

**UNDRESSING JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK: A NARRATIVE-CRITICAL
ANALYSIS OF THE CLOTHING OF THE CHARACTER OF JESUS**

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ABSTRACT

Undressing Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: A Narrative-Critical Analysis of the Clothing of the Character of Jesus

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Though combing through years worth of biblical commentaries, monographs, and journal articles on Mark's gospel does reveal some valid insights and analyses by scholars on clothing in general, none of these has ever isolated all of the mentions of Jesus' clothing in Mark and elaborated this occurrence into a further and more in-depth study. The following thesis attempts to fill this void and engages the clothing of Jesus in Mark's gospel from a narrative-critical lens. The clothing which Jesus wears or does not wear is mentioned in several instances throughout, but these do not serve one singular purpose in Mark's narrative. A common design or feature among all of the mentions is not immediately clear nor does it seem likely that Mark intends a singular purpose for Jesus' garments. Rather, the clothing of Jesus serves as different and unique literary devices in each episode in which they are mentioned. Though there is no clear singular purpose for the clothing of Jesus, in each case they are at work in symbolic, ironic, or foreshadowing ways within the overall Markan narrative. The mention of Jesus' clothing at various instances makes it clear that these are important elements of the story and that they are an integral part of the characterization of the protagonist.

KEY WORDS: New Testament; Gospel of Mark; Jesus; Narrative Criticism; Literary; Synchronic; Symbolism; Clothing, Garments; Nudity; Robe; Purple Cloak; Crown of Thorns; Transfiguration; Haemorrhaging Woman; Linen Cloth; Young Man

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the love of my life, Tatiana...

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ATLA	<i>American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ChrCent	<i>Christian Century</i>
ChrLit	<i>Christianity and Literature</i>
CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission
FemThe	<i>Feminist Theology</i>
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JTSA	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
LD	Lectio Divina
Mark	The Gospel According to Mark
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Proof	<i>Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i>

PRSt	Perspectives in Religious Studies
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>ScrNS</i>	<i>Scriptura: Nouvelle Série</i>
<i>Theof</i>	<i>Theoforum</i>
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>WITW</i>	<i>Word in the World: Concordia University Graduate Journal of Theological Studies</i>

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'Une découverte étonnante attend celui qui fixe ses yeux sur le vêtement dans l'Écriture Sainte.'

Edgar Haulotte (1966)

'Hence clothes in the Gospel of Mark generally bear emblematic connotations.'

Mary Ann Tolbert (1989)

'Clothing seems like an incidental item, of little relevance to narrative analysis. Yet it may symbolize new stages in a character's development, or reveal the inner landscape of a character—his or her values and commitments—or it may accent a character's social and spiritual status.'

James L. Resseguie (2005)

INTRODUCTION

I Statement of the Question

While reading or listening to a story, it is easy for anyone to be distracted by the narrative to the point where small details are overlooked and disregarded. When thinking about the canonical gospels, many have a difficult time telling the books apart or recalling from which of the gospels certain episodes of Jesus belong. This is not at all uncommon. It is the reason why stories are retold, reread, and rewritten.

When thinking of Jesus and particularly the *Gospel according to Mark*, many are surprised to hear that the clothing of Jesus is a part of the narrative or that Mark references Jesus' clothing in his story. What Jesus wears over his body is a detail of Mark's gospel which many readers, both past and present, tend to overlook in their reading of the text. In Mark's gospel, however, clothing is a crucial part of the narrative as it is mentioned in nineteen different episodes.¹ Of these nineteen episodes, about one third (that is six) refer specifically to the clothing of the protagonist Jesus. The first reference to Jesus' clothing is recorded in the story where Jesus heals a woman who has

¹ These episodes are the following: Mark 1:6, 10; 2:21; 5:14-7, 21-34; 6:8-9, 55-6; 9:2-8; 10:50; 11:7-8; 12:38; 13:16; 14:51-2, 63; 15:16-20, 21-6, 38, 46; 16:1-8.

