Mark 7:

> The controversy with the Pharisees about whether hand washing (or immersion) before a
> meal is necessary concerns not purity in general (which in the Priestly Code is related
> mainly to Temple, sacrifice, and priests) but daily, profane, and nonpriestly purity.
> Therefore, the context of vv. 15 and 19c does not appear to justify an abrogation of purity
> laws in general but merely of such ordinary, nonsacred activities, which not all Jews
> observe.[141]

Psalm 24 can be employed for further evidence. The Psalm describes purity as people "who have

clean hands and pure hearts … They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the

God of their salvation." Therefore, Jesus was not a unique teacher of "ethical" concerns over

"ritual tradition." Regarding Psalm 24, Chilton states, "Any rigid differentiation between ethical

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[139] For example, see Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Jesper Svartvik, *Mark and Mission: Mk 7:1–23 in its Narrative and Historical Contexts* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell Intl., 2000); David M. Young and Michael Strickland, *The Rhetoric of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2017). Young and Strickland conclude that "Jesus discredits the elders' traditions and consequently his accusers themselves, and redefines ritual cleanness in terms of the heart" (212).

[140] David J. Rudolf, "Jesus and the Food Laws: A Reassessment of Mark 7:19b," in *Evangelical Quarterly* 74.4 (Oct. 2002); 291–311. Rudolf concludes that Mark upholds "the validity of Torah's ritual purity system" (311); Eyal Regev, *The Temple in Early Christianity Book Subtitle: Experiencing the Sacred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). Regev states that Mark should not be read "as an overall rejection of the biblical purity system" (105).

[141] Regev, 105.

and cultic regulations is formally dissolved here … Psalm 24 insists that purity is affected by one's ethical behaviour as well as by acts of purification."[142] Overall, the majority of Mark's interpretive rhetoric aligns with certain Jewish rituals, discourses, and laws. Mark 10:3–5 and 7:9–10 affirm Mosaic Law as an authority. Mark 1:40–45, the healing of a leper, is also a prime example. Leviticus 14:2–7 provides the ritual instruction for cleansing a "leprous person." First, they are brought to a priest for inspection and confirmation of their cleanliness. Upon passing inspection, the priest will then command a sacrifice. Mark 1:40–45 employs this narrative and, seemingly, adheres to it. As Crossley states, "Only the priest declares the leper clean and *not* Jesus. This declaration is entirely in accordance with Lev. 13–14."[143] Jesus heals the leper and then instructs the leper to go to the priests and command a sacrifice. Regev summarizes,

> By ordering the person to appear before a priest and bring a sacrifice, Jesus leaves the final word on announcing the healed person's purity to the priest. What is interesting here is that Mark, by virtue of mentioning Jesus's reference to the Mosaic commands, shows that Jesus acknowledges the priestly purity system, priestly authority, and the sacrificial system. He is concerned not only with the leper's affliction but also with his ritual status.[144]

Therefore, Mark does abide by Jewish customs, albeit through his interpretive lens. He is not attempting to *replace* or *supersede* Judaism but to reconcile, rethink, and reimagine his perceived lost socio-cultural identity within his new social context. Reimaging ritual, custom, and traditional discourse was essential because of the seismic socio-cultural shift post–70 CE. Karl Allen Kuhn argues that redefinitions of purity reflect significant social changes.[145] Purity classification is

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[142] Chilton, 77.
[143] Crossley, 144.
[144] Regev, 103–104.
[145] See Karl Allen Kuhn, *Insights From Cultural Anthropology* (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2018). Kuhn states, "Major changes in conceptions often reflect significant social, economic, political, cultural, or cultic transformations. Consequently, the development and

primarily a spatial issue. Kuhn states that "impurity is often, if not always, a category of social exclusion… [and] purity codes define and restrict access to gods and sanctuaries, and even to households. Therefore, the mapping of sacred space defines who is permitted to participate in local cults and their rituals."[146] Without the "sacred centre" where purity rituals were ratified, Mark transfers the "sacred center" to an "anywhere" location. Finally, conceptions of cultural purity "also defines a select group of 'ritual specialists' qualified to distinguish between pure and impure and enact the rituals that can return persons to purity. As a result, the purity systems of these cultures enact the empowerment of priestly authority."[147] To reinforce his reconceptualization, Mark follows this procedure. Without designated authoritative "ritual specialists," he places Jesus as the high priest figure to facilitate purity ritual discourse; therefore, there is no need for a continuation of "there" ritual priests because the "anywhere" priestly figure, Jesus, has designated and applied a definitive reconciliation regarding the concept of purity.

Finally, Mark also alludes to Jesus' authority and status through, unsurprisingly, temple rituals, functions, and activities, especially in terms of sacrifice. The need for a sacrificial reimagining is obvious. As Lookadoo states, "The full, earthly enactment of the sacrificial rite must have ceased after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE."[148] A missing and previously essential, social-cultural practical component is poignant and communally distressing, making the requirement for a continual, or a "final," rapprochement sacrifice necessary and inevitable. To rectify this situation, scholars have argued that Mark utilizes Jesus as a replacement sacrifice. Timothy Grey sees the Last Supper as a primary example. He states,

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transformation of purity concepts prove to function as an excellent indicator of broader cultural changes and their impact on religious traditions" (101).

[146] Kuhn, 100.
[147] Kuhn, 100.
[148] Lookadoo, 72.

> The focus is on the sacrifice of Jesus … elements of cultic sacrifice in the Last Supper connect this scene to the temple … Since covenants were constituted through blood sacrifice, Jesus' language tying together blood and covenant evokes typical sacrificial imagery as such … Read in the light of Mark's strong antitemple polemic, the Last Supper is clearly an alternative cultic action that subverts the need for the temple and its sacrifices.[149]

Annette Merz and Gerd Theissen offer a similar argument: "Jesus offers the disciples a replacement for the official cult in which they could either no longer take part, or which would not bring them salvation."[150] In a more triumphalist approach, Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly argues that Mark rejects the "sacred violence" of Temple Judaism and stresses a new form of nonviolent worship, a total rejection of the sacrificial system of the temple. Violence "must be broken and replaced by a network of love if there is to be a new order."[151] However, as Crossley right points out, "It must be stated sharply: Hamerton-Kelly's view of Markan Christology is dominated by the myth of Christian superiority that it not only distorts his reading of Mark but misrepresents Judaism … Far from replacing sacrificial violence, the Markan Jesus implicitly accepts its validity … the Markan Jesus was actually much more concerned with upholding the ideal function of the Temple—sacrifices and all."[152]

However, one crucial issue is overlooked. A significant element of Second Temple sacrifice is the ritual purging and absolving of sin. Hans M. Moscicke sketches the importance of the scapegoat tradition. Discussing Mark's Legion exorcism, he states, "Early Jewish scapegoat traditions, especially the apocalyptic scapegoat *topos*, have influenced the composition of Mk 5.1–

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[149] T. Grey, 159–161.

[150] Annette Merz and Gerd Theissen, *Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 434.

[151] Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and the Messiah: The Markan Passion Narrative as a Redefinition of Messianology," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 461–493, 476.

[152] Crossley, 127, 129.

