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Selected Characterization of Women in Mark: Based on an Anthropology of Gender from Pierre Bourdieu and the First Century

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1. *Narrative Theory of Characterization*

As important as the identity of the historical author and audience of the Gospel of Mark may be, this study will focus on the literary concepts of actual author, implied author and implied audience in the creation of characterization of women in Mark. The actual author decides *how* to tell the narrative of Mark. In literary analysis, the way a narrative is told is called discourse.[1] The

1. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 9. Russian Formalists have a similar dualist model distinguishing *fabula* ('story/tale': the sequence of events referred to in a narrative in their causal, chronological order) from *sjužet* ('discourse'—the sequence of events in the actual order in which they appear in the narrative). Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky opines, 'In brief, the story is "the action itself," the plot, "how the reader learns of the action"' (see 'Thematics', in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis [eds. and trans.], *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* [Regents Critics; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965], pp. 66, 67 n. 5, 68). See also James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 9; Tzvetan Todorov distinguishes between *histoire* ('story': a reality of events that would have passed—events reported) and *discours* ('the manner in which the narrator makes events known to us') (see 'The Categories of Literary Narrative', *Papers on*

actual author also creates the person who tells the story of Mark. This narrator is called the implied author. The implied author may, or may not, be like the actual author. For instance, Robert Frost is described by biographers to be a difficult, eccentric person in real life. However, the person who tells his poems is often someone you wish was your neighbor.[2] That is an example of an implied author created by the actual author who is distinct from the actual author. The actual author also creates an implied audience by writing to imagined readers or listeners who have preunderstandings about first-century culture, namely, values, norms, social habits and expectations. The actual author will develop the narrative in a way the implied audience will understand so that the implied audience can create characterization through its interaction with the discourse and its preunderstandings. One reason a present-day audience finds an older work hard to understand is because it does not share the knowledge base needed to align itself with the actual author and implied audience.[3] It is essential for the present-day reader to be educated in the first-century valorization of characterization to understand how characterization is developed by discourse in the narrative and understood by the implied audience. Characterization developed in the narrative may align with historical, social values for men and women or may oppose, or modify, historical/social values.

Accordingly, the first part of this paper will explain some of the social-cultural preunderstandings about women and men in the first century shared

Language & Literature 50 (2014), pp. 381-424 [383-84] [trans. Joseph Kestner]). Mieke Ball follows a three-layer distinction of narrative text (a finite, structured whole composed of language signs that tells a story), story (the sequence of events), and *fabula* (a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors—the way in which events are presented) (*Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd edn, 1997], pp. 5-6). See also Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 2003), p. 152 n. 2. For ease of reference and clarity, I will use Chatman's categories of 'story' and 'discourse' in this discussion.

2. See discussion by Wayne C. Booth, 'Resurrection of the Implied Author: Why Bother?', in James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (eds.), *A Companion to Narrative Theory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 79-80.

3. Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences', *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977), pp. 121-41 (127).

by the actual author and the implied audience of Mark. These first-century understandings will be developed by looking at socio-analytic studies conducted by Pierre Bourdieu of the Berbers of Kabylia in Algeria as representative of the first-century Mediterranean world, and then by historical research on women in Greece, the eastern Roman empire and Israel. The second part of this paper will discuss characterization in selective Markan narratives of women in view of a first-century anthropology of gender. This study of characterization will show that the actual/implied author of Mark has deliberately established a personhood of women who perform decisively outside the first-century setting of the 'house' and push against engendered social hierarchies.

2. *First-Century Understandings of Women and Men*

Identifying the social patterns and habits of women in first-century Galilee and Judea is difficult not only because of the multiplicity of cultures present in this geographical area (Jewish, Greek, Roman), but because of the difficulty in discerning how men and women interacted in society through written texts and archeology alone.[4] Although material from the Old Testament and rabbinic writings offers some help, they often talk more about 'how the lawgivers, prophets and rabbis said one ought to live' than about how people actually did live.[5] Bruce Malina observed that meanings include models of society and social science.[6] Accordingly, Carol Meyers acknowledges the need to depend on extrapolations from current sociological and anthropological

4. Francis Gerald Downing, 'In Quest of First-Century C.E. Galilee', *CBQ* 66 (2004), pp. 78-97 (86); Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1995), p. 21.

5. See Moses I. Finley, review of *Daily Life in Palestine at the Time of Christ* (trans. Patrick O'Brian; New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), by Henri Daniel-Rops, in *New Statesman* (November 1, 1963), pp. 47-48; Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), p. ix (but Corley herself bases her analysis of women upon written sources).

6. Bruce J. Malina, 'Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation: Reflections on Tradition and Practice', *Int* 36 (1982), pp. 229-42 (233). See also Downing, 'In Quest of First-Century C.E. Galilee', p. 93.

studies to arrive at ancient people's roles and interactions.[7] Anthropological and social studies of twentieth-century peasant communities have provided helpful suggestions for interpreting the social, interpersonal culture of the first-century Mediterranean world.[8]

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's socio-analytic studies in the 1960s in Algeria among the Berbers of Kabylia provide suggestions for interpreting the social, interpersonal culture of the first-century Mediterranean world. Aspects of Bourdieu's work can be used to analyze how characters are infused with values that are different for men and for women. Bourdieu's analysis will be followed by an overview of Greek, Israelite and eastern Roman women in the first century.

a. *First-Century Women and Pierre Bourdieu*

Broadly speaking, Kabayle society adheres through family relationships, and these relationships run through the father. The father is the patriarch—the leader, priest and judge—with power over family life and organization. He decides and presides over family ceremonies, marriage and counsels.[9] A woman remains subject to paternal authority throughout her life. She transitions from her position under her father to a position under her husband, but the entire goal of the marriage is to strengthen family ties.[10] The mother supervises the domestic tasks and helps the father in his management of the family. She also represents the power of the father in female society.[11]

Bourdieu sought to resolve the antinomy of objectivism and subjectivism through the concept of *habitus*—a 'system of durable, transposable disposi-

7. Carol L Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 18-20, 139-64. See also Pomeroy who states, '[I]t is impossible to draw any conclusions about social systems in prehistory in the absence of written documents from the time' (*Goddesses*, p. 15).

8. Jerome H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke–Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

9. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Algerians* (trans. Alan C.M. Ross; Boston: Beacon Press, rev. edn, 1962), pp. 3-4.

10. Bourdieu, *Algerians*, p. 8.

11. Bourdieu, *Algerians*, p. 6.

tions'.[12] By 'dispositions', Bourdieu means 'the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination'.[13]

An example of *habitus* is observed in the division of labor between men and women of the Kabyle. *Men's work is primarily outdoors* as they take goats and sheep to the market, work in the fields plowing, sowing, harvesting and winnowing, transport dung on the back of animals, knock down trees, build roofs for houses and create utensils from wood and slaughter animals. Indoors, men only feed cattle at night, and the broom was prohibited to a man. *Women's work was primarily indoors.* They brought supplies into the house, tied up cattle brought back to the house from the fields, cooked, wove, milled, cared for the garden, transported seed-corn, dung (on back), water, wood, stones for house building, gathered olives, figs, acorns and twigs and kneaded by hand clay for the house and the threshing floor.[14]

Discussing this division of labor, Bourdieu emphasized how it manifests more than tasks, but global oppositions of male and female:[15]

Male	Female
up	down
above	below
in front	behind
right	left
straight	curved (or twisted)
dry	wet
spicy	bland
light	dark
outside (public)	inside (private)

Table 1. Male and Female Oppositions

12. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 72.

13. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 71 n. 1.

14. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 217.

15. Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 7.

These oppositions also show themselves in the structure of the Kabyle house which itself is an inverted microcosm of the world.[16] The following table is a 'synoptic diagram of pertinent oppositions' in the Kabyle world:[17]