been haemorrhaging for twelve years (5:25-34).² In this story, Jesus' clothes play a prominent role as they are the catalyst for the woman's healing after she touches them without Jesus' consent. The clothing of Jesus as a means for healing is also featured during Jesus' ministry when he heals the sick in Gennesaret (6:53-56). In this succinct episode, many beg Jesus to touch the fringe of his garment and are healed as a result of this action. In the transfiguration episode, Jesus brings three of his disciples with him atop the mountain away from the other followers (9:2-8). It is in this scene that Jesus' clothes are transformed to shining white which is described as being so white, that no bleacher on earth could have been able to reproduce such brilliance. Later on – and perhaps most memorable of all of the clothing passages – are the mentions of clothing which take place during the passion narrative of Jesus. Here, the clothing of Jesus is a major part of Mark's passion narrative as the Roman soldiers are said to have dressed him in a purple garment, and they placed on his head a crown of thorns (15:17). After flogging and mocking him, the soldiers proceed to strip Jesus of the cloak (15:20a) and put his own clothes back on him (15:20b). At the crucifixion of Jesus not long after, the soldiers are described as having cast lots in order to divide amongst themselves the clothing of Jesus (15:24). Finally, after the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea enters the story and wraps the body in linen cloth for burial (15:42-47). The references to the clothing of Jesus are prominent throughout the gospel, but they are mentioned most often during the passion and death of the main character. In all of these instances, the story turns its attention to the special detail of attire and gives the audience what can be described as the only physical details recorded in the canonical gospels concerning the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth.

² All scriptural references refer to the *Gospel according to Mark* unless otherwise noted.

With all of these references to clothing, one might ask: Why does Mark take the time to mention the clothing of Jesus? And to go even further: What is the purpose or the role of the garments of Jesus within the Markan narrative? Is there a reason or reasons for mentioning such specific physical details of the story or are these references to Jesus' clothing simply additional information with no intended purpose?

Surely for some readers of these texts, the mentions of the clothing of Jesus yield little interest or concern, and such supplemental details may be conjectured of as pointless information within the Markan narrative. The *Gospel according to Mark* is filled with details not all of which are easily explained or which seem immediately important to the story as a whole. Of course, I would contend that even if something is not easily discernable, that does not make it insignificant or any less relevant. In fact, I would strongly argue that Mark's narrative is one which demands of its audience a careful rereading (or careful retelling) not just because of an incomplete ending³ which forces a reader back to its beginning, but because of the nature of Jesus' secretive and encrypted message. As far as the clothing of Jesus goes, I argue that the fact that these are mentioned six times throughout the gospel reveals that they are an important factor of the story, and all of these mentions create for the text a literary motif. All of the references to Jesus' clothing in Mark are of importance and throughout the narrative they are utilized as a wide range of literary devices. Mark does not mention the clothing of Jesus as a passing remark or as filler like some might come to assume; rather, the fact that Jesus' garments are mentioned so many times is a clear indication of their relevance and their functionality within the Markan story.

³ If we assume, as most scholars do, that Mark's gospel originally ended inconclusively at 16:8.

Throughout this thesis, I explore the particular aforementioned aspect of the *Gospel according to Mark* which has hitherto received little scholarly attention. Though combing through years worth of biblical commentaries, monographs, and journal articles on Mark's gospel does reveal some valid insights and analyses by scholars on clothing in general, none of these has ever isolated all of the mentions in Mark and elaborated this occurrence into a further and more in-depth study. For the most part, scholars have generally commented on the various mentions of Jesus' clothing, but often in isolation from the other occurrences. The references to the clothing of Jesus, as shown above, are numerous and these are now explored within the Markan narrative as a whole (though not necessarily as having one function which they all share as I discuss later on). Until now, no one has stepped back, examined the bigger picture regarding the clothing of Jesus, and asked the question I am asking which is: *Why does Mark mention the clothing of Jesus?*⁴ With the use of narrative-critical tools, the thesis engages this question and others in order to make sense of the mentions of the clothing of Jesus in Mark's text. *The overall aim is to enhance our understanding of Mark's gospel and argue convincingly that the references to Jesus' clothing are not insignificant details which were included by happenstance. This thesis examines each mention of clothing for Jesus in Mark's gospel and argues that they work as symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, and as other literary devices.* The fact that Mark speaks of clothing so often in the gospel indicates the importance of this feature within the overall story.

Each chapter is a detailed study and analysis of one or more particular mentions of Jesus' clothing. At the beginning of each chapter, I have provided the most current

⁴ Though in this brief article the question only concerns the clothing removed by Bartimaeus; Alan R. Culpepper, "Mark 10:50: Why Mention the Garment?" *JBL* 101 (1982): 131-2.

critical edition of Greek passages⁵ of the pericope in question followed by my own English translation of the text. Immediately following each translation the chapter briefly introduces and surveys previous scholarship pertaining to the passages and follows-up with a narrative-critical analysis of the clothing of Jesus.