20."[153] Derived from Leviticus 16:1–34, "the scapegoats become vehicles of sin that are abused, brought to the desert, and cast into an abyss, bringing about the purification of earth or temple."[154] Therefore, two components are needed for a sacrificial ritual—a scapegoat and a blood atonement. Indeed, Jesus' crucifixion resembles a blood atonement, but absolution of the sin is vacant. David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie argue that Jesus does not refer "to sacrifice for sin but to a covenant sacrifice. Covenants in antiquity were ratified by pouring blood from a sacrifice."[155] Mark's Jesus does not encapsulate, embody, or assume "universal sin." Jesus predicts his death as a necessity (Mark 8:31–32; 9:31–32), but he never indicates his ability or willingness to shoulder all sin. Instead, Mark places sin upon the destroyed temple as it was no longer a house of prayer (Mark 11:17). Sin is therefore abolished by a crumbled, corrupted institution, and Jesus' crucifixion solidifies the sacrificial ritual. The result is Jesus granting access to the inner sanctum where the holiest of holies resides. Mark illustrates this point by tearing the inner sanctum's veil.

Alvarez states that Mark 15:38 directs the reader "to the inner sanctuary of the temple, its very core. We take the temple curtain that Mark refers to here to be the inner veil that served as

[153] Hans M. Moscicke, "The Gerasene Exorcism and Jesus' Eschatological Expulsion of Cosmic Powers: Echoes of Second Temple Scapegoat Traditions in Mark 5.1–20," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 41.3 (2019): 363–383, 364. Also see Daniel Stokl Ben Ezra, "Yom Kippur in the Apocalyptic *Imaginaire* and the Roots of Jesus' High Priesthood," in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (eds. Jan Assmann and Guy Stroumsa; Leiden: Brill), 349–366.

[154] Moscicke, 370. Despite Moscicke drawing needed attention to the scapegoat narrative, his conclusion is not convincing. Overall, he argues that "Jesus' exorcism signals the eschatological expulsion of the cosmic powers of Satan's kingdom (3:22–24) from their privileged positions of authority over the nations and augurs God's kingdom reign, in which Gentiles are released from bondage to cosmic forces, and their oppressive earthly counterparts, and welcomed into the family of God … Jesus' banishment of demonic powers from their heavenly thrones begins to 'cleanse the spiritual realm'" (378). Moscicke, I think, gives too much credence to cosmic dualism and concentrating on "spiritual" realms—factors that are less prevalent in Mark.

[155] David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 114.

the barrier to the holy of holies and not just the outer veil that served as the entrance to the sanctuary."[156] Juel's examination of Mark's temple language reaffirms Alvarez's argument. He compares how Mark employs the terms ἱερόν and ναός,[157] and indicates that both terms express location, ἱερόν being the entire temple complex, whereas ναός refers to a particular site—the proper sanctuary. Therefore, Juel concludes, "The meaning of the tearing of this inner veil at the moment of Jesus' death would not be difficult to determine. The image could mean that in Jesus' death, access to the holy of holies (that is, to God's presence) has been opened."[158] Continuing Juel's argument, Regev states, "By placing Jesus in the Temple and relating him to the cult in the preparation for the Passover sacrifice and the tearing of the veil, some of the attributes of the cult are symbolically transmitted to Jesus without disqualifying the Temple … [Mark] makes positive use of the Temple as a setting for Jesus's authority."[159] Regev's last point here is important. Previously, access to the "holy site" was limited to the high priest. Josephus claims that "priests alone were permitted to enter."[160] Palmer clarifies, "Though ordinary Israelites may be barred from entering the sanctuary, they nevertheless experience its worship through their mediator."[161] To display and convey Jesus' authority, Mark elevates Jesus to an authority figure able to intercede on people's behalf. In other words, Jesus is granting or mediating access to the sanctum. Perrin argues, "The tearing of the temple veil in verse 38 signifies nothing less than Jesus' atoning death having procured new and unprecedented entry through the heavens into the presence of God … The rending of the temple veil (collapsing the divide between the sacred and the profane)

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[156] Alvarez, 148–149.
[157] See Juel, 128.
[158] Juel, 140.
[159] Regev, 126.
[160] Josephus, *Antiquities xiii*, 372–376.
[161] Palmer, 126.

illustrates that it is Jesus (and not Caiaphas) who is the true priestly Son of God."[162] While hyperbolic, Perrin's point is cohesive with Jesus' "priestly" portrayal. Mark realizes that priestly functions, imagery, and symbols are vital for benediction and the procurement of authority. According to Josephus, Pompey even identifies the importance of respecting and restoring the services of a high priest.[163] Overall, as Crossley suggests, Mark's "imitation of the priesthood in Jewish sources do not automatically mean replacement and can indeed be the sincerest form of flattery."[164]

The Reimagination of the Desired Social Community

After Jerusalem's Roman occupation, a new Jewish diaspora was formed. Exilic authors who lose communal socio-cultural institutions are forced to reflect upon and renegotiate such institutions. Mark attempts to rectify his social alienation and lost communal cultural incongruity by imagining and prescribing new methods of social connection. Indeed, Mark does know his Hebrew Bible because he also equates Jesus with the suffering servant in Isaiah. This equation is not a new revelation by any means, but the suffering servant in Isaiah is identified with another exilic Israelite community.[165] Isaiah refers to a powerful and autonomous God who will conquer oppressors through his servant (community). Salvation/restoration derives from exilic suffering, both directly relating to the community.[166]

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[162] Perrin, *Priest*, 79, 80.
[163] See Josephus, *Antiquities xiv*, 69–79.
[164] Crossley, 143.
[165] Mark J. Boda, "Walking in the Light of Yahweh: Zion and the Empires in the Book of Isaiah," in *Empire in the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall; Hamilton: McMaster Divinity College Press, 2011), 54–89, 72.
[166] Boda, 74.

One method that Mark employs to rectify his social ills was reimagining his new social-economic reality. This reimagination is reflected in his concern for the marginalized, his urban/rural dichotomy, and his attempt to reclassify "national" ethnic boundaries and "insider/outsider" status. As Kotrosits and Taussig mention, "Mark's story is very interested in other characters at the edge of society … [and] throughout Mark, pained figures regularly cross Jesus' path—the ailing, the hungry, and the demon-possessed …"[167] As Shailer Mathews argues, "His teaching was the sympathy which identified Jesus with the unfortunate, the poor, and the oppressed."[168] Mark shows empathy for Jews, Gentiles, the poor, and even the rich. His social-economic hostility usually revolves around exploitation. For example, in Mark 12:41–44, a widow gives what little money she has to the temple institution. This passage, I think, is more enigmatic than it first appears (Is Jesus criticizing the women for giving all her money?). Previously, however, Mark criticizes the Scribes for taking money. Barbara E. Reid argues that "it is clear that the scribes are exploiting widows, and Jesus warns his disciples not to imitate them."[169] Both interpretations may be somewhat correct: "It seems more likely that Jesus is feeling bad about what the widow had done (and in this way noticing that it is not just the exploitation of the scribes but the mistake of the widow that is a problem) … [but it also] confronts the systems of exploitation that make and keep people poor."[170] Mark also recognizes that other issues and problems exist within his society besides poverty, which mostly results in alienation. Jesus dines

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[167] Kotrosits and Taussig, 13, 46.