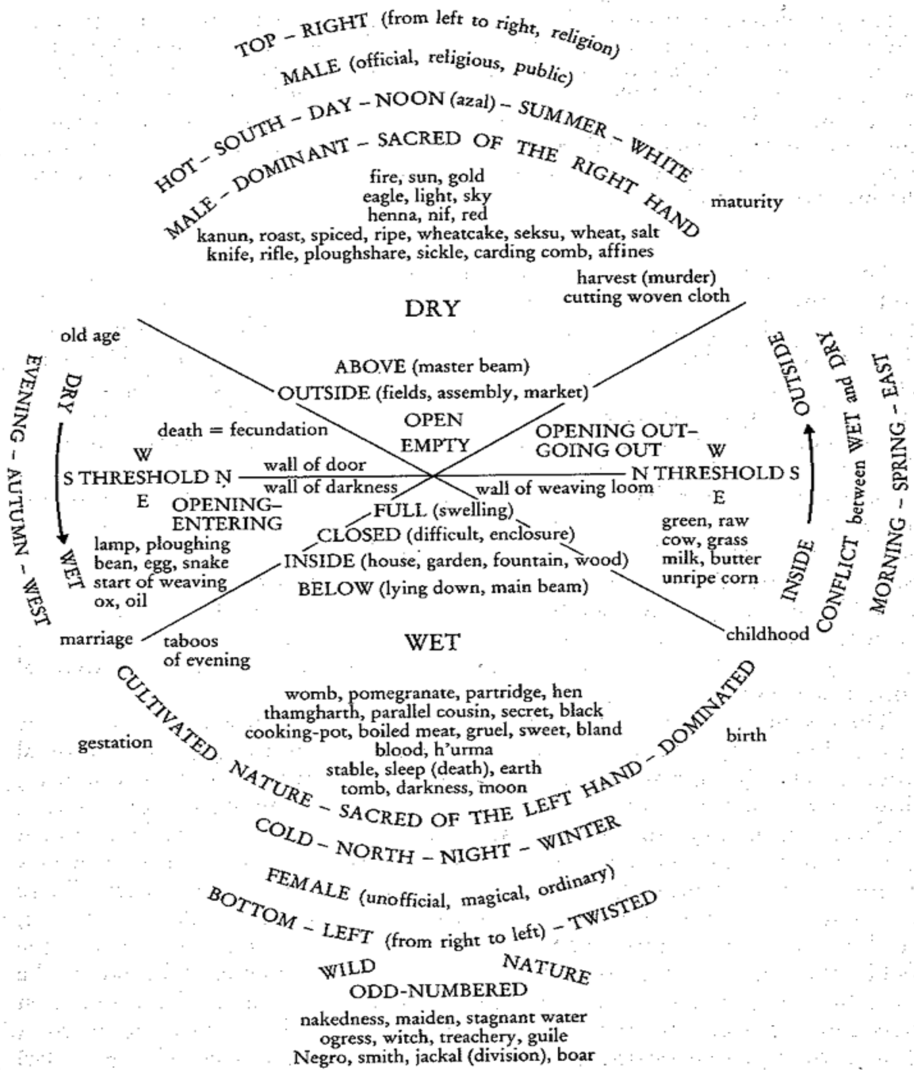


Table 2. Synoptic Diagram of Pertinent Oppositions

16. Bourdieu, *Logic*, pp. 271-83, 316-17, 317 n. 1.
17. Bourdieu, *Logic*, p. 215.

Bourdieu explains: 'This table can be read either in terms of the vertical oppositions (dry/wet, top/bottom, right/left, male/female, etc.) or in terms of the processes (e.g. those of the cycle of life: marriage, gestation, birth, etc., or of the farming year) and movements (opening/closing, going in/coming out, etc.).'[18] Bourdieu further explains:

> The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded: it is the sexual division of labour, a very strict distribution of the activities assigned to each sex, of their place, time and instruments; it is the structure of space, *with the opposition between the place of assembly or the market, reserved for men, and the house, reserved for women*, or, within the house, between the *male part*, the hearth, and the *female part*—the stable, the water and vegetable stores; it is the structure of time, the day and the farming year, or the cycle of life, with its *male* moments of rupture and the long *female* periods of gestation.
>
> The social world constructs the body as a sexually defined reality and as the depository of sexually defining principles of vision and division. This embodied social programme of perception is applied to all the things of the world and firstly to the *body* itself, in its biological reality. It is this programme which constructs the difference between the biological sexes in conformity with the principles of a mythic vision of the world rooted in the arbitrary relationship of domination of men over women, itself inscribed, with the division of labour, in the reality of the social order.[19]

The Kabyle house is a microcosm of the universe reflecting the place of a woman and a man in the world:

> Considered in relation to the male world of public life and farming work, *the house*, the universe of women, is *h'aram*, that is to say, both sacred and illicit for any man who is not part of it (hence the expression used in swearing an oath: 'May my wife (or, my house) become illicit (*h'aram*) to me if …') …

18. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, p. 12.
19. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, pp. 9-11 (emphasis mine).

> *The woman can be said to be confined to the house only so long as it is also pointed out that the man is kept out of it, at least in the daytime. A man's place is outside, in the fields or in the assembly*; boys are taught this at a very early age … As soon as the sun has risen, in summer, a man must be out in the fields or at the assembly; in winter, if he is not in the fields, he must be at the assembly or on the benches set in the shelter of the pentroof over the door to the courtyard …
>
> It is understandable that all biological activities, sleeping, eating, procreating, should be banished from the external universe … and *confined to the house, the sanctuary of privacy and the secrets of nature, the world of woman, who is assigned to the management of nature and excluded from public life*. In contrast to man's work, which is performed outdoors, *woman's work is essentially obscure and hidden*.[20]

If Bourdieu is taken seriously on the categories that he has typified in the making of social order and how these also perform in the making of cosmic order, then the differentiations in 'above' and 'below', 'right versus left', 'wet versus dry', 'hot versus cold', 'in versus out', etc. should also be considered in the *how* of characterization. When related to gender, it becomes taken-for-granted that a man would be allocated to the position of 'above', would be seen as 'hotter' than a woman, would rather be 'dry' whereas a woman could be casted in the role of a 'leaking vessel'. Greek physician, Hippocrates (ca. 460–370 BCE), aligns with Bourdieu about women being associated with 'wet' and men being associated with 'dry' when he states, 'the female flourishes more in an environment of water, from things cold and wet and soft, whether food or drink or activities. The male flourishes more in an environment of fire, from dry, hot foods and mode of fire.'[21] And these categories all contribute to a social hierarchy in which women are seen as inferior, their bodies as defective, their virtue-potential as lacking, and always in need of control and guidance by men.

In some way, the *act* of characterization draws upon these habituated resources. It could be argued that Bourdieu's work, as an interpretive analytic, points us to look for fixed norms that function as ready-made, fixed, unquestionable knowledge within a society. The making of characters in a literary

20. Bourdieu, *Logic*, pp. 275-76 (emphasis mine).

21. Hippocrates, *Nat. hom*. (Jones, LCL); Hippocrates, *Acut*. (Jones, LCL); Hippocrates, *Aph*. (Jones, LCL); Josephus, *War* 2.233-235 (Thackeray, LCL).

work can hardly avoid creating them from this reservoir of already existing knowledge since it would be impossible for its implied audience not to identify this existing knowledge in the reading/listening process. Bourdieu's categories will be used to show how the implied audience and the actual reader determine whether the characters who have been created were in sync with the norms that were at work during the time of writing or in confrontation with those norms in the Gospel of Mark.

b. *Greek and Israelite Women*

Many of Bourdieu's descriptions of women among the Kabyle find parallels in writings about historical Greek and Israelite women. There are less similarities between the life of Roman women in the western Roman Empire and in northern Africa than with Israelite women living in the eastern Roman Empire.[22] Even if the Gospel of Mark was originally delivered to a Roman audience, the women described in its narrative are those living in the eastern Roman Empire. Therefore, they are generally described in the Markan narrative within the context of more conservative eastern Roman Empire cultural settings. The implied author of Mark does provide a broader description of a woman's right to divorce her husband (Mk 10.12) than was the experience of most women in Israel, but this more-inclusive language may be due to the narrative world of Mark where Herodias divorced her husband Herod Philip to marry Herod Antipas, the brother of Herod Philip (see Mk 6.18-19).[23] Even though the Herodian dynasty lived in and around Israel, they were royalty, held power by Roman decree and lived lives affiliated with the western Empire and not the standards of the general, common populace of Israel.

Sarah Pomeroy wrote a social history of women in the Greek world (from 1184 BCE through the Hellenistic period) and in the Roman world (from the Roman Republic through the Empire to the death of Constantine in 337 CE). Pomeroy broadly concluded that even though Roman women were not excluded from social, political and cultural life to the same extent as Greek

22. See the discussion by Cynthia Long Westfall who describes a continuum from more restrictive to less restrictive roles for women in the following geographical order: Athens, Jerusalem, Rome and Alexandria in *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), p. 16.

23. Josephus, *Ant*. 7 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL).

women, 'Roman society never encouraged women to engage in the same activities as men in the same social class.'[24]

Hennie Marsman studied women in Ugarit, a polytheistic kingdom situated on the coast of Syria at the latitude of Cyprus during the Bronze Age (ca. 1400–1185 BCE) and monotheistic Israel as revealed in the canonical Hebrew Scriptures, extra-biblical texts and data from Mesopotamia, Egypt and Hatti to determine if there was any difference in the position of women in the Ugarit and Israeli cultures.[25] After examining documents addressing the social position of women in the family, society, the court, property, rights, business, professions, domestic activities and slavery, Marsman concluded:

> I have demonstrated that by and large, leaving aside minor differences, the social and religious position of women was the same in Ugarit and Israel, and as far as I was able to ascertain, in the ancient Near East as a whole. Everywhere women were subordinated to men, even though women belonging to the upper classes often enjoyed somewhat more freedom than other women.[26]

1. *Greek Women*. As Froma Zeitlin explained, when one looks at gods in the eras of Archaic (eighth to sixth centuries BCE) and Classical (fifth and fourth centuries BCE) Greece, often the categories of male and female are not limited to anatomical and physiological characteristics but are associated with 'socially prescribed traits, roles, and obligations'[27] or *habitus* as Bourdieu would describe. Those in ancient Greece lived in a divided world emphasizing distinctions between the roles, attributes, spaces, and spheres of influence for the male and female.[28] As with the Kabyle, men were associated with the hot and dry, while women were associated with the cold and wet.[29] Aristotle understood women to be deformed men noting that men were hotter than

24. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 129.

25. Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

26. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel*, p. 738.

27. Froma I. Zeitlin, 'Reflections on Erotic Desire in Archaic and Classical Greece', in James I. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 50-76 (52).

28. Zeitlin, 'Reflections', p. 58.

29. Zeitlin, 'Reflections', p. 75 n. 24.

women.[30] Furthermore, female gods had limitations even when they had some measure of 'control' over male gods. For instance, they may be able to seduce male gods, but it was the male god who could give immortality.[31] A goddess was subject to the all-too-human experiences of pregnancy and giving birth.[32] Athena was a masculine woman who found success as the goddess of wisdom and as a warrior often denying her own femininity and sexuality.[33]

For the ancient Greeks, men were thought of as stable both in the house and in the city, but women were considered mobile.[34] This mobility, when joined with issues of pollution and defilement, led to social policies that isolated the female from society.[35] Women were also considered to be wet both physiologically and psychologically while men were associated with dryness:

> Males and females would be formed, so far as possible, in the following manner. Females, inclining more to water, grow from foods, drinks and pursuits that are cold, moist and gentle. Males, inclining to fire, grow from foods and regimen that are dry and warm.[36]

In the Bronze and Homeric eras (ca. eighth century BCE), the duties of women revolved around the household—making clothing, weaving, bathing and anointing men, fetching water, grinding corn and reaping.[37]

During the Archaic period (800–500 BCE) women were primarily the bearers of children and warriors. Ionian women in Athens continued to perform the work in the household.[38] While men spent most of their days in public

30. Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 13 (Peck, LCL). See also Francis Gerald Downing, 'The Nature(s) of Christian Women and Men', *Theology* 108 (2005), pp. 178-84 (179). Eric C. Stewart, 'Masculinity in the New Testament and Early Christianity', *BTB* 46 (2016), pp. 91-102 (94).