The first chapter of the thesis explores the clothing of Jesus whereby his garments have the ability to heal the ailments of any who touch them. In Mark 5:25-34, a woman touches the clothing of Jesus and is miraculously healed. In Mark 6:53-56, Jesus arrives to the land of Gennesaret where people – recognizing him – bring the sick to the agorae in order to touch his garments and be healed as a result of this contact. The first two mentions of Jesus' clothing reveal a similar event whereby particular characters, in recognizing who Jesus is, touch his garments in the hopes of being cured. What is fascinating about these stories is that Jesus himself is not responsible for the healing as is the case in the other miracle stories;⁶ rather, it is the clothing of Jesus which is able to cure independently from the knowledge (perhaps even willingness) of Jesus. These first passages reveal a key component of Mark's narrative, namely that the clothing of Jesus is a pivotal part of it. Jesus' clothes here are not mentioned as visual aids, but as literary devices which bring attention to the garments of the protagonist and help to characterize Jesus. These first references to clothing are a clue for the audience that Jesus' attire is and will continue to be a vital part of the narrative because they – in their ability to heal – are as powerful as the main character and his twelve disciples (6:6b-13).⁷ The mentions of

⁵ The Greek passages have been taken from *Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece: Standard Edition*. Twenty-Seventh ed. Hendrickson Press, 2010.

⁶ Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 5:35-43; 7:31-37; 10:46-52; in all of these instances Jesus uses his touch and words in order to heal. No mention is made of his garment and Jesus is the one who initiates the healing.

⁷ In this episode, the disciples are given power to exercise unclean spirits and to anoint and cure the sick people they encounter. The clothing of Jesus also has the rare ability to cure.

clothing in these two episodes set up the rest of the narrative whereby it is made clear that his garments have an important role in the story, which will be seen in what is to come later on in Jesus' ministry and death.

In the second chapter, the transfiguration of Jesus episode is examined for its unique display of Jesus' clothing (9:2-8). In this episode, Jesus' clothes become shining white as he is transfigured before three of his disciples atop a mountain. The episode is unique in its portrayal of Jesus, but also in its allusions to Hebrew Bible texts and characters. In this scene, the attire of Jesus works as a narrative device in several different but unifying ways. The white clothing of Jesus acts as a literary device in that it symbolically reveals for the audience Jesus' immortality since his clothes are connected to the scene at the empty tomb. As such, the clothing of the protagonist successfully foreshadows what will transpire at the end of the gospel. The clue provided by the white clothes for the reader as to what is yet to come will be realized during the closing stages of the story when the women enter the empty tomb of Jesus and find a young man sitting there dressed in white (16:1-8). Thus, the white that Jesus wears at the transfiguration scene echoes the end of the gospel and connects Jesus with the young man while simultaneously connecting the Jesus dressed in white clothes with the unseen resurrected Jesus. In reading about the young man and the white robe, a reader is reminded of the transfiguration of Jesus episode where he is speaking with prophets of the past in the presence of God atop the mountain. By means of these connections, the transfiguration episode can be viewed in conjunction with the resurrection account.

The third chapter of the thesis investigates the mocking of Jesus by the Roman soldiers (15:17-18) as well as their casting lots for Jesus' clothes (15:24) and how the

clothing here works as irony and symbolism. At the time of his crucifixion, the soldiers mock Jesus by dressing him in a purple garment and placing on his head a thorn covered crown. After being ridiculed by the Romans who had dressed him in a purple outfit, the soldiers take back the garment and dress Jesus in his own attire (15:20). They then lead him to be crucified and divide his garments amongst themselves (15:24). The ironic aspect of the aforementioned scene is unmistakable and reaches its peak when the soldiers bow to him and say aloud, “Hail, King of the Jews!” In this episode, the clothing that Jesus wears is ironic in that he has actually become the king and the intended audience is well aware of such a missed attempt of ridicule on the part of the soldiers. Jesus also foretells the coming of the kingdom of God within the gospel and the clothing here symbolically emphasizes his prophetic words. Therefore, Jesus’ garments reveal an ironic scenario whereby Jesus – being dressed in kingly clothes – will succeed in establishing the kingdom of God and the clothes also work as latent symbolic imagery which reveals Jesus’ kingly position.

The fourth and final chapter follows the last mention of Jesus’ clothing. After the crucifixion account, Joseph of Arimathea wraps the naked body of Jesus in linen cloth and buries him (15:46). This enigmatic mention of clothing once more furthers the connection between the protagonist and the young man. When the audience learns that Jesus has been buried in a linen garment they can reflect upon the outset of Jesus’ death, namely the time of his arrest and how the youth was stripped of his own linen cloth. The undressing of the young man’s linen garment (14:51-2) foreshadows Jesus’ escape from the linen burial cloth at the end of the gospel when his prophecy is fulfilled and he is

resurrected. The narrative function of the linen garment, which was originally proposed by David Hester, is presented, critiqued, and expanded upon throughout this chapter.