[168] Shailer Mathews, *Jesus on Social Institutions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 49. It should be noted that Mathews discuss the sentiments of Jesus himself rather than the narrative character portrayed by the Gospel author.

[169] Barbara E. Reid, *Taking up the Cross: New Testament Interpretations Through Latina and Feminist Eyes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 49.

[170] Kotrosits and Taussig, 86.

with people (tax collectors) who are shunned or alienated from their community.[171] As K.C.

Hanson states, "The abusiveness of tax collectors is a well-attested phenomenon from the Roman

era." This hospitality indicates concern and empathy for the socially alienated, not just the

economically alienated, and provides a community where they can gather and be accepted, thus

overcoming their isolation and marginalization.

One cannot discuss economic matters in Mark without examining 12:13–17. Numerous

interpretations have been written regarding this passage. Hans Leander argues that Mark was

implying that "requirement to pay taxes is not justified by divine mandate,"[172] and to render what

is due is dependent upon the situation. Zeichmann argues that Mark merely weighs in on a

contemporary debate of whether to pay the new *fiscus Iudaicus* tax. He concludes that "The

Markan Jesus *would* pay his taxes and apparently encourages others to do likewise."[173] Although I

concur that the "tax" Mark references alludes to the *fiscus Iudaicus*, I think there is too much

emphasis on these verses being purely about monetary concerns. Economics, in antiquity, was not

an isolated demarcation, and it was usually tied to other forces—the temple in particular. In

"Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark," John Kloppenborg discusses the Roman military ritual

of "calling out" a patron deity before attacking a temple or city.[174] Kloppenborg argues,

> But to the ancient hearer … the destruction of a temple entailed the belief that the deity
> had departed … The notion that a temple could not be taken while the deities were present
> was not only a Roman belief, but is implicit and explicit in statements of the Tanak and
> Second Temple literature, which account for the destruction of the First Temple by the
> Babylonians by the belief that the deity had departed. The prediction of Mark 13:2, then, is
> not a statement about real estate or architecture, nor is it merely an expression of divine
> judgment, although it is that too. Implicit in the prediction of a destroyed temple is the

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[171] Hanson, 104.

[172] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 283.

[173] Zeichmann, 8 (original emphasis).

[174] John Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124.3 (2005): 419–450.

belief that the deity has or will abandon the temple, for it is only under these conditions that it could be destroyed.[175]

After Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, there was a Roman campaign that suggested the God of the Israelites deserted the Israelites and favoured the Romans.[176] Moreover, Vespasian purported that the Jewish messiah prophecy was about himself.[177] Mark 12:13–17 separates and distinguishes God from Caesar, which to Mark's audience would have been Vespasian. This distinction indicates that God had not transferred sides, proclaimed Vespasian messiah, and abandoned his people. Denarii are employed as a method to separate Caesar from God.

At first, the urban/rural dichotomy in Mark resembles a Gentile/Jew polemic. Jesus and his disciples never step foot in the larger (mostly Gentile) urban centres in Galilee (Sepphoris and Tiberius). Additionally, Mark's narratives predominantly take place in rural locations. A closer look, however, reveals that Mark opens up his socio-cultural institution to Gentiles. For example, within the narrative of the Syrophoenician woman, the woman is first rebuked. Granted, this could be due to either gender or gentile relations. But nonetheless, she then persuades Jesus to take pity on her, and he obliges. As a result, "The Syrophoenician woman receives an ambiguous insider/outsider status that blurs the borders around the identity position that Mark's narrative represents."[178] Jesus' hostile response plays on the perceived hostility that Jews had displayed towards what they saw as Greek domination. Since Mark was circulating close to or even at the end of the Jewish War, the enmity between Jews and Greeks would have been particularly acute at that time. As is evident from Josephus, the anti-Roman rebellion began with an incident that was

[175] Kloppenborg, 441.
[176] Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 6:5.
[177] See Winn, 153–177.
[178] Leander, 236.

related to the tensions between Jews and Greeks in Caesarea.[179] This hostility explains why the narrative refers to the woman as a dog; she needed to be put in her "proper place" before the socio-cultural institution opened to her, perhaps to appease more "hardline" Jews who still held grudges against the Greek population. But the main point of relocating the disenfranchised is still prevalent. Leander declares, "Jesus as well as the woman represented the dominated—they are both Roman subjects … A story about subjected peoples—a Syrophoenician Greek and a Jew—who overcome enmity without a Roman intervention therefore suggests an incipient universalism beyond Roman control,"[180] an idyllic cosmopolitanism.

Certain scholars, however, argue that Mark's distinction between Jew and Gentile is overemphasized or merely lacking. Miller states, "There are no consistent markers suggesting that regions to the north and east of Galilee are conceived by the writer as the locale of a mission to gentiles or that make it appropriate to suppose that Mark thinks of the peoples in view as encompassed by a Jew/gentile totalizing binary."[181] Mark's text (and certain scholars) suggest that urban and rural centres in Roman Palestine were comprised of wholly divided ethnicities; however, this was not the case, even before the post–70 CE exile. Daniel Cohen argues that pre–70 CE populations were diverse, especially in urban centres. He states, "Jews living in Eretz Israel during the Roman period were, for the most part, rural people living off the land … [but] recent research shows that some cities had significant Jewish populations, such as Beth Shean. A large

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[179] Leander, 233.
[180] Leander, 238.
[181] Miller, 232.

Jewish population even continued in the Decapolis for many generations after the destruction of the Temple."[182]

In addition to this sentiment, Mark was a strategic writer. While appeasing Jews with the Syrophpenician narrative, Mark also keeps Jesus and his disciples away from the larger Gentile cities. The absence is deliberate. When the revolt broke out in Galilee, Josephus tells us (*Vita*, 9.12.32.163) of a rebellion leader named Jesus, son of Sepphoris. This particular Jesus led a group of fisherman who slaughtered all the Gentiles in Tiberius. Hyperbole aside, this is an astonishing claim. Living in the immediate aftermath and vicinity, Gentiles from the larger urban locations would still have had these events fresh in their mind. Receptiveness to a social institution founded on a man named Jesus, who had a group of fisherman for disciples, would be sparse. Mark equivocates a potential heated and divisive issue, but here Mark's inventiveness is demonstrated. His is the first source that explicitly states the disciples are fishermen. This notion is historically impossible to determine and is more likely a result of Mark's imagination. Tiberius was the centre for political-economic activity and seen as a symbol of domination. Avoiding exploitative centres makes sense as a political statement, but Mark is also aware of the sensitivities that these centres would have towards a social institution constructed around a man named Jesus, whose disciples were fishermen. To entice potential members, Mark romanticizes rural lifestyles as a comparison to the failed cosmopolitan ideals of urban centres (even though I suggest that Mark is composing his narrative in an urban setting). Mark's image of a new "home" outside the previous centres is also in line with the Exodus tradition; therefore, "new" centres away from urban locations would be entirely plausible for a Jewish reader. There are criticisms of the "earthly" social institutional

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[182] Daniel Cohen, "The Gerasene Demoniac: A Jewish Approach to Liberation Before 70 CE," in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey* (ed. James G. Crossley; London and Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 152–173, 155).