31. Hesiod, *Op.* (Most, LCL).

32. Zeitlin, 'Reflections', p. 69.

33. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 4.

34. Anne Carson, 'Dirt and Desire: The Phenomenology of Female Pollution in Antiquity', in James I. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 77-100 (77-78).

35. Carson, 'Dirt and Desire', p. 78.

36. Hippocrates, *Nat. hom.* (Jones, LCL); Hippocrates, *Aph.* (Jones, LCL).

37. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, pp. 29-30.

38. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 43.

areas like the marketplace or the gymnasium, respectable women stayed at home and sent their servants to conduct errands.[39] Women would go out for festivals and funerals. They also prepared a human body for burial and mourned at funerals.[40] Women were always under the guardianship of a man—father, brother, husband.[41] With the growth of urbanization, women's activities were moved indoors to make them less visible. Women of the upper class supervised household activities, but many women did the work of slaves in the household creating clothing and preparing food. To protect women, they did not go to the marketplace.[42] Women did not participate in governmental or public affairs; therefore, their education was limited to domestic matters.[43] When a woman acted in a way that was not characteristic of submissiveness and modesty, they were often characterized as 'masculine'.[44]

2. *Israelite Women*. Much of what is known about Israelite women is found in rabbinic works of oral law which were later written down including the Mishnah (teaching of scholars and sages prior to 220 CE) and the encyclopedic commentary on the Mishnah known as the Talmud, whether Babylonian or Jerusalem (ca. 450 to 600 CE).[45] Ross Kraemer discusses some of the difficulties of using these written materials including their late dates.[46] But as Deborah Sawyer observes, much of the material within the Mishnah and Talmudim dates back to and prior to the first century.[47] The writers of the

39. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 79. Women usually lived in rooms away from the street or upstairs.

40. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 43.

41. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, pp. 62-63.

42. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 71.

43. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 74.

44. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, p. 98. This is also true in the Old Testament. The adjective sometimes translated as 'excellent' for a wife in Prov. 31.10 (NAS and NASB) is חַיִל ('strong' or 'powerful') (see HALOT, *s.v.* 'חַיִל'). ἀνδρείαν in the LXX means 'manly' or 'courageous' (see BDAG, *s.v.* 'ἀνδρεῖος').

45. Alfred J. Kolatch, *Who's Who in the Talmud* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, rev. edn, 1981), pp. 5-7.

46. Ross S. Kraemer, 'Jewish Women and Christian Origins: Some Caveats', in Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (eds.), *Women and Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 35-49 (37).

47. Deborah F. Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 163 n. 71.

Mishna, Tannaim and Gemara, Amoraim, were male, so the writings contain androcentric views of who women are and how they ought to act.[48] However, not all history is lost behind the veil of these male writings. The hermeneutics of suspicion that questions objectivity of an author's description of women does not mean that nothing about women's lives is recoverable from this data.

Even though Jewish people were exposed to a wider Greco-Roman culture, there is evidence that, at least in some areas, the Jews remained distinct in their culture from the western Roman Empire.[49] For instance, under Roman law, it was common for fathers and mothers to decide whether to reject a child at birth and abandon a child to exposure or infanticide.[50] However, infanticide and exposure of infants was uniformly condemned in Jewish literature.[51] Also, Roman law allowed a daughter to inherit property, but there is some evidence that the Pharisees prohibited a father's daughter from inheriting property even though the Sadducees allowed it.[52] Unlike the Roman focus of marriage around matters of status and rank, Jewish marriages were concerned with endogamy, or limiting marriage to other Jewish relatives rather than Gentiles.[53]

There is some evidence that younger, upper-class women were restricted to the house prior to marriage out of a desire to protect their purity.[54] Similar to the practice of the Kabyle, Philo (ca. 20 BCE to 50 CE) stated, in a prescripttive rather than a descriptive manner, that it was suitable for men to be found

48. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), p. 106. See also Jacob Neusner, 'The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism: From the Mishnah's Philosophy to the Talmud's Religion', *Communio Viat* 44 (2002), pp. 19-43 (19-20).

49. Sawyer repeatedly observes that the concerns and practices of women in first-century Israel were distinct from surrounding cultures (*Women and Religion*, p. 32).

50. Lynn H Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 35-41.

51. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 41-42 (citing Josephus, *Apion* 2.202; Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.5; Strabo, *Geog*. 17.2.5).

52. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 55-56 (*b. B. Bat*. 115b-116a).

53. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 81-83. See also Tob. 3.15; 4.12-13; 6.11; 7.10, 12.

54. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 54-55. See also 2 Macc. 3.19; 3 Macc. 1.18; Tobit; Judith; Joseph and Aseneth; LAB; see also Kraemer, 'Jewish Women and Christian Origins', pp. 60-61.

in the market, council-halls, law courts, gatherings and meetings where a large number of people were gathered. 'The women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house, within which the middle door is taken by the maidens as their boundary, and the outer door by those who have reached full womanhood.'[55] Further, Philo states, 'The harmonious coming together of man and woman and their consummation is figuratively a house. And everything which is without a woman is imperfect and homeless. For to man are entrusted the public affairs of state; while to a woman the affairs of the home are proper.'[56]

There is evidence that first-century Jewish women followed the Greco-Roman custom of participating in public meals with men at birthdays, weddings and especially religious festivals.[57] Although in ancient Greece the meals were only for men who also had prostitutes participate in the symposium that followed the meal, by the second century BCE, men were known to bring their wives to public meals and to the symposium that followed the meal.[58]

Apparently, Jewish mothers, like Greco-Roman mothers, were educated sufficiently to educate and/or train their children, even if this does not necessarily mean that they were literate (see Tob. 1.8; Sus. 1.3).[59]

c. *Conclusion.* It appears that the life of first-century women in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire was more limited than their counterparts in the western Roman Empire. If anything, the lives of women in Israel were similar to the life of Greek women that preceded them and the Kabyle peasants described in the sociological studies of Pierre Bourdieu. Israelite women, like most women in the ancient and later Greco-Roman world, were in some manner dominated by men in an androcentric society. Israelite women were primarily identified with the home and overseeing or doing the work of the home rather than the outside world which was the domain of men. Israelite women

55. Philo, *Dec.* (Colson, LCL); Philo, *Spec.* (Colson, LCL). Philo, as an Alexandrian, does appear to present a Hellenistic view of Judaism.

56. Philo, *Quaest. in Gen.* (Marcus, LCL). See also Sawyer, *Women and Religion*, p. 36.

57. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 87-88; Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals*, pp. 66-75.

58. Cohick, *Women*, p. 88; Sir. 9.9.

59. Cohick, *Women*, pp. 143-44; Sawyer, *Women and Religion*, p. 82.

may have also shared the Kabyle and Greek concepts of coldness and wetness while men were associated with dryness and heat, making women inferior to men because they deviated from the masculine perfection of dryness and stability. This perceived instability resulted in the need to confine women to the more private world of the home. In marriage, women were to preserve the family and the state by creating necessary warriors.

More freedom was available to women of higher financial and social status than that of lower status in Israel, Greece, and even Rome. Some Jewish women had the privilege of intensive study of the Scriptures or education, but it appears that all women were educated on some level because they became the instructors of their children, but the content of that instruction is unclear.

Life for Israelite women in the first century CE was generally not characterized by equality with men. Their domains and spheres of influence were distinct because their essence was considered to be distinct. Private home and domestic work were considered to be the proper measure of life for a first-century Israelite woman in the eastern Roman Empire. Exceptions to the norm existed but were few, and they were for the elevated women of social status and/or wealth.

The implied audience of the Gospel of Mark would possess social and cultural preunderstandings about first-century Mediterranean women as described by Bourdieu and in historical writings and archelogy. The actual author and implied audience of Mark would use this understanding to construct the characterization of women through discourse in the narrative. A present-day reader would need to share first-century understandings of *habitus* and culture with the original author and implied audience to lessen the gap between their world and the Markan narrative world of women.