Finally, the thesis concludes by revisiting the overall motif of Jesus' clothing in Mark's gospel and suggests avenues for further research on this topic. The clothing of Jesus is a crucial part of the Markan narrative, but there are many other mentions of clothing in Mark's gospel which are in need of closer literary analyses. Even beyond Mark's borders, the mentions of Jesus' vestment and of clothing in general are recurrent throughout much canonical and non-canonical biblical literature. This theme, which is important and lacking in scholarly attention, should continue to be studied and analyzed in the hopes of achieving a better understanding of the text at hand and of the different literary elements embedded within the narratives.

II *Status Quaestionis*

In the case of Mark's gospel, the voices are plenty and the bookshelves are overstocked with various publications which have come about over the course of two-thousand years. As a scholar who wishes to examine Mark's gospel today, it is important and necessary to be able to make sense of the past and how we have come to where we are now in terms of our understanding of the second canonical gospel. This research involves a close examination of the scholarly literature on Mark and an understanding of the current ideas which Markan scholars have proposed.

II.i Study of Clothing in Mark's Gospel

Since Mark's gospel has been around for the better part of two millennia, there is no wonder why a search for scholarly material on the subject yields overwhelming results. Over the many years there have been countless commentaries and commentators who have partaken in the dialogue by observing and analyzing the clothing of Jesus in the *Gospel according to Mark*. Here, I offer a brief overview of what scholars have written over the years, specifically concerning the mentions of the clothing of Jesus. This overview of literature concerning the Jesus clothing passages in Mark is meant to put forward an idea of the history of this scholarship in broad strokes. Specific thoughts and ideas particular to each individual pericope are later revisited in greater detail and specificity within the introduction of each chapter of this thesis.

In the early 20th century, when commenting on the Jesus clothing passages, a majority of authors were concerned primarily with the historically practical uses of Jesus' clothing. That is to say that for most scholars, the clothing of Jesus was relevant inasmuch as it could be understood from a realistic perspective (What did Jesus wear? What materials or colors were the clothes of Jesus made up of?). Concerning the haemorrhaging woman who touches Jesus' clothing (5:25-34), for example, commentators would note the requirements of Jewish law and elaborate on the colors and materials that likely would have been used for Jesus' garments, basing that information on the books of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*. No doubt such conceptions about the exact clothing Jesus wore are fuelled by readings of the same event in other gospels.⁸ Such

⁸ Mann points out that, "Matthew's version refers to the tassels attached to the corners of the cloak (cf. Num 15:38, Deut 22:12)," (Christopher S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986], 285).

concerns about the historically-centered details of the clothing that Jesus wore⁹ begin to transform as the years go by, and while they remain the main focus of commentaries up until the late 1970's, these begin to lose track and are overtaken by evolving concerns. During the late 1970's and early 1980's different conceptions about Jesus' clothing in the passages of Mark's gospel begin to take shape.

Historical concerns soon give way to more symbolic and allegorical readings as these become the main focus of Jesus' clothing in Mark up until the present day. No doubt, the same trend in progression of scholarly research from historical to narratological is mirrored in the shift of methodologies utilized by New Testament scholars who began to implement narrative readings of the canonical gospels during the same period (i.e. late 1970's and early 1980's). These more recent narratological readings have been concerned with examining the literary aspects and characteristics of Jesus' clothing; though these are most often done in isolation from one passage to another. Said differently, the clothing passages are almost always examined as single units within Mark and not as a whole or as a motif throughout the gospel. Most notable of such allegorical and ironic readings stems from the passage in which the Roman soldiers mock Jesus, dress him in a purple robe, and place a thorn covered crown over his head (15:17-18). Many scholars, having examined this particular scene, have applied a narrative reading of

⁹ For other historical concerns with the clothing of Jesus see: Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*. (London: Oliphants, 1976), 339; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 230, 453, 455; Sherman E. Johnson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*. (London: A. & C. Black, 1960), 128; Alexander Jones, *The Gospel According to St. Mark; A Text and Commentary for Students* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963), 119, 235. William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 559-60; Dennis E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 186, 420; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*. (trans. D.H. Madvig; Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), 341; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indexes* (2d ed.; New York: St. Martin's Publishing, 1966), 589.

the text in order to better understand this episode. Concerning the allegory of the Roman soldiers' actions, Tannehill writes:

The irony here actually has two levels. The soldiers act and speak ironically, outwardly they proclaim Jesus King of the Jews but actually they are rejecting his kingship. However, the reader is meant to take the soldiers' irony ironically, i.e., as pointing to a hidden truth. This reading is supported by the repeated references to Jesus as Christ and king in the passion story.¹⁰