centres throughout the text (Mark 12:10–11; 13:2; 14:58). The most obvious example of the

inadequacies of such social institutions is found in 10:35–45, where James and John argue about

who will be Jesus' "right hand." Once again, Jesus declares an idyllic cosmopolitanism as an

alternative. Comparative social institutions are inadequate for Mark. His judgemental and

reproachful tone towards competitive societal establishments and organizations is not unusual. As

Kotrosits and Taussig point out,

> [The] first century term 'gospel' or 'good news' was regularly used to describe the 'great deeds of warring men'—that is, military conquests and the related achievement of cultural domination, particularly those enabled the Roman emperor … Mark is pointing toward the searing irony of Roman domination being called 'good news … a sense of double entendre: The Roman gospel of military triumph is not really good news to those who are on the other end of it, but rather the good news is that stirring and reparative moments appear in the middle of violence and defeat … As 'good news,' it deflates the egotistical achievements of Roman domination, instead drawing attention to the violence inherent in those achievements. But it also in turns, with a kind of tenderness, toward marginal figures who almost instantly recede into the background.[183]

Another example of Mark reflecting his communal desire can be seen in the "Messianic

Secret" motif, brought into prominence by William Wrede.[184] Wrede argued that Jesus' silencing

instructions did not emanate from the Historical Jesus, but were products of later traditions

introduced for theological reasons.[185] Theodore J. Weeden continues Wrede's conclusion with

slight alterations. Weeden argues that the secrecy motif is a condemnation against the "divine-

man" Christology.[186] Although, before engaging in the gospel, one has to determine whether a

literary theme is *actually* present within the text. William Freedman provides two fundamental

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[183] Kotrosits and Taussig, 34–35.
[184] William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).
[185] See Wrede, 22–51, 66, 71, 79–80.
[186] Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark. Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 138–158.

points of criteria to establish a motif.[187] First, repetition must be present. Second, a literary motif

is not essential for the overall narrative; it can be avoided. Whenever a motif is unnecessarily

placed within a narrative, the more likely it is deliberate. Freedman's first criterion is evident in

Mark and has been discussed at length in scholarly circles. Kelly R. Iverson states that the

disciples are "recipients of instruction that is often excluded from others … These scenes portray

the repetition of a similar phenomena that points to the presence of a literary theme."[188]

Freedman's second criterion is more intriguing. Is secrecy essential in Mark, or can it be avoided?

The most unambiguous indication that the motif can be avoided is its absence in Matthew and

Luke. As Iverson states,

> Matthew and Luke "tacitly affirm the avoidability of the theme. Their redaction suggests
> that neither Matthew nor Luke understood secrecy (as articulated by Mark) to be an
> unalterable feature of Mark's Gospel … Unlike Mark, where Jesus repeatedly commands
> demons to be quiet, the Matthean Jesus never prohibits the demons from speaking. Neither
> Matthew nor Luke considered the thematic instances, nor the particular Markan
> articulation of the theme, to be beyond modification … neither felt compelled or
> constrained to reproduce the theme with the frequency of occurrence or the same broad
> vision as Mark.[189]

Both of Freedman's criteria can be found within Mark's text; therefore, the secrecy motif can be

perceived of as a literary theme.[190]

Many occasions describe Jesus silencing the disciples or demons in regard to his identity

(Mark1:25; 1:40–44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30). Thus, the reader is provided with "insider" knowledge that

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[187] See William Freedman, "The Literary Motif: A Definition and Evaluation," in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction* (ed. Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 200–212, 204–205.

[188] Kelly R. Iverson, "'Wherever the Gospel is Preached:' The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 181–209, 192.

[189] Iverson, 193, 195.

[190] To be clear, the Messianic Secret motif, I think, has been overemphasized. Scholars attempting to decipher its *exact* meaning have not yet provided a convincing and suitable argument.

the crowds are not aware of.[191] As Iverson outlines, the "underlying assumption is that the disciples have been made privy to Jesus in a way that is unparalleled among the crowds … The disciples are the recipients of divine revelation and insiders to the teachings of Jesus."[192] In other words, the veracities of Mark's text "are concealed only from the characters in the narrative … Consequently, regardless of the audience's opinion of Jesus, they are made insiders to the mysteries of the Gospel, enjoying a perspective that is not shared by those within the story world."[193] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie suggest that this was done to provide people with courage and hope in the face of persecution. They view Jesus' trial, humiliation, and execution as a model for faithfulness despite suffering.[194] They state, "Mark's story makes most sense addressing followers who are under the threat of persecution."[195] Therefore, the Gospel is a "call to commitment" in defiance of anxiety and distress.[196] Roskam provides a political interpretation of the Messianic Secret.[197] She argues that Jesus portrays no political ambition and silences the crowds (not the disciples) to avoid political misunderstandings of his teachings, and also to avoid rousing the audiences. Roskam states, "Mark's Jesus intends to prevent the people from embracing the idea of him as a royal pretender who wishes to assume political power over Israel."[198] In other words, "to reject the political connotations of the title Christ."[199] Francis Watson sees the motif of secrecy being associated with the theological concept of

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[191] For example, see Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 43.
[192] Iverson, 191, 192.
[193] Iverson, 201.
[194] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 141–142.
[195] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 146.
[196] See Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 150–151.
[197] See Roskam, 171–188.
[198] Roskam, 178.
[199] Roskam, 170.

predestination.[200] Watson argues that Mark employs secrecy to offer hope, assurance, and encouragement to people suffering persecution. Despite Watson's attempt to examine the theme of secrecy as having a distinct social function, his arguments get tangled in theological rhetoric and the assumption of an actual Markan community. Additionally, as Iverson points out, if predetermination is at play, "why does Jesus communicate with the crowds, since they stand condemned?"[201] In other words, what is the point of preaching and writing a Gospel if everything is already predetermined? Why attempt to gain converts or convince people of your arguments?

Iverson delivers a convincing addition as to why Mark included a secrecy motif. It is not merely that Mark was conveying "insider" knowledge to the reader; the more important aspect is the social motivation for the motif, namely, persuasion. Nancy L. Collins and Lynn Carol Miller argue that "when people perceive that they have been personally selected for intimate discourse, they feel trusted and liked and are more apt to evaluate the discloser favourably."[202] In other words, if someone conveys something "special," private, or intimate, the person receiving this information feels a type of worth; they have been explicitly "chosen" to bear this knowledge. The result is that the recipient of the information is more liable to believe, trust, and esteem the informant. This technique has been labelled the "disclosure-liking effect." As another example of Mark's intellectual creativity, Iverson argues that Mark explicitly utilizes this method to project sentiments of trust and believability upon the reader. She states,

> Mark's use of the secrecy theme in relation to the disclosure-liking effect … fosters the positive rapport between performer and audience necessary for relational development … By providing the audience with insider knowledge, Mark utilizes a rhetorical device to cultivate a favourable relationship between the audience and performer … the employment

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[200] See Francis Watson, "The Social Function of Mark's Secrecy Theme," in *JSNT* 24 (1985): 46–69.

[201] Iverson, 197.