3. *Selected Characterization of Women in Mark*

With a background of a Mediterranean anthropology of gender, we will now examine characterization in five Markan passages where women are presented outside the first-century setting of the 'house'.

a. *Jesus' Relatives (Mother) and the Beelzebul Controversy (Mk 3.20-35)*

The setting for this narrative is outside of a house in Galilee. These interchanging stories must be heard on top of one another for the implied audience

to fully understand what the implied author is saying in the passage.[60] In Mk 3.20-35, Jesus' mother profoundly misunderstands Jesus, casting him as 'out of control' (a first-century female description) and needing to be 'controlled' (a first-century masculine activity). Ironically, Jesus' mother is in the masculine setting outside of the house with his brothers, and Jesus is in the feminine setting inside the house with his followers. It is almost as if he replaces his mother in the house with his true family. The spatial displacement of Jesus' mother outside of the house aligns with the awkward narrative placement of her alongside the male religious leaders who accuse Jesus of being demonized in the inner story of the intercalation. The link between the misunderstanding by Mary and the religious leaders elicits tragedy for the implied audience in their characterization of Mary, who then come to understand that true discipleship cannot oppose the mission of Jesus even when the mission appears 'crazy' from a human viewpoint.

b. *Jairus's Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk 5.21-43)*

The setting of this narrative is a public crowd in Galilee. Again, this unit contains interchanging stories that must be read together for the implied audience to fully understand what the author is saying about the women in the passage. In the outer story (Mk 5.21-24, 35-43) a man named Jairus (Mk 5.22) who is the 'ruler of the synagogue' (ἀρχισυνάγωγος, see Mk 5.35, 36, 38) has a sick daughter in his house (see Mk 5.38). In the inner story a woman appears in the unusual location of a public crowd (Mk 5.24-25). Said differently, she is outside of the usual, first-century setting of the house. She is not there with

60. The pattern of storytelling where an initial story is broken away to tell an inner story to conclusion before the initial story resumes is ancient reaching at least as far back as the fifteenth century BCE in the Hebrew Scriptures and the seventh century BCE in ancient Greek writings (David E. Malick, 'Biblical Gender Studies and Literary Analysis: Contributing Different Perspectives on Women in the Gospel of Mark' [PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2023], pp. 63-92; see also my published dissertation [forthcoming]: David E. Malick, *Women in the Gospel of Mark: Characterization through Literary and Gender Analysis* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2025], pp. 58-82). Intercalations functioned so frequently in the way stories were told that it was a type of a habituated literary practice that would have functioned in the production of narratives and would have been familiar to both authors and audiences. The technique assisted in memorizing, making a story alive, and ensuring that a particular point would reach an audience.

her family, but on her own. To enter this male-like activity of a crowd may show the implied audience the weight of her peril. She is described as a first-century woman because she is *leaking* blood and is thus a source of pollution.[61] However, Jesus never speaks to her breach of social custom. Instead, her first-century male-like assertiveness is met by Jesus' first-century female-like response. As the woman has a flow of blood from her body, Jesus has a flow of power from his body (see Mk 5.30), perhaps showing himself to be the perfect, first-century, one-sex model of a human.[62] Another option is that Jesus is showing himself to be vulnerable as a man who is in a metaphorical sense penetrated by the woman's touch of faith.[63]

The looming question at this nexus is whether Jesus will arrive in time to heal Jairus's daughter. This delay for an unknown, unclean woman may cause the death of Jairus's daughter. Certainly, the implied author's/narrator's telling of the discourse in this way has also had an impact on the implied audience who is kept in tension by an unnamed, 'polluted' woman while Jesus delays in responding to a named, high social class male's desperate plea. When Jesus stops an emergency run for the leader of a synagogue for this anonymous woman, he emphasizes just how important she is to him. Jesus saw the woman's faith, not her non-traditional location or ritual uncleanness. The implied audience who identifies with Jesus will also adopt his point of

61. As Carson explains, 'Woman is subject not only to incursion from without but to leakage from within, and, for this reason, her very presence may pose a threat to the integrity of the *oikos* of which she is part and the *polis* that encompasses it' ('Dirt and Desire', p. 86).

62. See Stewart, 'Masculinity', p. 94. See also Candida R. Moss, 'The Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25-34', *JBL* 129 (2010), pp. 507-19.

63. See Jonathan Walters, 'Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought', in Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (eds.), *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 29-43. Although writing in a sexual context, Walters defines the Roman man as 'impenetrable penetrators'. See also Jonathan Jodamus who describes the Greco-Roman ideology of a penetrated body as an (un)masculine, feminine body ('Paul, the "Real" Man: Constructions and Representations of Masculinity in 1 Corinthians', *AJGR* 23 [2017], pp. 68-94 [80]). Ironically, however, when Jesus is *willingly* penetrated and dies for others, Jodamus describes his death as a manly, hypermasculine act ('Paul', p. 81). Whether one agrees with Jodamus's 'hypermasculine' description of Jesus, one can say that Jesus encompassed the breadth of the experience of humanity rather than simply the masculine ideal.

view in its characterization of the woman. Jesus then emphasizes her faith: 'Daughter, your faith (πίστις)[64] has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your suffering (ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου).'

When Jairus learns that his daughter has died while this woman was being healed, the echo and example of the woman from the inner story becomes a lesson that Jesus gives to the ruler of the synagogue: 'Stop being afraid, only believe' (μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε).[65] It is almost as if the fear of the woman has transferred itself to Jairus, even though its content is distinct, so he must be told to stop being afraid, or said differently, to stop acting with a first-century female characteristic of emotional weakness and fearfulness.[66] These narrative encounters of Jesus with women are not only stories about what happened, but of what happens; they are theological pictures displayed by an implied author to an implied audience of the exemplary character of women to instruct others in the narrative—even male leaders in the community. This would not be lost on the implied audience as it sees the development of characters who do not conform to their first-century stereotypes.

The narrative chords between Jairus's daughter and the woman who was healed sympathetically resonate for the benefit of Jairus and the implied audience.[67] Both Jairus's daughter and the woman are called 'daughter' (θυγάτηρ in Mk 5.34, 35, and θυγάτριον in Mk 5.23).[68] These emotional titles enliven

64. See Marla J. Selvidge, 'Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations', *JBL* 103 (1984), pp. 619-23.

65. The present imperative plus μή allows for the idea of cessation of activity in progress (see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], p. 724).

66. As Jodamus explains, 'It was a common *topos* in the sex-gendered system of the Ancient Mediterranean for women to be regarded as weak. According to the sex-gendered logic of that epoch women were naturally seen as weak, fearful, emotional and uncontrolled (Philo, *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 1.8)' ('Paul,' p. 81 n. 63).

67. See Tom Shepherd, 'The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation', *NTS* 41 (1995), pp. 522-40 (529-30). See also a fuller discussion of this passage tracing the many correlations between the woman and Jairus's daughter in David E. Malick, 'An Examination of Jesus's View of Women through Three Intercalations in the Gospel of Mark', *Priscilla Papers* 27 (2013), pp. 4-15 (7).

68. The term for Jairus's daughter is a diminutive. All but one of the words used for Jairus's daughter are diminutives: 'little daughter', 'daughter', 'little child',

the narrative by enabling the implied audience to enter into the skin of Jesus who appears to feel the endearment of family toward the suffering woman, as Jairus feels for his daughter. The implied author/narrator uses these identical emotional titles to evoke an identification between Jesus and Jairus in their affection for the woman and the daughter. No doubt, when Jesus called the woman, 'daughter', that word resonated within Jairus as he thought about his dear, sick girl. Just as Jairus's daughter needed to be healed, or saved (σῴζω, Mk 5.23), so too was the woman healed, or saved, from her illness (σῴζω, Mk 5.29, 34).

The implied author has crafted this discourse for the implied audience to form character by showing a woman, who, like the sea (cf. Mk 4.37-40; 5.21), is in chaos[69] and is polluting because she is leaking blood. However, the woman's status is reversed as she comes to Jesus in faith. Consequently, instead of being a woman characterized by chaos, the implied audience sees a woman who is like a daughter to Jesus, and for whom, Jesus makes himself vulnerable or porous.[70] Her character is transformed from someone who has been exploited and desperate to someone who is a teller of truth who like a dear daughter models faith for the male leader of the synagogue whose little

'Talitha' (diminutive of 'lamb' [טַלְיְתָא]) and 'little girl'. See Tom Shepherd, 'Markan Sandwich Stories: Narration, Definition, and Function' (PhD diss., Andrews University Seminary, 1993), p. 150.

69. This reference to the 'sea' reaches back to the storm at sea in the prior context of Mk 4.37-40 which may have been caused by the demons Jesus met on the other side of the sea (Mk 5.1-20). The woman with the flow of blood may provide a literary echo of the prior rough sea crossing when in 5.21 the narrator tells the audience that Jesus crossed over the sea again before he met Jairus and the women in the following narrative. The implied author has contextually shown the chaos of waters to the implied audience as a potential foreshadow of the women who, from a first-century perspective, was associated with chaos.

70. In Matthew Thiessen's recent work (*Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospels' Portrayal of Ritual Impurity within First-Century Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020], p. 91), he observes that with the woman's touch of Jesus' garment, not only does the woman's discharge of blood dry up, but Mark's Jesus experiences an uncontrolled discharge of power leaking from his body which, like contact with certain of the tabernacle furnishings, rendered the woman clean or holy: 'Contact with Jesus, the holy one of God, causes a discharge of holiness to surge out of Jesus—a holiness that overpowers the source of impurity in the one touching Jesus.'

daughter has died. The ignored mother in the narrative, Jairus's wife, who might have had social status in the house and through her husband, is only impliedly involved in the aftercare of her healed daughter. The implied author/narrator brings about these reversals in characterization for the implied audience through an intercalated discourse that challenges first-century preunderstandings.

c. *Herodias, her Daughter, and the Beheading of John the Baptizer (Mk 6.7-32)*

The setting of this narrative is a public birthday celebration for Herod Antipas. Even though this narrative is built on an interchange of two stories, an analysis of the parallels and comparisons from the intercalation offers little insight about the women in the narrative. Therefore, another narrative approach will be adopted using the implied author's narrative typology as a means of characterization. Typologically, Herodias is similar to the first soil in Jesus' parable of the soils (Mk 4.3-9, 14-29).[71] Like the response of religious leaders to Jesus, when John the Baptizer speaks against the divorce of her first husband, Herod Philip, and marriage to Herod Antipas (cf. Mk 6.17-18), she cannot receive the prophet's revelation—she has a grudge against John for his criticism of her remarriage and wants to kill him. She is also named in the narrative and, as such, shows herself to be flawed, even ruthless.

Through this typology, the implied author/narrator vilifies Herodias and her daughter, as unstable, deceptive women, as a subtle means of vilifying Herod whose lack of self-control and inability to control those under him, including the women in his house, exposes him to the implied audience as depraved and unmanly.