The ironic conception of the passage is echoed in later studies of this section in Mark as well.¹¹ But while more narrative based understandings slowly start to emerge in the scholarly literature, still today there is lacking an overall – taking into account the entire gospel – understanding of Jesus' clothing in Mark. From the vast array of academic articles, commentaries and monographs, only few authors explore the overall picture of Jesus' clothing within Mark's text. In her commentary on Mark, Mary Ann Tolbert examines the various mentions of Jesus' clothing stating:

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus' garments have functioned symbolically to indicate his power or state of being: touching the hem of his garments was sufficient to heal those with faith (5:27-31; 6:56); his garments became intensely white beyond the power of any human bleach as he was transfigured (9:3); and just prior to dividing his garments, the soldiers had replaced them with purple robes to mock him as king (15:16-20). His garments have been used, then, to symbolize who Jesus is and what state he is in (i.e., powerful healer, transfigured divine son, mocked human king). Moreover, the garments of others throughout the Gospel have also exhibited figurative dimensions [...] Hence clothes in the Gospel of Mark generally bear emblematic connotations.¹²

¹⁰ Robert C. Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia* 16 (1979): 79.

¹¹ Stephen H. Smith, *A Lion with Wings: A Narrative-Critical Approach to Mark's Gospel* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 225; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*. (ed. Daniel J. Harrington; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 435.

¹² Mary A. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 280.

In just a few short paragraphs, Tolbert brings to light the importance of Jesus' clothing in Mark's gospel. Though she does take a step back in order to examine the bigger picture with respect to Jesus' clothing in Mark, she does not expand this concept into a longer and more in-depth study nor does she explore this feature further.

Another writer who has made mention of the clothing of Jesus is James L. Resseguie who writes of this narrative feature – which he refers to as a *prop*¹³ – in his introductory work for Narrative Criticism in the New Testament. Resseguie, in writing about the use of 'props', explains that:

Clothing seems like an incidental item, of little relevance to narrative analysis. Yet it may symbolize new stages in a character's development, or reveal the inner landscape of a character – his or her values and commitments – or it may accent a character's social and spiritual status.¹⁴

In just a few short pages, Resseguie analyzes the use of clothing in several New Testament books including the *Gospel according to Luke*, the book of *Acts*, and the book of *Revelation*.¹⁵ Resseguie's analysis is innovative and unique as several other books on Narrative Criticism fail to recognize the importance of 'props' as a literary device. He asks a question familiar to the one I am posing in this thesis: "[...] why did the narrator bother to mention [clothing]?"¹⁶ While Resseguie does explore clothing from a narrative perspective, his analyses are often quite succinct and rightfully so since he is writing an introductory book for learners of Narrative Criticism. As it pertains to this thesis, Resseguie's labour does not focus specifically on the clothing of Jesus in Mark's story.

¹³ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 105-8.

¹⁴ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 106.

¹⁵ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 106-8.

¹⁶ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 106.

Nonetheless, this understanding of clothing as a ‘prop’ is extremely noteworthy and relevant for this study. Resseguie’s work succeeds in clarifying the importance of clothing in biblical literature and it demonstrates a growing interest for this unique literary feature within biblical narratives.

Finally, it is important to note the 1966 monograph of Edgar Haulotte entitled *Symbolique du vêtement selon la Bible*.¹⁷ This work, which is seldom if ever cited by scholars up to the present day, presents a thorough exploration of the theme of clothing throughout biblical literature beginning with the Hebrew Scriptures and spanning all the way through to the New Testament. Haulotte’s study explores in great and impressive detail the importance of clothing in biblical narratives and the various historical and symbolic functions clothing can serve. The monograph overviews an array of different types of clothing which are present within biblical literature and Haulotte’s work masterfully examines the multitude of functions clothing can have. For example, the author explores the use of clothing through such themes as protection, as markers of identification, as loss of identity, in relation to love, power, etc. This scholarly work is a significant source in the study of clothing within biblical narratives though it has been disused in much scholarly literature. The book itself is an excellent tool for studying clothing passages; however, its wide scope throughout numerous biblical books unfortunately makes Haulotte’s study much less focused upon the mentions of clothing in Mark’s gospel which is the focus of this thesis. Nonetheless, the monograph serves as an excellent source for the study of clothing within biblical literature and clearly demonstrates the importance of the role of clothing within such texts. As it pertains to the specific explanations Haulotte presents concerning the mentions of the clothing of Jesus

¹⁷ Edgar Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement selon la Bible* (Théologie 65; Paris: Aubier, 1966).

in Mark's gospel, these are presented and further explored within the literature review sections of the chapters below.