[202] Nancy L. Collins and Lynn Carol Miller, "Self-Disclosure and Liking: A Meta-analytic Review," in *Psychological Bulletin* 116.3 (1994): 457–475, 459.

of the technique is an affective tool that facilitates the very reception of Mark's message.[203]

Therefore, the so-called secrecy motif is not merely a theological communication mechanism, but a social tool employed to entice potential community members. In other words, the secrecy motif is a means of recruitment. Roskam, however, makes an important observation. Throughout Jesus' teachings, healings, and miracles, he does not silence the crowds in *every* instance. As Roskam states, "Mark does not carry through the motif of the secrecy of Jesus' identity consistently."[204] Mark's lack of consistency, however, matches Iverson's argument. There is no need to be aggressive and obnoxious for persuasion endeavours. Potential readers are not bombarded with attempts to make them feel "special." Indeed, this would have an adverse effect. Subtlety is paramount for success.

Finally, the last instance of Mark communicating a communal desire is seen in his symbolic usage of the cross. Damian Barry Smyth views the crucifixion narrative, and its symbolic cross, to be the first occurrence of trauma for Jesus followers.[205] Therefore, the cross is purely a symbol of terror and national trauma. Smyth identifies the later "gnostic" response—that Jesus somehow did not suffer at all—as a resolution to this problem.[206] The issue with this argument is the assumption of sentiments of early followers. It also disregards the Gospel's compositional timeframe. Arnal describes the Passion narrative as a distinct Markan composition

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[203] Iverson, 204–205, 207–208.

[204] Roskam, 185.

[205] Damian Barry Smyth, *The Trauma of the Cross: How the Followers of Jesus Came to Understand the Crucifixion* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 3. Smyth see Mark being written in Rome under Nero's persecution. Thus, the use of a cross within his text would "cut too close to the bone" (62). Smyth, however, appears to ignore Mark 8:34, where Jesus declares the cross as his communal symbol.

[206] Smyth, 4–7.

that is not based upon some pre-Markan narrative.[207] He states, "The passion as a whole serves as an excellent example of Mark's techniques for composing narrative, in this case, a narrative that represents the culmination and the essence of his entire story … [Therefore,] we should instead see in this extensive prooftexting the *source* of Mark's imagination of the death of Jesus."[208]

The cross has a close association with Roman power because it was such a gruesome method of execution. James M. Dawsey mentions that "crucifixion showed the power of the state, and the Romans used it as punishment for rebellions—as when the general Crassus ordered 6000 prisoners from Spartacus' rebellion crucified along Via Appia, ancient Italy's most important road leading from the south into Rome."[209] However, crucifixion was not simply a political suppressant; it was also employed as an execution method "against thieves, to prevent crime, to inflict vengeance, as entertainment in the Roman games."[210] In other words, crucifixion was not just a socio-political deterrent. Dawsey proclaims that the primary goal of crucifixion was to humiliate and deride the victims. It was thus a method to degrade the sufferers to a subhuman status.[211] Dawsey states, "When a freedman, foreigner, or citizen was crucified, it signified that person's transition into the category of slave."[212]

Despite the fact that the cross is a symbol of Roman power and authority, Mark twists it into a virtuous symbol. Mark 8:34 is a clear example of this. Jesus advocates potential followers to "take up their cross" to become a community member or follower (Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν

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[207] See Arnal, 433.
[208] Arnal, 435, 450.
[209] James M. Dawsey, *Peter's Last Sermon: Identity and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 84–85.
[210] Dawsey, 85.
[211] Dawsey, 87–88.
[212] Dawsey, 92.

καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι). The rhetorical tone here suggests a symbolic adoption, or adaptation, to provide his potential social group with a collective identifier for unification. Dawsey argues, "Mark's theology of the cross not just being adapted to a new situation but being co-opted into a theology of glory."[213] Reid continues this line of thought, asserting that the cross is a vital (ancient and modern) representation of Jesus followers. She states, "This symbol and the narratives we tell about it bind Christians together … in ritual and narrative."[214]

To slightly expand upon the idea of employing the cross as a symbol, Mark develops it as a uniting or rallying symbol, presumably for his desired social institution. David Kertzer provides a convincing theoretical argument. He asserts that manipulating symbols that are tied to "traumatic national experiences of the past, especially wars … lend themselves particularly well to a universal form of political symbolism."[215] Moreover, "by expropriating this symbol in their own rite, in a different political context, the protesters … build their own self-image."[216] Kertzer's argument nicely reflects Mark's "traumatic nation experience," enabling him to subvert and recategorize a previously oppressive symbol to create a new self-image. Leander argues that Mark employs the notion and term of a cross as catachresis. He states that "by using [the cross] as a metaphor for following Jesus, its meaning in imperial discourse is subverted; the catachresis thus implies resistance against the stranglehold of the cross, making possible a new empowered

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[213] Dawsey, 153. I do quibble with Dawsey's terminology of "theology" here. The Cross, I think, is more emblematic of a social-subversion technique.

[214] Reid, 1. Reid discusses how certain contemporary women view "taking up their cross" and translate it to the suffering in their lives (17). Reid, however, notes potential dangers in this attitude, arguing that it could be construed as a method of control over women who are suffering in specific situations; i.e., domestic abuse (see 1, 31–33).

[215] David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, & Power* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 71.

[216] Kertzer, 123.

subjectivity …Without being openly oppositional and rebellious, then, the catachrestic use of [the cross] was profoundly subversive.[217] As a result, Mark assaults a symbol of an oppressive political institution, "an institution closely aligned with, and subservient to, the traditionally dominant segment of society."[218] The ramification of such an action strips the symbol of its oppressive mythology. In other words, Mark demythologizes it. By manipulating and flipping a repressive symbol into a positive one, he robs a highly oppressive symbol of Roman domination of its aura, anxiety, and impact.

Overall, Mark is attempting to reconstitute his social identity. He renegotiates and establishes socio-cultural institutional classifications and provides a symbolic rallying point. As Smith states, "Once an individual or culture has expressed its vision of its place, a whole language of symbols and social structure will follow … It is through an understanding and symbolization of place that a society or individual creates itself."[219] Mark imagined, renegotiated, and reconciled a model community (or what Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie label Mark's "ideal audience")[220] based upon idyllic cosmopolitanism. Mark views the marginalized as kin in pain and alienation. Dividing the marginalized is not acceptable for Mark; this includes both Jew and Gentile. He envisions his desired community as both groups of peoples comprising a new social institution based upon his idyllic cosmopolitan proclivities. Ernest Best uses Jesus' feeding miracles to illustrate this point. He states, "The union of Jew and Gentile in the new community may be part of the reason Mark has two feedings, that of the five thousand is for Jews and that of the four

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[217] Leander, 247.

[218] Lincoln, *Discourse*, 127.

[219] Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Influence of Symbols Upon Social Change," in *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978); 129–146, 141, 143.

[220] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, 138.

thousand for Gentiles; the two are then unified in the one loaf (8:14–21) which alone is necessary and is sufficient for both."[221] Jeffrey W. Aernie applies the hemorrhaging woman narrative in Mark 5:25–34 as another example of a restored community: "her narrative is a portrait of restored discipleship."[222] He states, "Jesus' personal engagement with the woman also reflects a significant transition in Mark's narrative. She is no longer defined in reference to her chronic bleeding. She is a daughter—a member of the community. Jesus' words evoke the reality of her restored identity."[223] The affliction that marginalized this woman is now cured. She is now the recipient of a re-established community. One can see how this curative could be applied to Mark's social diasporic condition.[224]

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[221] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 4, 1981), 218.