Jennifer Knust has written extensively on how Christians in the first century CE used virtues to praise, or vices to expose, the 'elite' among Roman rulers.[72] Although Knust's focus is often on the deviant sexual behavior that vilified those who were culturally considered to be virtuous, she emphasizes

71. Mary Ann Tolbert has argued persuasively that the parable of the soils in Mark 4 provides a plot synopsis for the implied audience early in the Gospel in that it identifies the different, typological responses that people will have to the word (*Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989], pp. 148-64).

72. Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

that virtues were broader than sexual behavior. For instance, elite Roman men included those who ruled well over themselves and others, and elite Roman women included those who remained loyal to their husbands and did not bring shame on themselves or their families.[73] As Knust explains, 'Generations of Greek and, later, Roman schoolboys were trained in the repertoire of categories appropriate for praise or blame.'[74] Therefore, the implied audience of Mark would know that 'A man is virtuous when he is in control of himself and his household, when he is courageous in battle, and when he is wise in his dealings with his subordinates.'[75] When a man renounced his prerogatives of masculinity, that man was corrupt and worthy of blame. Similarly, '[i]f a man cannot be trusted to keep his women in line, then he should not be trusted with the well-being of the state.'[76] Accordingly, a capricious lack of self-control by Herod when he offered up to half of his kingdom to Herodias's daughter in appreciation for her dance shows to the implied audience that Herod is not virtuous. Furthermore, the allowance of Herodias to trick Herod into killing John the Baptizer shows to the implied audience that Herod is not able to control the women in his household and thus is not fit to be a ruler over his Galilean tetrarchy. As Catharine Edwards explains,

> Martial bravery was symbolically central in Roman culture. Romans celebrated themselves as a nation that had conquered an empire through *virtus*. *Virtus* (a word cognate with *vir*, "man") denotes the physical courage felt to be the specific characteristic of the male and of the Roman male in particular.[77]

The endurance of pain was not limited to the physical; it included mental pain.[78] However, in the conflict between Herodias and Herod, it is Herodias who shows herself to have the greater self-control and Herod who cannot display self-control over his own feelings: 'The king was greatly distressed (περίλυπος) but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to

73. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, p. 47.
74. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, p. 47.
75. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, p. 48.
76. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, p. 49.
77. Catharine Edwards, 'The Suffering Body: Philosophy and Pain in Seneca's Letters', in James I. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 252-68 (262).
78. Edwards, 'Suffering Body', p. 257.

refuse her' (Mk 6.26). In an ironic twist, Herod shows himself as feminine in a first-century culture by not exercising self-control over Herodias and her daughter and over the pressure created by his words before his subjects. The strong, immoveable, self-controlled one was Herodias who wanted to kill John and then arranged to accomplish her will. This kind of reversal was spoken of by Seneca (ca. 4 BCE to 65 CE) who observed that even slaves may despise death (i.e. lack self-control), while a girl in childbirth may set an example for the endurance of pain.[79] This reversal of roles is further emphasized in the narrative by the actions of the executioner. Herod orders the executioner to bring John's head in Mk 6.27. After beheading John, the executioner brings back John's head on a platter and does not present it to Herod, but to the girl who then gives it to Herodias (Mk. 6.28). As Michelle Connolly observes, 'In a sense, Herod is bypassed in the chain of command and the women have taken over.'[80] Unlike the women previously portrayed in Mark's narrative, Herodias and her daughter come from a different/higher social class. As Connolly observes, 'In a sense, their world represents the Roman Empire in Palestine.'[81] For the implied audience versed in the value system of the Romans, this emphasis on the Roman class in Israel will provide a subtle critique of this male Roman underling.

We have already seen that Herodias was like the religious leaders in that they both could/would not receive the revelation from the preachers. What is enlightening when comparing Mark 6 and 15 is the parallels which arise between Herodias's daughter and the crowds. Just as the chief priests stir up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas to them instead of Jesus (Mk. 15.11), so is it that Herodias stirs up her daughter to ask Herod for John's head instead of anything else a young girl might desire (Mk 6.24-25). The daughter and the crowd are lethal instruments in the hands of the more powerful mother

79. Seneca the Younger states, 'And thou, silence the groans, the cries, and the bitter shrieks ground out of the victim as he is torn on the rack! Forsooth thou are naught but Pain, scorned by yonder gout-ridden wretch, endured by yonder dyspeptic in the midst of his dainties, borne bravely by the girl in travail. Slight thou art, if I can bear thee; short thou art if I cannot bear thee!' (*Ep*. 24.14 [Gummere, LCL]).

80. Michele A. Connolly, *Disorderly Women and the Order of God: An Australian Feminist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2018), pp. 139-40.

81. Connolly, *Disorderly Women*, p. 134.

and religious leaders.[82] Furthermore, both the crowd and the daughter go beyond what they are encouraged to do by the religious leaders and by Herodias. Not only do the crowds ask, as instructed, for the release of Barabbas, but they then call for the crucifixion of Jesus (Mk 15.11-14). Likewise, Herodias's daughter goes beyond the request of her mother. As Connolly observes,

> She does not merely repeat what her mother said, but makes it her own, insisting, 'I want you to give me at once.' She adds her own grotesque recognition of the birthday scene, asking that her request be presented 'on a platter', as though it is to be yet another course of the banquet.[83]

These disruptive, disorderly, deadly consequences arise because of how people respond to the revelation they are given as foretold in the parable of the soils in Mk 4. Herodias is shown to act like the religious leaders and her daughter becomes a pawn like the crowd to force the hand of a Roman official. Yes, Herodias and her daughter are portrayed negatively in the narrative—sly, seductive, deceitful, not to be trusted, not given to repentance and characterized by uncontrolled revenge—but only because they do not respond well to the message of the prophet and use their power to bring about the prophet's death. As women, they are powerful—even more powerful, strategically, than their male, Roman ruler. But they are not unique in this struggle. They are like the other characters, including male religious leaders and the crowd in the broader narrative who back the Roman governor into a corner to do their will and crucify Jesus. The subtle message for the implied audience is that these Roman representatives are not 'manly' but womanlier than the women in Mk 6 because these Roman pawns are weak, irresponsible, out of control and without knowledge about how to rule. The rhetorical concern is

82. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon observers, 'Herodias and her daughter are parallel to the chief priests, scribes and elders (the council) and the crowd because the former (Herodias; the council) stir up the latter (the daughter; the crowd) to influence another (Herod; Pilate) to bring about a desired death (John's; Jesus')' ('The Major Importance of the Minor Characters in Mark', in Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Edgar V. McKnight [eds.], *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* [LNTS, 109; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994], pp. 58-86 [70]).

83. Connolly, *Disorderly Women*, p. 138. See also Malbon, 'Major Importance', p. 70.

to beware of those who will not receive the word of God, whether male or female, because they can be treacherous—even deadly.

d. *The Maidservant's Trial of Peter (Mk 14.53-72)*

The setting of this unit is in the courtyard of the High Priest. In Mark's narrative world, this account is concurrent with the trial of Jesus before the religious leaders. As Jesus prevails in his trial in the house of the High Priest, Peter devastatingly fails his trial in the courtyard of the High Priest. Peter's inquisitor is not a religious leader but an unnamed female maidservant—showing an expected imbalance of power between an unnamed servant girl and the named head of the Twelve. Unlike most other women in the Markan narratives, this maidservant has no direct affinity with Jesus. The implied author forms her character from her relationship to a high-ranking male—the High Priest—who is an antagonist of Jesus. As such, she could be characterized as dangerous and threatening. However, unlike the religious leaders, she pummels Peter with questions of truth, while the religious leaders pummel Jesus with lies. By the time the cockcrow announces the third Roman watch, the light of her inquiry definitively shows Peter to be 'asleep' (to use language of the parable of the Doorkeeper in Mk 13.34-36)—just as Jesus predicted. By the implied author's portrayal of this anonymous woman as a person who gives expression to Jesus' evaluation of Peter's disloyalty through her truth telling, the implied audience will be sympathetic to her virtuous character.

In Mark's narrative world, incongruity is seen early in the narrative between Jesus and Peter. The disciples were called to be 'with him' (μετ' αὐτοῦ) (cf. Mk 3.14), but Peter is following Jesus from Gethsemane 'from a distance' (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν). In fact, Peter is 'with the attendants' (μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν), who will soon beat Jesus (Mk 14.65). Other significant contrasts arise in the narrative. Jesus is accused by numerous false witnesses whose testimony does not agree (Mk 14.57-59). Peter is accused by numerous true witnesses whose testimony agrees. Jesus boldly answers his inquisitors with a threefold affirmation (I am the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed one, the Son of Man who will come sitting at the right of the one with power) (Mk 14.62), and Peter boldly answers his inquisitors with a threefold denial of Jesus and any relationship with him (Mk 14.68, 70, 71). The implied author achieves these contrasts in part through a maidservant who speaks the truth.

Twice, the inquisitor of Peter is described as a female slave or maidservant using the diminutive term παιδίσκη.[84] The implied audience would have noticed the woman's 'smallness' from its Greco-Roman engendered social hierarchies when she is brought into comparison with Peter. This diminutive form places the girl at an apparent disadvantage to Peter, the leader of the Twelve.