Overall, even with Tolbert and Haulotte's works, the mention of clothing is an aspect of Mark's gospel which has hitherto remained relatively unexplored by many scholars. Though there has been a shift in the last decade to studying clothing passages from a narrative perspective¹⁸ these have not been extensive. The understanding of Jesus' clothing in Mark's gospel has evolved from historical to more allegorical readings; however, these have always been in isolation from one another. Until this time, scholars have examined the clothing of Jesus in one particular scene, but have not commented on the overall role of his clothing in Mark's text.

III Epistemology & Methodology

III.i Epistemology

Here I offer a few thoughts concerning my epistemological and ethical reflections. In this thesis, I approach the clothing passages in Mark's gospel from a narrative-critical perspective; however, I also take into account and acknowledge the diachronic elements of the text. Though the two approaches are different and focus on varying aspects, they are not – in my mind – exclusive from one another. It is clear that Mark's gospel presents to its audience the story of Jesus' ministry and his death. The author gives a historical account of Jesus' life and might also provide some historically accurate details throughout the gospel. At the same time, this history is not a 'biography' of Jesus as we have come to understand the term today; rather, the historical details have been weaved

¹⁸ See: Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

into a narrative. Therefore, Mark's gospel is comprised of elements both historical and literary in nature. As a result, it is important to be attentive to both of these aspects at work in the text. Overall, my approach is very much concerned with the literary quality of the narrative and how the mentions of clothing work as literary devices throughout the gospel. At the same time, I do not neglect historical elements of the text or historical understandings. While I do not pursue these features, I am still very much aware of their existence and oftentimes their relevance as I acknowledge such readings. There is not, in the field of biblical studies, only one specific way of reading Mark's gospel and as a result of this plurality, I believe it is not only necessary, but mandatory for scholars to be aware of the various approaches and readings of the texts and how different readings help better inform our overall understandings.

III.i.i Ethical Considerations

Since, as I have mentioned, there are several ways of reading biblical texts, it is important that we remain ethical in such readings. By ethical, I refer to the responsibility of being open to the diversity of readings possible and always keeping in mind that there is *not only one way* for examining and understanding biblical texts. David Rhoads, a pioneer in Narrative Criticism for the study of the New Testament, offers his views on an ethical reading of a biblical text by stating the following:

Choosing to address the text in dialogue is an ethical choice based on the values of respect for the otherness of the text, openness to be changed by it, honesty in critiquing the text, acceptance of difference of opinion, as well as a refusal to dominate the text or to be dominated by it.¹⁹

¹⁹ David M. Rhoads, *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 205.

The ethical side of this exegesis is the recognition of the limitlessness of possible readings of biblical texts. The ethical exegete is aware of the multitude of possible readings and thus, in his/her own interpretation, does not force onto the text or its audience a singular or authentic understanding. In my thesis for example, I examine the clothing of Jesus in Mark's gospel from a narrative-critical perspective and draw several conclusions based upon my readings of the text from this methodological approach. While I undoubtedly argue for the logic of my interpretation, I do not impose or present this understanding as the only way of reading clothing in Mark's gospel. I am well aware that there are countless ways of reading the text and extracting meaning and that my reading is not more 'true' or 'authentic' than any of these. That is not to say that all meanings share equal weight because it is true that they do not. Some interpretations are more logical than others and some produce a better coherence or understanding of the text; however, the importance is to be able to realize, as an exegete, that the interpretation one presents is not *the* interpretation of the text, it is simply *an* interpretation of it. Ethically speaking, there is pluralism with respect to the ways of approaching any text and in order to be a good or ethical exegete, one must recognize this plurality of readings and accept it.²⁰

²⁰ Rhoads states, "[...] every interpretation will be only interpretation in a range of interpretations," (David M. Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects," David M. Rhoads and Kari Syreeni eds., *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* [JSNTSup 184. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004], 284).