[222] Jeffrey W. Aernie, *Narrative Discipleship: Portraits of Women in the Gospel of Mark* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishing, 2018), 65.

[223] Aernie, 65.

[224] It should be noted that not all scholars agree that Mark should be read as a "collective" reconciliation. For example, see Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 144–146. She argues that during Mark's compositional timeframe, "two elements are constant, however, in Jewish literature of the time, namely, that resurrection is a collective even and that it is an event of the future. The picture of Daniel 12 is collective but not universal … In Maccabees the emphasis is on the restoration of individuals … I submit that the author of Mark did something analogous. He was convinced that what actually had happened was that Jesus had been raised from the dead … he described that event in what seemed to him the most appropriate way … The creation of the empty tomb story shows that the author of Mark had a notion of resurrection closer to that of 2 Maccabees than to that of Daniel 12 … The Christian affirmation was that a single individual, Jesus, had been raised from the dead. Apart from the usual collective context of the Jewish notion of resurrection." Collins' arguments here are unconvincing. As previously argued, Mark displays an in-depth knowledge of Prophetic literature. Therefore, it is more likely that he refers to restoration in the collective sense, as seen in Isiah and Daniel.

Conclusion: Jesus the Social Healer

Many scholars have examined the concept or notion of Jesus as a healer because "The gospels are replete with stories of Jesus healing, exorcising, forgiving, and bringing wounded people to wholeness."[225] For example, Geza Vermes claims that Jesus was a popular healer and exorcist for "the sick and possessed."[226] Mathew also proclaims, "There was another appeal which Jesus made to the crowds that gathered about him, his power to cure the sick."[227] Therefore, "As a healer, Jesus belongs within a category of charismatic or shamanistic figures found in the ancient world."[228] Continuing this trajectory, certain scholars discuss the particular reasons why Jesus performed healings. Gerald O'Collins, utilizing Mark 2:1–12 as a reference, argues "This story from Mark sets what is visible over against what is invisible: the visible power exercised by Jesus in curing the paralytic as evidence for his invisible power to forgive sins."[229] O'Collins see this line of thought as the overall motif for healing narratives. In regard to afflicted people, he states, "His visible handicapped condition reflected and symbolized something invisibly wrong with him in his relationship with God. Jesus dealt with the visible and the invisible handicap."[230] O'Collins' argument, however, relies purely on individual experience, physically and spiritually. He briefly

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[225] Reid, 143.

[226] Geza Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus* (Toronto: Penguin Press, 2000), 163.

[227] Mathews, 47. However, Mathews mainly discusses the perceived historical figure of Jesus, rather than the narrative character portrayed by the gospel author.

[228] Jan-Olav Henriksen and Karl Olav Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer: A Gospel for the Body* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 21. However, Henriksen and Sandnes later argue that Jesus was portrayed, and thus should be seen, as "unique" (23).

[229] Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus: A Portrait* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 53. O'Collins states that a person who was healed received forgiveness for their sins: "This story from Mark sets what is visible against what is invisible: the visible power exercised by Jesus in curing the paralytic as evidence for his invisible power to forgive sins" (53).

[230] O'Collins, 67.

states that Jesus' healing of the leper resulted in a restored life.[231] Again, this is centred on

individual restoration. Don Capps instead opts for a psychosomatic interpretation to Jesus'

healings.[232] Capps thinks that the healing participants had a mental illness that manifested into

physical ailments, possibly due to Hellenistic cities and policies. Capps' concern, however, runs

into the same problem as O'Collins' interpretation, namely, a complete emphasis on the

individual. Another scholar who places prominence on the "healed" individuals is Gerd

Theissen.[233] Theissen argues that the healing narratives are not creative endeavours from the

Gospel authors, but are somehow based upon historicity—"they are no invention."[234] He argues

that Jesus employed faith as a type of "placebo effect" in combination with ritual. This placebo

improves "the general conditions of health and thereby makes it easier to live with an illness."[235]

Overall, the problem with these arguments is that they entirely disregard social "illness," which

mainly stems from dislocation and alienation. Additionally, all assume these healing stories are

based upon a dependable foundation. Their entire arguments revolve around the postulation of

"why" the individuals were healed to "why" Jesus felt inclined to treat them. This argument

disregards the actual author of the gospels. Mark's ideology, purpose, and discourse would not

completely resemble past concerns. Furthermore, Mark produced a narrative, one that displays his

dispositions and proclivities and therefore does not fit with assumptions and conjectures regarding

the "Historical Jesus" and his patients.

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[231] See O'Collins, 51.

[232] Don Capps, *Jesus the Village Psychiatrist* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

[233] See Gerd Theissen, "Jesus and His Followers as Healers: Symbolic Healing in Early Christianity," in *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy* (eds. William S. Sax, Johannes Quack, and Jan Weinhold; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 45–65; Gerd Theissen, *Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (trans. Francis Mcdonagh; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983).

[234] Theissen, "*Jesus and His Followers as Healers*," 50.

[235] Theissen, "*Jesus and His Followers as Healers*," 55.

Regardless of a hypothetical "why" Jesus performed healings, scholarly debate revolves around a perceived dichotomy of "curing disease" and "healing illness."[236] This polemic stems from recent scholarship employing a medical anthropological method for studying healings in antiquity and other scholars who see the method as helpful but ultimately inadequate.[237] Medical anthropology attempts to examine the cultural representations of sickness and health, overcoming ethnocentric notions of medicine, especially in regard to modern Western biomedicine as the definitive, and seemingly axiomatic, reality. Perhaps the influential medical anthropological study was John J. Pilch's *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology*.[238] Pilch states, "What a Western reader might interpret as a loss of function, namely lameness, an ancient reader would see as a disvalued state of being."[239] The sense of devaluing derives from one's reception, or lack thereof, within their community. Mediterranean

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[236] See John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) for a categorical review and observation.

[237] For example, see Pieter F. Craffert, "Medical Anthropology as an Antidote for Ethnocentrism in Jesus Research? Putting the Illness-Disease Distinction into Perspective," in *Harvard Theological Studies* 61.1 (2011). Craffert argues that Jesus should be perceived as a type of shamanic healer. Also see John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus and the Challenge of Collaborative Eschatology," in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy; Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic Press, 2009), 127–129. For counter views, see Henriksen and Sandnes. They suggest that illness and disease should not be seen as separate categories. Rather, "The two are not necessarily separate realities" (32); Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2010); Wendy J. Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic Press, 2010). However, Henriksen and Sandnes, Gaiser, and Cotter's oppositional views fall into the trap of historical assumption and conflating numerous independent text to provide an all-encompassing interpretation. Additionally, some arguments rely on the anachronism of "Christology" for explanation (see Henriksen and Sandnes, 39, in particular).