The counterpart to those giving false testimony against Jesus (Mk 14.56-59) appears to be the servant girl who only says what is true about Peter and proves to be more man-like than Peter.[85] Those who give the false testimony against Jesus are spoken of generically with terms like "many" (πολλοί), 'certain ones' (τινες), 'we' (ἡμεῖς) and 'their' (αὐτῶν) (Mk 14.56-59). In contrast, a specific reference is given to the woman who questions Peter; she is described as 'one of the servant girls of the high priest' (μία τῶν παιδισκῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως). She is anonymous, but she is a specific person as opposed to the vague plurality of witnesses against Jesus. She is connected with the high priest as a servant, but not in any other official capacity. So, her questioning of Peter has no real authority; but the implied author shows her to wield power that causes Peter to distance himself in stages from her and her accusations. She is a woman; she is a servant. Peter is a man, and a free man at that. There is a power differential in Peter's favor in this interchange except for the fact that Peter probably feels threatened because of the high priest's actions against Jesus. If the religious leaders want to condemn Jesus to death, they

84. Bernadette Kiley argues that the diminutive form of παιδίσκη in classical Greek could suggest that the girl was a prostitute of the high priest's household or of the high priest himself ('The Servant Girl in the Markan Passion Narrative: An Alternative Feminist Reading', *Lutheran Theological Journal* 41 [2007], pp. 48-57 [52-53]). Even if the high priest or his household had authority sexually over the servant girl, the Markan narrative makes nothing of her sexual relationships. Perhaps the implied author used the term παιδίσκη to characterize her for the implied audience as someone of low esteem. Louw further explains that παιδίσκη probably refers to someone younger than would be the case for a δούλη (see LN, *s.v.* 'παιδίσκη'). Again, the servant girl's youth diminishes her apparent status for the implied audience. However, because she is identified with the prestigious house of the high priest, she may have had a measure of prestige for a Jewish audience (Cohick, *Women*, p. 265).

85. Jeffrey W. Aernie suggests, 'the servant girl plays a contrarian role in the narrative in her interrogation of Peter' (*Narrative Discipleship: Portraits of Women in the Gospel of Mark* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018], Kindle edition, ch. 2). I will show that this maidservant stands on the side of truth. The fallible one is Peter.

may also seek out his followers. It appears that it is the potential threat of the high priest that drives Peter's response. However, the servant girl exercises a power of her own in speaking the truth to Peter. The servant girl's power seems to widen as bystanders join in with her truth telling. Peter's lies may be driven by his fear of being guilty by association with Jesus, but the maid-servant is the powerful presence that exposes Peter's unwillingness to be 'with Jesus' at this time.

The servant girl is described by three verbs as coming, seeing Peter warming himself, and looking at him (Mk 14.66-67). The verbs progressively show the woman moving and coming to a stop to look at Peter. She is probably able to distinguish Peter because he was warming himself by the light (φῶς) of the fire (see Mk 14.54). She then makes her first statement to Peter: 'You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus' (καὶ σὺ μετὰ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ ἦσθα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) (Mk 14.67). This direct, true statement associates Peter with Jesus of Nazareth. In response, the narrator tells the implied audience that Peter denied (ἠρνήσατο)[86] her statement and then quotes Peter's denial: 'Neither do I know nor understand what you are saying' (οὔτε οἶδα οὔτε ἐπίσταμαι σὺ τί λέγεις) (Mk 14.68). By adding the second person singular pronoun 'you' (σύ) with the inflected second person singular verb 'saying' (λέγεις), Peter is emphasizing that his response is particularly pointed to the servant girl. It may well be that the servant girl's use of 'you' (σύ) in her statement to Peter in 14.67 resulted in Peter using the pronoun in response. But the use of the pronoun may also be a means to silence her by intimidation. The narrator then tells the audience that Peter went out of the courtyard to the forecourt, or gateway to the court (προαύλιον). The narrator also tells his implied audience that

86. As Paul L. Danove observers: 'Deny (ἀπαρνέομαι) initially appears in Jesus' statement that anyone wishing to be his disciple must deny himself (8.34). It subsequently appears in Jesus' prediction that Peter will deny him three times (14.30), Peter's response that he will not deny Jesus (14.31), and in Peter's remembrance of Jesus' statement after he has denied Jesus three times (14.72). Peter's denial of Jesus and not himself places Peter in an indirect negative relationship with Jesus. Deny (ἀρνέομαι), the root of ἀπαρνέομαι, occurs in Mark only with Peter as subject and only in Peter's denials of Jesus (14.68, 70) and places Peter in an indirect negative relationship with Jesus' ('The Narrative Rhetoric of Mark's Characterization of Peter', in Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge [eds.], *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* [LNTS, 483; London: T. & T. Clark, 2014], pp. 152-73 [160]).

the rooster crowed. If this is part of the original text,[87] it is clearly an allusion to Jesus' prediction in Mk 14.30 that 'before the cock crows twice, thrice you will deny me' which Peter vehemently denied, but the implied audience remembers. In the implied author's story world, Peter's denial of Jesus is not because of the slave girl, but because of Jesus' prediction and Peter's fear. The slave girl is merely one of the means through which the prophecy is realized. The implied author's determinism is emphasized by dramatic irony at the end of Jesus' interrogation where it is reported that certain ones struck Jesus with their fists and said, 'Prophesy!' (Mk 14.65). The irony is that the characters who struck Jesus did not think that he could prophesy, but the implied audience knows that Jesus can prophesy, and Peter's simultaneous denial of Jesus is proof par excellence.

The slave girl does not appear to be intimidated by Peter's first response to her because when she saw him by the gateway to the court, she spoke to the bystanders and said, 'This one is from them' (*οὗτος ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐστιν*, Mk 14.69). The maidservant is not directly addressing Peter but a generic group called 'bystanders' or 'those who were present' (*παρεστῶσιν*) in the forecourt. Even if she was hesitant to speak directly to Peter, she makes a similar affirmation to those who are present at the gateway to the court that Peter was with the group who were with Jesus. Perhaps this is a reference to those who were present with Jesus at his arrest (cf. Mk 14.42-52). If so, some of these 'bystanders' may also have been present when Jesus was arrested. In any case, the implied audience knows that the words the servant girl has spoken are true, but Peter lies. The narrator tells the audience, without a quotation,

87. The words 'and the rooster crowed' (*καὶ ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν*) are in later manuscripts (A C D K N Γ Δ Θ Ψ^c^ 067 *f*^1.13^ 28 33 565 700 1241 [+ ευθεως α. λεκτωρ 1424] 2542^s^ 𝔐 lat sy^p.h^ [sa^mss^ bo^ms^]); Eus. The words are omitted in good and early Alexandrian witnesses (א B L W Ψ* 579 892 c sy^s^ sa^mss^ bo^ms^). The editors of the NA28 decided to include the words in the text in brackets because of the difficulty of the external evidence for each reading (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2nd edn, 1997], p. 97). Internally, the evidence can go in either direction. The words may have been inserted to fulfill Jesus' prophecy in Mk 14.30 or excluded to align with other Gospel accounts that only mention a rooster crowing once (Mt. 26.75; Lk. 22.60; Jn 18.27). However, in view of the statement in Mk 14.71 that the cock crowed a second time, it may be best to understand these words as part of the original text. The decision is difficult.

that Peter again denied (ἠρνεῖτο) the claim (Mk 14.70). This denial certainly includes the claim that Peter was with Jesus, but also includes the claim that Peter was with those who were with Jesus. Peter is denying the community he has been a part of since he was called to be with Jesus (Mk 3.14-16).

The maidservant's words first move Peter and then move the bystanders so that they adopt her words and say, 'Truly, you are from them, for you are also Galilean' (Mk 14.70). The generic word for bystanders (οἱ παρεστῶτες) does not tell the audience the gender of the group that is speaking to Peter. Masculine terms in Greek can be used to describe men and women.[88] Therefore, it is conceivable that other maidservants would be among the group of bystanders. It would be unusual for a woman to be by herself in this more-public setting unless perhaps her work required her presence. We are not told, but the Greek text allows for the possibility that other women joined in with men in making the third statement to Peter. Perhaps it is a composite statement made by several of those present. In some ways, the final statement is a composite of the maidservant's previous two statements. Like her second statement, the bystanders say, 'Truly, you are from them' (ἀληθῶς ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ). This language is very similar to the maidservant's second statement in Mk 14.69 except she spoke about Peter to them (οὗτος ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐστιν) whereas they speak directly to Peter (ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ). This heightened, direct address

88. Jeffery D. Miller writes, 'One rule in many languages, including Koine Greek, is that grammatically masculine expressions regularly describe groups that include both men and women. An example is Mt. 19.4 (ESV): "he who created … made them male and female." The word "them" here is a masculine plural pronoun, though it obviously refers to a man and a woman' ('A Defense of Gender-Accurate Bible Translation', in Ronald Peirce, Cynthia Westfall and Christa McKirland [eds.], *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 3rd edn, 2019], pp. 473-88 [478]). See also Mk 10.21; Lk. 1.6; Rom. 16.7, 15-16; 1 Cor. 16.22; 2 Cor. 13.12; 1 Thess. 5.26; 1 Pet. 5.14. The gender of ancient-Greek terms does not always correlate with sexual gender. It is often simply a category of inflection, or 'grammatical gender' (Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* [BLG, 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2nd edn, 1994], pp. 100-101; H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* [New York: Macmillan, 1955], pp. 34-35; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [trans. Robert W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], p. 76; A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman, 1934], pp. 252-70).

may in part explain Peter's heightened response. In addition, the second statement made by the bystanders 'for you are also Galilean' (καὶ γὰρ Γαλιλαῖος εἶ) is similar to the maidservant's first statement that 'You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus' (Mk 14.67) since Nazareth was in the region of Galilee. Accordingly, the double, third statement that echoes the maidservant's two earlier statements is a climax to the claims identifying Peter with Jesus.

The climactic statement by the bystanders results in a climactic denial by Peter when the narrator reports that Peter started to curse (ἀναθεματίζειν) and swear (or take an oath with an implied invitation of punishment if he is untruthful) (ὀμνύναι):[89] 'I do not know this man of whom you speak' (Mk 14.71). Peter's lies place him under his own curse. Furthermore, Peter's denial uses the most generic word available (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) so that he does not have to say the name of Jesus. Through nothing but truthful statements made by the servant girl and the bystanders, Peter exposes himself as a liar. Jesus has courage to speak the truth before his false accusers knowing that it will cost him his life, but Peter refuses to speak the truth before truthful accusers so that he can preserve his life. Peter's repeated denials place him in a negative relationship with Jesus, and the implied audience disassociates itself from him. On the contrary, the repeated statements by the slave girl associate her with the truth about Peter and Jesus, and the audience identifies with her.

