

the Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Western Carolina University has given careful thought to the matter of an effective format for arranging the substance of the gospels.

The book is divided into four parts: one part for each of the gospels, using the canonical order beginning with Matthew and ending with John. The text employed is the Revised Standard Version. The material is arranged in blocks of parallel lines. Swanson describes his procedure thus: "The lead gospel is almost always the gospel in bold-faced type on the top of the block of lines. Exceptions occur only when there is material in the supporting gospels not found in the lead gospel. Such material is included, since it is important to see what the other gospel writers are saying which is not repeated in the lead gospel" (p. x).

Each gospel is preceded by a table of contents and cross references. The text of each is divided into sections. Matthew has 79; Mark, 72; Luke, 106; and John, 44. Six of Matthew's sections, those containing the five discourses around which the gospel is built (5:1-7:29; 9:35-11:1; 13:1-53; 18:1-19:2; 24:1-26:2), plus the account of the Jerusalem controversies (21:23-22:46), are subdivided into from 5 to 10 subsections each. In Mark the account of the controversies in Jerusalem (11:27-12:35-37) and the Eschatological Discourse (13:1-37) are also subdivided. The same is true of the Sermon on the Plain (6:20-49) and the Controversies in Jerusalem (20:1-45).

The material is to be studied in blocks of lines. There are two kinds of parallel materials included: (1) primary, printed in bold-faced type, and (2) secondary, printed in light italics except when the text agrees exactly with the lead gospel. The account of the Last Supper, for example, in Matthew includes parallel lines from 1 Cor 11:24-27 in bold-faced type and material from Jn 13 and 6 in light italics. The horizontal-line arrangement is flexible enough to include materials outside the gospels. As further illustration the list of the 12 apostles given in Acts 1:13 is also given as a parallel to Mt 10:2,3 (p. 49) as well as to Mk 3:16-19 (pp. 213-214) and to Lk 6:14-16 (pp. 362-363).

In the Marcan section, both the "long" and the "short" ending of the gospel are included (pp. 324-326). In John the Pericope adulterae is given as a regular part of John (7:53-8:11). The work, unfortunately, contains no textual notes or variant readings.

For a convenient comparison of the wording of the parallel accounts of the gospels as rendered in the RSV it is a valuable tool. We look forward to Swanson's production of a Greek Synopsis based on the same format.

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Via, Dan O., Jr. *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament: A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975. xii + 179 pp. \$8.95.

In recent years we have seen the NT studied by the methods of form criticism and redaction criticism, and now right on the heels of the latter the method of structuralism. While form criticism and redaction criticism are not heterogeneous to each other, structuralism is to them and therefore

is not to be built upon the results of either. Its approach is ahistorical in seeking to establish, not historical causal relationships between literature, but basic structures common to the human mind and society which would independently develop this type of literature. According to Via, "Structure properly speaking is the hidden or underlying configuration that can offer some explanation for the more or less visible or obvious pattern in the text" (p. 7). Again, "structure in one sense is the hidden and unconscious system of presuppositions which accounts for and holds together the visible, existing order, including its literary texts" (p. 13).

The hidden element that Via sees as the structure in the study of Paul (1 Cor 1:18-2:5; Rom 9:30-10:31) and Mark is the "comic genre—the rhythm of upset and recovery" seen in the death and resurrection of Christ. He points to the presence of this structure in Aristophanes' comedies, which in turn were derived from an ancient fertility rite. He sees a structural-genetic relationship rather than a causal-genetic relationship. The first question one must ask concerning this is whether in fact a structural relationship exists. How does one go about determining this? Is it sufficient to show that this motif is present in some other literature? Secondly, if we grant that this is so, what does this tell us about the kerygma? Does this mean that the kerygma of death-resurrection is so basic to human experience that it is expected that all men will sense it and accept the meaning of the Gospel for their lives? Does it mean that the tragic genre is not a basic structure of human existence?

We recognize that this is only the first foray in the application of this method to NT studies and much yet needs to be worked out. The first chapter, which presents the method and the language for this method, is rather awesome for the uninitiated. The new language includes diachrony, synchrony, syntagm, paradigm, signifier, signified, performance and competence texts, indicial, actantiel, etc. Actually Via presents much more than is relevant for his purposes, and the clarity of his presentation suffers because of this. One gets the impression that lack of clarity is also due to the fact that the subject has not had time to fully mature in the mind of the author before he placed pen to paper.

Perhaps one value in this method is that it seeks to understand a text as a whole rather than as fragments, as is the tendency in form and redaction criticism. This point which Via emphasizes is well taken. More emphasis needs to be made on the study of the text as a whole, though whether the structuralist approach is the correct one is doubtful.

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Wolff, Hans Walter. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. Translated by Gary Stansell; edited by Paul D. Hanson. *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974. xxxii + 259 pp. \$19.95.

This is a translation of the second edition (1965) of the German original published in the famous series *Biblischer Kommentar—Altes Testament*.