[238] John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

[239] Pilch, 13.

culture highly depended on social cooperation and the reciprocation, especially under the social umbrella, of kinship. Pilch states,

> Emphasis on collateral relationships or cooperation with others (rather than competition) is also revealed in passages that reflect aspects of dyadic contract as well as patron-client relationships … Jesus himself advises the seventy of an alternative, acceptable form of reciprocity in terms of collateral relationships … Healing, then, can be an integral part of collateral relationships … The people who appear in Mark's gospel are collectivistic or dyadic personalities, that is, individuals who depend heavily on the opinions and evaluations of others; they are socialized to intense group orientation rather than individualism … The person's focus is on social relations or kinship.[240]

Since kinship was a major formal social institution in antiquity, one's removal from the institution resulted in a form of social illness. Jesus accounts for this exclusion (sickness), and his healings result in social reintegration. Pilch employs Jesus' healing of the leper as an example. Traditionally, leprosy could result in the removal from the community; however, through Jesus' healing, the former leper was allowed back into his social institution. Pilch states, "Jesus' willingness to associate with lepers … reduces the social and cultural oppressiveness of exclusion from the community … Jesus reduces and removes the experiential oppressiveness associated with such afflictions. In all instances of healing, meaning is restored to life and the sufferer is returned to purposeful living."[241] Another example is Mark 1:30–31. The narrative describes Peter's mother-in-law being confined to bed with a fever, a sickness that secludes her from her kinship relations, duties, and status. However, after Jesus lifts her fever, "she began to serve them" or "waited upon them" (καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός, καὶ διηκόνει αὐτοῖς). Upon being healed, Peter's mother-in-law immediately returned to her previous duties and status; therefore, she is once again apart of her kinship community. Overall, Pilch's argument is that

> Healers mediate culture … [Therefore,] human sickness, or illness, can thus be conceived as a coherent syndrome of meaning and experience that is linked to society's deep

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[240] Pilch, 9, 65.
[241] Pilch, 14.

semantic and value structures … System can be viewed at a macro-level (whole societies or regions) or at a micro-level (localities: communities, neighbourhoods, groups of families) … [Jesus] provides social meaning for the life problems resulting from the sickness … [and] highlights the importance of key cultural factors in the text, such as kinship, social networks, power/authority, and the like.[242]

Despite Pilch's important arguments of healings as social reinstatement, he could, I think, push the point further, namely, into Mark's social narrative layer. In other words, Jesus presented as a social healer within a socio-ethnic restorative text. After Jerusalem's takeover, the temple's destruction, and the resulting exile, a social curative was essential. In every healing narrative (Mark 1:23–31, 40–45; 2:1–12; 3:1–6; 5:1–34; 6:54–56; 7:24–37; 8:22–26; 9:14–27; 10:46–52), the sick show symptomatic conditions (such as leprosy) that would somehow exclude them from their kinship and community, or they are encumbered with an ailment (for example, a withered hand) that would prevent them from participating and working in their community, thereby establishing, determining, and labelling them a social hindrance or liability. Additionally, Mark laments and even condemns previous attempts at social healing from other "professional" physicians. For example, Mark 5:26 states, "And much suffering under many healers and spent all she had, and nothing benefited but rather became worse" (καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλ ον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα"). Mark, again, is chiding a previous social institution, one that can be presumed lost, as being inadequate. His reflective consideration and ultimate judgement are clearly on display; indeed, all the previous afflictions separated and segregated the sufferers from their social identities.

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[242] Pilch, 15, 42, 61, 72–73.

Overall, Mark reimagines his lost "here" and "there" identities by narrating Jesus as a sort of all-in-one kingly/priestly figure. Even though his social organizations are in chaos, Mark's narrative myth-making attempts to reconcile and conflate these lost institutions through the character of Jesus. Despite the organizational disarray, lost social institutions can be reconciled, reconfigured and reimagined through the narrative figure of Jesus. Rectification can also be accomplished through a projected autonomous existence by reclassifying the Kingdom of God as a universal institution. Overall, Mark's narrative can be seen as a type of institutional bricolage consisting of a reclaimed lost temple, lost priestly order, and lost community. Though this bricolage, one can still connect to their lost national institutions, albeit in a different manner, namely, by re-establishing their place from "there" to "anywhere." Mark's exilic circumstance, stemming from the Judean War, provided a situation that forced him to rethink his nationhood and identity. The physical detachment and loss of "here" space were resolved by a universal application. He also rethought lost socio-ethnic institutions of "there" by resituating their functions and activities onto the character of Jesus. The narrative surrounding the bricolage "anywhere" institutional replacements is Mark's attempt to reconsider his identity and nationhood within his new social surroundings. Overall, Mark is faced with various situation incongruities and is forced to rethink how his socio-ethnic identity utilizes, and reflects upon, previous socio-ethnic institutions. Jonathan Z. Smith splendidly summarizes Mark's circumstances and response:

> Each society has moments of ritualized disjunction, moments of "descent into chaos," or ritual reversal, of liminality, of collective anomie. But these are part of a highly structured scenario in which these moments will be overcome through the creation of a new world, the raising of an individual to a new status, or the strengthening of community … When the world is perceived to be chaotic, reversed, liminal, filled with anomie. Then man finds himself in a world which he does not recognize; and perhaps even more terrible, man finds himself to have a self he does not recognize. Then he will need to create a new world, to express his sense of a new place.[243]

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[243] Smith, *Influence of Symbols*, 145–146.

Conclusion

It is evident that an author finding themselves in a new situational incongruity of exile will attempt to search for, or rethink, their socio-cultural identity, alienation, and dislocation through the process of myth-making. The method of thinking through their new situation is a two-step process. First, various lamentations mourning the loss of their previous social order occur. However, during their lamenting process, exilic authors also attempt to reconcile and construct a new form of social order that stems from and builds upon their previous one. A rebuilding of their social order is accomplished through a reflective thought process—what went wrong, why it went wrong, and so forth. Conclusions vary, but most exilic authors try to find possible solutions. This examination was an endeavour to locate Mark within these criteria. To accomplish this, I examined the social-historical context of the text, explored various theoretical approaches and themes of exilic literature, displayed how Mark laments the loss of previous social-cultural institutions, and finally discussed how he attempts to rectify this social incongruity.

The examination began with an analysis of Mark's socio-historical context, which was essential for establishing possible sentiments and motivations. Chapter 1 was an exploration of Mark's socio-historical background and engaged with the challenging issues of dating and physically locating the text's composition. I agreed with approaches that date Mark in a post–70 CE setting and provided arguments as to why I am inclined to concur with this compositional date. An understanding of the Jewish revolt, the destruction of Jerusalem's temple, and the occupation of the city are vital social factors for establishing a timeframe. Additionally, an investigation into the Palestinian post-revolt economic system was undertaken. The issues of additional taxes, forced dislocation, and potential vocational tribulations were examined to emphasize a post–70 CE date of composition. The second issue I discussed was a possible

physical location for situating Mark. Confirmation of a possible compositional origin is ultimately

unattainable, but I found the argument of a Syrian, or Northern Galilee, location most convincing.

Additionally, I engaged with Mark's perceived polemics and social tensions. Finally, this section

concluded with an examination of Mark's supposed audience. Despite assumptions that Mark was

addressing, or representing, a specific community, I argued that these suppositions are ultimately

precarious.

Chapter 2 was dedicated to examining various theories of nationhood, nation, and

nationality concerning exilic identity and utilizing exilic and post-colonial literature as references.

Employing Chris Abani's "positive" and "negative" forms of exilic discourse,[1] the importance of

employing exilic writing to provide insights on social groups, community affiliations, and

political/systemic prejudices was accentuated. Then, I argued that urban exilic authors are

typically knowledgeable in idyllic "cosmopolitan" rhetoric. To emphasize this point, I suggested

that urbanization aids in creating specific cultural discourses while proclaiming inclusive ideals.