In order for the implied audience to know that Peter's undoing was not the result of the woman or the bystanders who testified truthfully, the narrator reports that 'immediately, for the second time,[90] the cock crowed, and Peter remembered the words Jesus spoke to him that "before the cock crowed twice, thrice you will deny me"' (Mk 17.72). Jesus has openly identified himself as Messiah and is willing to suffer in that role, but Peter is unwilling to take up his cross and suffer, so he denies Jesus when all the witnesses, including the maidservant, truthfully state that he was with Jesus.

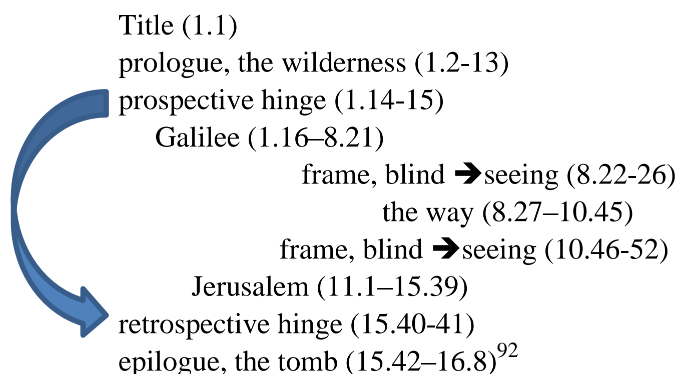
It seems best to understand the anonymous servant girl to be a truth teller. Her truth gives Peter an opportunity to publicly follow Jesus during the time between midnight and the cockcrow watch, but as predicted, he fails; he lies

89. BDAG, *s.v.* 'ὀμνύω'.

90. Metzger writes, 'Several witnesses omit ἐκ δευτέρου (א C*vid L itc Diatessaroni, s), probably in order to harmonize Mark with the account in the other Gospels (Mt 26.74; Lk 22.60; Jn 18.27)' (*Textual Commentary*, p. 97). Those witnesses that include ἐκ δευτέρου are B C* D L W Θ *f*13 565 579 700 2542s latt syp samss boms Eus.

to protect himself; he is not watching and alert when the cock crows. The maidservant has not undone Peter but provided the perfect opportunity for him to follow Jesus in the light of the truth she proclaims. As with other anonymous women in the Gospel, she is a foil that subverts the first follower of Jesus and the first of the Twelve. Accordingly, the implied audience is more drawn to the maidservant than to Peter and reminded that discipleship is no easy task.[91]

e. *The Women Who Accompany Jesus to Jerusalem (Mk 15.40-41)*
The setting for this narrative is in Jerusalem near the public crucifixion of Jesus. This Markan narrative is in the form of a transitional, retrospective hinge that provides a seamless transition from the Jerusalem panel to the panel associated with the tomb:



As Stock explains, the inverted hinge was an effective tool in 'helping the listener follow the speaker's shift in thought' by 'hesitating at the point where the topic changes and hinting at the change before actually making it'.[93] Both the 'prospective' and 'retrospective' hinges in Mark slow down the narrative by looking backward and forward.[94] Furthermore, by looking backward and

91. Willem S Vorster, 'Characterization of Peter in the Gospel of Mark', *Neot* 21 (1987), pp. 57-76 (69).

92. Bas M. van Iersel, *Mark* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), p. 84.

93. Augustine Stock, 'Hinge Transitions in Mark's Gospel', *BTB* 15 (1985), pp. 27-31.

94. Stock, 'Hinge Transitions', p. 28.

forward, the hinges integrate parts of each panel to link them together and add additional information that enriches the narrative.

Mark 15.40-41 form a 'retrospective hinge' transitioning the audience from the earlier panels of the book to its epilogue, at the tomb. The verses are as follows:

[40] There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom *were* also Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome.

[41] When He was in Galilee, they were following Him and ministering to Him; and *there were* many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. (Mk 15.40-41)[95]

Verse 40 looks forward to the tomb where the same three women (Mary Magdalene, Mary *mother* of James and Salome) will once again be named as characters who saw where Jesus was laid (Mk 15.47), purchased spices, and came to the tomb (Mk 16.1). Verse 41 looks backward: first to Galilee where we are explicitly told for the first time that women were following Jesus and

95. Verse 40 has also been translated to identify four women and not just three: 'Mary Magdalene, and Mary the [*daughter/mother/wife*] of James the less, and the [*nameless/Mary*] mother of Joses, and Salome'. The textual variants in B and Ψ allow for this reading placing a definite article before Joses (η Ιωσητος or the variant Ιωση). However, the textual evidence for the variant is late and without versional support (Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium, 2: Kommentar zu Kap 8,27–16,20* [Fribourg, Switzerland: Herder, 1980], pp. 504-7; R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], p. 664 n. 83). See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (2 vols.; ABRL, 2; New York: Doubleday, 1994), II, pp. 1016, 1152-54, 1276-77; Robert Horton Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 976-79. It seems best to understand the ἡ before Ἰακώβου to be a kataphoric definite article for μήτηρ thereby bracketing and thus grouping together, or pointing to, all of the terms between the article and 'mother' (ἡ Ἰακώβου τοῦ μικροῦ καὶ Ἰωσῆτος μήτηρ) (see Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pp. 220-21).

ministering to him. The central panel, 'On the Way', and the 'Jerusalem' panel are also mentioned as the narrator explains that 'many other women went up with him to Jerusalem'.[96] Therefore, this retrospective hinge provides a seamless transition summarizing earlier themes in the book and introducing the women who will play a strategic part at the tomb.

The implied author of Mark has been criticized for waiting so long to introduce these women into the narrative.[97] However, rather than ascribing negative, philosophical motives that the implied author is androcentric or paternalistic, it might be better to consider what the implied author is *doing* with what is being said.[98]

The informed implied audience knows this is not the first time that women have appeared in the narrative. Women have been active characters from the beginning of the narrative and, except for Jesus' mother (Mk 3.20-35) and Herodias and her daughter (Mk 6.7-32), the women have been characterized positively.[99] In Mk 15.40-41, the implied author skillfully employs several lexical links to unite the women just mentioned with some of the earlier women in his narrative. Some of these links are positive characterizations exposing the inconsistencies of the status quo and some may be negative characterizations where contemporary *habitus* remains in place, or the women are portrayed as unresponsive to the message of God. These intentional echoes also

96. Stock states, 'This [verse 41] refers back to everything that has gone before, and in particular it makes mention of the three central topographical divisions: Galilee, Jerusalem, and the Way to Jerusalem' ('Hinge Transitions', p. 29). See also van Iersel, *Mark*, p. 84.

97. Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 111; Joanna Dewey, 'Women in the Gospel of Mark', *Word & World* 26 (2006), pp. 22-29 (28).

98. Abraham Kuruvilla, '"What Is the Author Doing with What He Is Saying?" Pragmatics and Preaching—an Appeal!', *JETS* 60 (2017), pp. 557–80 (565). How does *what* was said *affect* the hearer? See also Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), pp. 48-54.

99. See Simon's mother-in-law (1.29-31), the woman with the flow of blood/Jairus's daughter (5.21-43), the Syrophoenician woman (7.1-30), the poor widow who gave at the Temple (12.41-44), the woman who anointed Jesus (14.1-11) and the maidservant who confronted Peter (14.53-72).

function within the design of the retrospective hinge as v. 41 looks backward to the earlier narrative and v. 40 looks forward to the next panel at the tomb.

The women in Mk 15.40 are first described as watching Christ's crucifixion 'from a distance' (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν). While some interpret this distance as understandable due to their fear of arrest,[100] in the narrator's story world, this prepositional phrase appears to have an immediate negative echo and reference. When Jesus was arrested and led away from Gethsemane to the religious leaders, Peter was not with him (μετ' αὐτοῦ; cf. Mk 3.14)[101] but was following him from a distance (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν) into the courtyard of the high priest where he then denied knowing Jesus three times (Mk 14.54, 66-72).[102] Furthermore, if 'Mary, the mother of James the younger and Joses' is in fact

100. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 319-22; Dewey, 'Women in the Gospel of Mark', p. 28; Susan Miller, 'Women Characters in Mark's Gospel', in Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (eds.), *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (LNTS, 483; London: T. & T. Clark, 2014), pp. 174-93 (189-90).

101. See Robert C. Tannehill's discussion of the positive characterization of the disciples in the early chapters of Mark by Jesus' call for the disciples to be 'with him' and by the description of the disciples who were 'around him' ('Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role', *JR* 57 (1977), pp. 385-405 [396-97]).