III.ii Methodology

III.ii.i Translation & Textual Criticism

Since each chapter focuses on a particular unit of Jesus' clothing in Mark's gospel, these passages have been provided in Greek at the outset of each chapter. As previously mentioned, the translations have all been based upon the 27th edition of Nestle-Aland.²¹

For centuries, the canonical gospels have been translated and retranslated into English. This long history of available translations offers the modern scholar a plethora of available texts from which to work with – some translations, of course, being better than others. In order to do justice to the literary nature of the text, I have provided my own unique translations of the aforementioned relevant passages. In these, I have tried as much as possible to translate similar words consistently. In such cases where certain words are used several times throughout the gospel, (example: ἱμάτιον) I was careful to consistently translate this word the same every time it appears. Therefore, the English translation “clothes,” will be used for this particular word at the various instances in which it occurs. I felt this was an element even some of the most important and accepted modern English translations of the gospel have neglected to uphold. Oftentimes, the translation of similar Greek words have been expressed using different English words (example: the NRSV translates the word ἱμάτιον as ‘clothes’ and other times as ‘cloak’.) Consistency was an element that was lacking in some translations and this is an area in which I tried to uphold the integrity of the Greek wording of the text. No doubt, a Greek

²¹ While there may be some very minor textual variances which deal with the clothing passages of Mark's gospel, none of these merited an alteration from the Nestle-Aland text in my opinion.

word may have different meanings especially in different contexts and surely I am aware of this. It is common knowledge that any translation of one language into another involves more than simple word for word equivalencies. Nonetheless, this consistency was an element of my translation that was stressed especially for more specific words referring to Jesus' clothing within the Markan passages.

III.ii.ii Narrative Criticism

Narrative Criticism²² is the synchronic methodology which I employ in order to analyze the clothing passages in Mark's gospel.²³ The aim of Narrative Criticism as a methodology is to engage the narrative elements of a literary text. Resseguie defines Narrative Criticism as the following:

Narrative Criticism focuses on how biblical literature works as *literature*. The 'what' of a text (its content) and the 'how' of a text (its rhetoric and structure) are analyzed as a complete tapestry, an organic whole. Narrative criticism is a shift away from traditional historical-critical methods to the way a text communicates meaning as a self-contained unit, a literary artefact, an individual whole.²⁴

Narrative-critical analyses tend to focus on such elements as the characters, plots, settings, narrator, etc. This approach to biblical texts is perhaps one of the most innovative and contemporary in biblical exegesis today. As I have previously mentioned,

²² See: Kyle Keefer, *The New Testament as Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1999); Mark A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*; David M. Rhoads, Joanna Dewey and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) [originally published in 1982].

²³ For monographs which are specific to the study of narrative criticism and Mark's gospel see: Elizabeth S. Malbon, ed. *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, Interpretation* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009); Elizabeth S. Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000); Elizabeth S. Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009); Rhoads, *Reading Mark*; Smith, *Lion with Wings*.

²⁴ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 18-9.

this methodology is not the only way of analyzing the text at hand, but it is the one which I have chosen to employ. Later in the conclusion, I discuss other possible methods for analysis which I dutifully leave to future scholars and inquirers.

III.ii.ii.i Brief History of Narrative Criticism and Mark's Gospel

The study of biblical texts from a narrative perspective has two very distinct historical roots. As early as the 19th century, there have been studies on the Bible as literature. The term 'Bible' was often used to refer specifically to the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. In 1899, Richard G. Moulton examined the Hebrew Bible as literature and spoke of a new development during that era, whereby many were beginning to see the Bible as literature.²⁵ His book is a literary study of the Bible, particularly the book of *Job* and lyrical poetry. Later on, throughout the 1960's, some wrote of the educational aspect and practice of how they taught, in classrooms, the Bible as literature.²⁶ This approach continues to evolve up until the early 1980's where two important scholars (Northrop Frye and Robert Alter) produced milestone works for the study of the Bible as literature.²⁷

During this time, however, the study of the Bible as literature has little or no relation to the New Testament. Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th century, studies on the New Testament and Mark's gospel were largely based on examinations of the

²⁵ Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms by Literature Represented in the Sacred Writings; Intended for English Readers* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1899).

²⁶ See: James S. Ackerman, *On Teaching the Bible as Literature: A Guide to Selected Biblical Narratives for Secondary Schools* (ed. Jane S. Hawley; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967); Cecil M. McCulley, "Teaching the Bible as Literature," *ChrCent* 78 (1961): 357-8.

²⁷ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (ed. Alvin A. Lee; vol. 19 of *Collected Works of Northrop Frye*; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006 [originally published in 1982]).

historical qualities of the texts. It was not until the late 1970's when a shift in methods and new perspectives began to blossom. The whispers of analyzing the gospels from a literary perspective began in the very last years of the 1970's with authors such as John Dominic Crossan, Norman Petersen, Robert C. Tannehill, and Roland M. Frye.²⁸ It is during this time that scholars started imagining new possibilities for reading the *Gospel according to Mark*. Tannehill notes: "There is increasing recognition that the Gospel of Mark can and should be read as a unitary narrative and that, when this is done with the aid of perspectives from literary studies, the message and the art of the Evangelist stand out with new clarity."²⁹ From these first few steps, the study of Mark as literature begins. Then, at the outset of the 1980's, David Rhoads co-authors the first (and still one of the most influential) monographs for Narrative Criticism.³⁰ His work is the first of its kind and its focus is entirely on a narrative-critical approach which specifically engages the Markan gospel. Thus, Mark's becomes the first gospel to be analyzed using this new narrative-critical approach. Soon after, studies on the other gospels as literature erupt.³¹ From Rhoads' groundbreaking work has come a whirlwind of scholarly literature which continues to utilize this method, not only for the *Gospel according to Mark*, but for the other canonical New Testament books as well.