Finally, this chapter illustrated how the concepts of nation, identity, place, and exile are essential

for an examination of Mark. I contended that Mark was located in an urban intellectual setting.

This explanation aids in elucidating his intellectual idyllic cosmopolitan constructions.

Chapter 3 provided numerous explanations and examples of Mark's lamentation

sentiments, namely, lost socio-cultural institutional representations, symbols, and forms of

identity. First, it examined specific manifestations of Mark's incongruity, namely, emotions of

alienation and the physical and emotional loss of social institutions stemming from a post–70 CE

setting, a setting of failed rebellion and Jerusalem's destroyed temple that culminates with the

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[1] See Chris Abani, "Resisting the Anomie: Exile and the Romantic Self," in *Creativity in Exile* (ed. Michael Hanne; Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V., 2004), 21–30.

production of a new diaspora. All resulted in Mark questioning his self-identification. In general,

exilic authors struggle with the notion of lost identity by mourning their lost identification

markers. Although Mark is distraught over his temporal dislocation, he also displays alienation

from his previous socio-cultural institutions. He does so through portrayals of signs of

disillusionment and frustration with the former authoritative groups and the Roman imperial

authorities. Mark's disappointment with certain institutional bodies stems from his loss of "home"

and identity. Writing in the immediate, or near-immediate, aftermath of the rebellion, he knew

that previous socio-identification institutions were now missing. Additionally, the temple's

destruction resulted in the disorder of the previously established institutional

representation. Overall, Mark questions his self-identity through sentiments of social alienation.

This chapter began with an examination of Mark's disillusionment with Roman authority. Then it

investigated Mark partaking in inter-Jewish polemics in the form of establishing previous temple

leadership as being corrupt. The next section focused on the disciples' depiction and argued that

Mark used the disciples as symbolic representations of his social separation and alienation.

Following that, the social ramifications of lost identity were inspected through the temple's

destruction. Finally, the concluding section examined the Passion narrative and how Mark

displays his sentiments of loss and alienation through the crucifixion episode. Overall, the central

motif of this chapter was Mark attempting to convey his emotions through lamenting lost socio-

cultural institutions and their representatives.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I provided an examination of Mark's socio-cultural institutional

reconciliation, arguing that Mark's composition was more than a lamentation text. It also displays

an active intellectual attempt to reconcile his social-cultural identification issues. Doing so results

in a creation process, through narrative, of a perceived or prescribed definitive solution. First,

Mark constructs a reconciliation narrative in regard to why the temple was destroyed. He concludes that due to perceived official corruption, the vital socio-cultural identifier was demolished and then universalized. Next, I examined Mark's method of recouping and rectifying the lost authoritative socio-cultural representatives by eliminating the need for a priestly class and replacing their responsibilities with the new mobile ("anywhere") authority figure using familiar authoritative tropes and imagery. Finally, I investigated Mark's attempt to overcome his social alienation by reconstructing and re-establishing an ideal community, one that could identify and resonate with Mark's sentiments and dispositions, namely, the socially marginalized, alienated, and subjugated. I concluded by suggesting that Mark employs Jesus as a social healer for these illnesses. In other words, Jesus does not merely heal individuals, but reconciles and restores communities.

Undergirding the entire project was Jonathan Z. Smith's essay "There, Here, and Anywhere."[2] This theory was essential for my arguments. With the loss of socio-cultural institutional stability, Mark reconceptualizes the institutional framework from "here" and "there" categories into an "anywhere" association. The lost socio-cultural institutions consisted of physical representation (i.e., the temple) to authoritative terrestrial representatives. By universalizing these lost social institutions, Mark reconciles his social incongruities through an intellectual reflective process. Overall, I demonstrated that exilic authors could simultaneously lament and reconcile their social incongruities through re-establishing, remoulding, and reconfiguring lost socio-cultural institutions. This project examined how an early exilic author attempted to locate himself within his new social reality by redefining institutional space. Through

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[2] See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Here, There, and Anywhere," in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 323–339.

an examination of Mark, I argued that the sentiments of alienation, disillusionment, and

dislocation manifested as practical apprehensions and concerns, specifically, in dealing with lost

political or socio-cultural institutions. Then Mark endeavours to reconcile his losses with an

idyllic cosmopolitanism stemming from idealistic and romanticized urban discourses. In other

words, Mark is a cosmopolitan prescribing cosmopolitan proclivity, dispositions, and ideals. This

idyllic reconciliation results in a narrative that reimagines a new, all-encompassing universal

"anywhere" national institution comprised and projected through the narrative figure of Jesus with

a primary concern for the socially marginalized and alienated. Even though the author's national

organizations or institutions are in disarray, he creates a narrative classifying Jesus as a sort of

authoritative priestly figure who then becomes a universal mediator to facilitate and enable people

to encounter the still-present sacred through a newly developed communal arrangement. Mark's

Jesus is an all-in-one narrative character developed through a myth-making process. Despite

socio-cultural organizational confusion, lost institutions are reconfigured or reimagined through

the narrative figure of Jesus. Overall, the narrative picture of Jesus in Mark can be seen as a type

of collective institutional bricolage, and though this bricolage character, one can still connect to

their lost socio-cultural institutions, albeit in a different manner.

In conclusion, by using Jonathan Z. Smith's theories of "here," "there," and "anywhere"

and the rectification of situational incongruities,[3] I argued that Mark encompasses these

techniques. Through a post-colonial lens, my investigation concerning issues and concepts of

exile, alienation, and identity brought forth a specific reading of Mark concerning his post-war

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[3] See Jonathan Z. Smith, "A Pearl of Great Price and a Cargo of Yams," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 90–101. Smith compares the Babylonian Akitu festival with the Ceramese myth of Hainuwele as examples of "a difficult and incongruous present … that both of these texts have in common the attempt at rectification" (101).

socio-historical circumstances. Employing this theoretical method allowed me to argue that

Mark, living in a new post-war reality, suffered from social alienation and a socio-ethnic identity

existential crisis. However, while lamenting, Mark processed his new reality and created ideas,

concepts, and notions to aid his ills. Being an urban intellectual, he utilized and advocated an

urban idyllic cosmopolitan discourse. However, his worldly social dispositions are not unique in

terms of exilic literature. Many intellectual authors living in exile portray, illustrate and prescribe

a similar position. Through creative thinking and applying authoritative rhetoric, Mark

accomplished a method of social and identity reconciliation to overcome his situational

incongruity. Examining exilic theories and literature aided my argument that Mark was an urban

intellectual reflecting common metropolitan proclivities. To reinforce my case, I applied textual

examples of Mark's lamentation and reconciliation methods. I believe my textual examples, and

the conclusions of such texts, are what separate my examination from previous scholarship.

While understanding that a definitive understanding of Mark's writing is ultimately

unobtainable, I believe my contribution to the conversation of Markan scholarship will be

beneficial. As Smith states, "For if we do not persist in the quest for intelligibility, there can be

no human sciences, let alone any place for the study of religion within them."[4]

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[4] Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Devil in Mr. Jones," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 102–120.

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