102. Other writers who also interpret 'from a distance' to be a negative foreshadow of the women include the following: Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, 'Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark', *Sem* 28 (1983), pp. 29-48 (43); Winsome Munro, 'Women Disciples in Mark', *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 225-41 (235); Winsome Munro, 'Women Disciples: Light from Secret Mark', *JFSR* 8 (1992), pp. 47-64 (50); Joel F. Williams, *Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel* (JSNTSup, 102; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), p. 188; Augustine Stock, *The Method and the Message of Mark* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), p. 415; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, II, p. 1158. But see France, *Gospel of Mark*, p. 663 n. 79. van Iersel states, 'The Greek ἀπὸ μακρόθεν refers, as a rule, to physical distance in Mark (5:6; 8:3; 11:19; 14:54). The connotation of fear, cowardice, and beginning disloyalty, caused by 14:54, need not be present in 15:40 at all' (*Mark*, p. 488 n. 11). It may also be that women would not be present at a public, Roman gathering like a crucifixion. However, Mark's implied correlations between the female and male disciples in vv. 40-41 suggest that the geographical description of Peter in Mk 14.54 may be foreboding when it is so quickly applied to the women.

the mother of Jesus,[103] the implied author has introduced a second suggestion of fallibility (cf. Mk 3.20-35)—not in the women as a group, but in a specific woman in the midst of the three particularly identified. In addition, the three women in 15.40 are named. While not all named people in the Gospel of Mark are portrayed negatively (see Bartimaeus, Son of Timeaus in Mk 10.46-52; Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus in Mk 15.21; and Joseph of Arimathea in Mk 15.43-46) among the women in Mark, all of those portrayed positively are anonymous.[104] Like the Twelve, these three women are named, which may suggest fallibility in Mark.[105] All three of these negative echoes fall in the first verse of the inverted hinge which looks

103. Support for 'Mary' being the mother of Jesus is that the two children mentioned in Mk 15.40, 'James' and 'Joses', are identified, in the same order, earlier in the narrative as children of Jesus' mother Mary. When Jesus ministered in his hometown, the people responded, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of *Mary*, and *brother of James and Joses* and Judas and Simon?' (Mk 6.3; emphasis added). Abraham Kuruvilla suggests that Mary is not overtly identified as the mother of Jesus so that she might be a generic character with whom the audience will identify: 'The Evangelist's intention must be to portray her as "everywoman" without affording her any pride of place; any woman (or man, for that matter) could be in her shoes/sandals, or in those of the other Mary or Salome' (*Mark: A Theological Commentary for Preachers* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012], p. 354 n. 5). Gundry suggests that this Mary may not be identified as the mother of Jesus to avoid confusion with the proclamation of the centurion who just proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God (*Mark*, p. 977). While these interpretations are possible, it may be that by the implied author identifying Jesus' brothers with Mary, the negative echo of Mk 3.20-35 is that much stronger for the implied audience. While she is identified as a follower of Jesus in this narrative, the earlier narrative casts a shadow. For those who do not construe Mary to be Jesus' mother see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, II, p. 1017; France, *Gospel of Mark*, pp. 664-65.

104. See Simon's mother-in-law (Mk 1.29-31), the woman with the hemorrhage/Jairus's daughter (Mk 5.21-43), the Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7.1-30), the poor widow who gave at the Temple (Mk 12.41-44), the woman who anointed Jesus (Mk 14.1-11) and the maidservant who confronted Peter (Mk 14.53-72).

105. Tolbert concurs stating, 'Also, naming three of them casts a possible shadow on their natures, for throughout the Gospel naming has often been associated with the human desire for fame, glory, status, and authority all longings that harden the heart and encourage fear rather than faith' (*Sowing the Gospel*, p. 160).

forward to the narrative at the tomb where these same three women will be major characters (cf. Mk 16.1).

The second verse of the inverted hinge looks backward and uses positive, lexical links from earlier in the narrative. The first lexical link is the word 'Galilee'. The implied audience knows that Galilee was a place of significant ministry where Jesus revealed who he was and called people to follow him. The significance of associating the three named women[106] with Galilee might be seen by contrasting the Galilee panel with the Jerusalem panel.[107] The Galilee period was a time of significant ministry where many were responsive to Jesus, while the Jerusalem period was a time of curtailed ministry and negative responses to Jesus. Furthermore, Mk 15.41 aligns the women with the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem: 'and many other [women] went up with him to Jerusalem.' This description shows that women were active in the central part of the Gospel 'on the way' to Jerusalem.

In addition, the narrator states that when Jesus was in Galilee these three women had been following him (ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ) and ministering to him (διηκόνουν αὐτῷ). By repeating the word 'him' (αὐτῷ) after each verb, the writer identifies Jesus as the specific object of the women's actions. They were not just following a crowd, they were following him, and they were not ministering to a group in general but were ministering to him. Likewise, these three women had been serving Jesus (διηκόνουν αὐτῷ).[108] The word

106. It is not clear who the pronoun is referring to at the beginning of v. 41: '*who* when he was in Galilee were following him and serving him' (αἳ ὅτε ἦν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ) (emphasis mine). It is possible that the pronoun (αἳ) refers to everyone mentioned in v. 40. However, the nearest referent of the feminine plural pronoun 'who' (αἳ) is to the three women specifically identified and not the women (γυναῖκες) in the first part of v. 40. This is further supported by the second half of v. 41 that once again broadens the reference to a larger group of women: 'and many other *women* who came up with him to Jerusalem' (καὶ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ αἱ συναναβᾶσαι αὐτῷ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα) (see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, II, p. 1153; Gundry, *Mark*, p. 978).

107. Many of these parallels may be found in Kuruvilla, *Mark*, p. 7; van Iersel, *Mark*, pp. 76-77; Stock, *Method and the Message of Mark*, pp. 288-90.

108. This sentence 'and they had been serving him' (καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ) is omitted in C D Δ 579 and n. These fifth- (C, D, n), ninth- (Δ) and thirteenth- (579) century texts do not provide a strong basis to omit this reading. Of the earlier texts, both C and D have problematic variants. Codex Δ is a Koine or Byzantine type, but the Gospel of Mark in Δ belongs to the Alexandrian type (Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D.

διακονέω is first used in Mark to describe the activity of the angels after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness: *καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ* (Mk 1.13). This verb and indirect object are identical to that used for the three women in Mk 15.41.[109]

Discussing the significance of Bourdieu's observations about the Kabyle to the Gospel narratives, F. Gerald Downing opines,

> Let us, accordingly, make a very tentative application of just a few elements of the highly structured Kabyle analogy. If Jesus takes men away from home (Mark 10:28; Q/Luke 9:57-60; Luke 9:61-62), he may not be opposing patriarchy, as some would have it; he could be exacerbateing masculine domination, for males are 'naturally' centrifugal, women centripetal. Only if he brings women out, too, would he be clearly disrupting patriarchy.[110]

In Mk 15.41, the implied author appears to be 'disrupting patriarchy' by describing women as ministers in Jesus' itinerate ministry as they traveled with him outside of the home from Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem. The enormous implications of the implied author's description of

Ehrman, T*he Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* [New York: Oxford University Press, 4th edn, 2005], pp. 82-83). Moreover, Codex D has been shown to omit or change texts that show women in a positive light in the book of Acts (see David E. Malick, 'The Contribution of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis to an Understanding of Women in the Book of Acts', *JGRChJ* 4 [2007], pp. 158-83).

109. In Mark's Gospel, the verb διακονέω is only used to describe the ministry of angels (Mk. 1.13) and women to Jesus (Simon's mother-in-law in Mk. 1.31 and the women in this passage, Mk. 15.43). Except for the redemptive ministry of Jesus in Mark 10.45, the implied author never used διακονέω to describe the ministry of men to, or for, Jesus. The late textual variants in Mark 15.41 may have arisen once Christianity entered the public sphere and actively accommodated itself to Greco-Roman patriarchal social values to meet first-century cultural expectations. See John McKinley, 'Humility: The Path for Male-Female Relationships', *Priscilla Papers* 38 (2024), pp. 22-28. In a time when διακονέω and its cognates were often used of men in their service of Christianity (see for example 1 Tim. 3.8, 10, 12-13; 4.6; Eph. 6.21), the implied author of Mark's exclusive use of διακονέω for women is a strong countercultural affirmation to the implied audience of women's work as ministering servants of Christ.

110. Downing, 'In Quest of First-Century C.E. Galilee', p. 91.

women as part of Jesus' itinerate ministry is evident in Downing's statement: 'if Jesus is disrupting the home, or even just disturbing it, he could be disturbing the whole interwoven system, the whole cosmos that the home represents.'[111]

4. Conclusion

While difficult Pauline and Petrine passages on women (for present-day readers) dominate gender-oriented studies, this integrated literary study of women in the Gospel of Mark demonstrates that there is an alternative to a gendered view that insists that a woman know and keep her subordinate place in a male social hierarchy. If characterization is, or can be, a mechanism for the valorization of personhood, that is, if characterization is the way an author infuses bodies with value, then this study shows that the actual/implied author of Mark has quite deliberately established a personhood for women enhanced with significant potential. Women characters in Mark are not merely subordinate to men in their world. On the contrary, even though no outright or direct critique has been made of repressive social hierarchies of the Greco-Roman/Greco-Judaic world in which non-elite 'normal' women have occupied the lowest level of the social hierarchy—quite often similar to slaves and even animals—the actual and implied authors of Mark have used narrative characterization to create women characters who perform so decisively outside of the 'house' that their presence as a gender can no longer be denied or shifted into the shadows of the early Christian community.

A first-century habituation of women is still featured prominently in many instances where no name, and therefore no real identity, has been given. Also, the household may still be the dominant setting for women in Mark, but as these brief studies have shown, it is not the only space for women, and the stereotypical acts that belong to the domain of women in the household are not emphasized in Mark. So, there is an alignment with Greco-Roman *habitus,* but the narrative is not tied to that *habitus* in its characterization of women. Furthermore, the inquiry into the 'how' of characterization has disclosed a subversive element—a constant pushing against the boundaries of engendered social hierarchies—to such an extent that the alignment with Greco-Roman *habitus* can be seen as compromised, or at least problematized. 'Man'

111. Downing, 'In Quest of First-Century C.E. Galilee', p. 91.

as the perfect ideal is no longer so perfect. There is a new social order advocated where institutional domains such as the household, prime areas of women's subjugation, will be questioned.

Accordingly, this integrated literary study of women in the Gospel of Mark has demonstrated that there is an alternative to a gendered view of women emphasized in the Pauline and Petrine passages that appear to insist that a woman remain subordinate in a first-century, male social hierarchy. The characterization of women in the Gospel of Mark shows an intentional pressing, and at times reversal, of the prescribed, expected, social, hierarchical boundaries between men and women contributing to a different perspective on women.