

## THE COMPOSITION OF TRIPOLAR PRONOUNCEMENT STORIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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In the Gospel of Mark one finds narratives with three main characters. These stories, which belong to the category of pronouncement stories, I call tripolar pronouncement stories. These narratives have not been recognized, nor has their significance been examined.

I utilize in my study the principles of narrative criticism. Subsequently, I analyze the eight tripolar pronouncement stories of the gospel of Mark according to the plot, characters, setting, and rhetoric of the story.

The tripolar pronouncement stories that can be identified in the Gospel of Mark are: (1) Mark 2:1-12 (The Healing of the Paralytic), (2) Mark 2:15-17 (Jesus' Company with Sinners), (3) Mark 2:23-28 (Plucking of Grain on a Sabbath), (4) Mark 3:1-6 (The Healing of the Crippled Hand), (5) Mark 7:1-13 (Clean and Unclean), (7) Mark 10:35-45 (Zebedee's Sons), and (8) Mark 14:3-9 (Jesus' Anointment). Elements that these narratives have in common are that they portray three main characters and unfold in a threefold progression of the plot with description, reaction, and reply.

The significance of tripolar pronouncement stories can be recognized (1) in comparing them with pronouncement stories that have two main characters (dipolar narratives), (2) in their contribution to the Gospel as a whole, and (3) in their impact upon the reader.

Dipolar pronouncement stories present only one party who approaches Jesus with a question or criticism. In tripolar pronouncement stories, two parties are set in dramatic juxtaposition to each other, creating a lively and complex situation, to which Jesus then responds with a pronouncement. Dipolar narratives present Jesus as a corrector, commender, responder, winner, and teacher, whereas tripolar pronouncement stories portray him also as a judge, vindicator, ally, protector, mediator, and authoritative example. Because of their detailed description of relationships, I have called these stories case studies in social interaction.