²⁸ John D. Crossan, "Waking the Bible: Biblical Hermeneutic and Literary Imagination." *Int* 32 (1978): 269-85; Roland M. Frye, "Literary Criticism and Gospel Criticism." *ThTo* 36 (1979): 207-19; Norman R. Petersen, "Point of View in Mark's Narrative." *Semeia* 12 (1978): 97-121; Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark," 57-95.

²⁹ Robert C. Tannehill, "Tension in Synoptic Sayings and Stories." *Int* 34 (1980): 148.

³⁰ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie, *Mark as Story*.

³¹ See: R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). This monograph becomes another very important early narrative-critical work.

III.ii.ii.ii Advantages of Narrative Criticism

Narrative Criticism focuses on the literary shape and features of a given text. A narrative-critical study of any biblical book, like the *Gospel according to Mark*, examines the story on the basis of its type, genre, structure, characterization, and narrative features. This recent method of interpretation is pivotal in the study of New Testament texts by the fact that it allows for different questions to be asked and it offers new ways of viewing old texts. Essentially, Narrative Criticism focuses on the literary aspect of biblical literature and it studies the text as a completed narrative. The narrative-critic reads the text as a narrative, looking at how the author constructed the story with plot, irony, repetition and so forth, in order to ascertain meaning from the book.

There are several important advantages for utilizing a methodology such as Narrative Criticism. Mark Powell's landmark monograph on Narrative Criticism lists the following eight criteria as benefits of utilizing this methodological approach in biblical studies:

1. Narrative Criticism focuses on the text of Scripture itself (i.e. it is centered on the text and not the elements behind a text).
2. Narrative Criticism provides insight into biblical texts for which the historical background (authorship, dating, provenance, etc.) is uncertain.
3. Narrative Criticism provides for checks and balances on historically based methodological approaches.
4. Narrative Criticism tends to bring scholars and non-professionals closer together when reading the Bible.
5. Narrative Criticism is closer to the believing community because it interprets biblical passages in terms of their intended literary affect.
6. Narrative Criticism offers the possibility for scholars of various believing communities to come together in their interpretation of biblical material.
7. Narrative Criticism offers novel interpretations of biblical texts.

8. Narrative Criticism unleashes the power of biblical stories for personal and social transformations.³²

Powell notes that the method is 'new' for approaching biblical texts and as a result, its findings are oftentimes quite innovative. In the case of Mark's gospel, we are able to reread a two thousand year old gospel and can find new meaning, new understandings, and new truths when using the tools of Narrative Criticism. In addition, the method elicits from texts a more coherent meaning, something which is sometimes lacking in the historical-critical methods. The same way people read modern literature for its affect and concern with the human condition, so too does a narrative-critical reading bring forth a deeper existential quality from the biblical text. All of these reasons allow for Narrative Criticism to be a formidable tool in biblical studies. However, despite its enormous advantages and proven effectiveness, the method does have restrictions.

III.ii.ii.iii Limits of Narrative Criticism

As it is with any critical methodology, Narrative Criticism has its own limitations. In Powell's monograph not only does he present the benefits of Narrative Criticism, but he also discusses and dismisses several of the problematic issues surrounding the method.³³ Some of the major arguments being that: 1) the methodology applies modern literary theories and concepts onto ancient literature; 2) Narrative Criticism treats the gospels as unified texts when instead they should be read as a collection of redacted documents; and 3) Narrative Criticism treats the gospels as a work of fiction and not as historical documents. Narrative Criticism has evolved rather quickly; in 1982 Rhoads

³² Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 85-91. In this monograph the aforementioned advantages of narrative criticism are expanded upon. Many of these arguments are still considered valid today.

³³ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 91-8.

produces the first monograph utilizing the method and not long after he was already at work re-examining the methodological approach.³⁴ Here, I discuss only what I consider are the most important and relevant critiques of Narrative Criticism³⁵ including some of my own issues with the methodology. The importance of this assessment is to evaluate the usefulness of this hermeneutical approach not only for my thesis, but for future studies as well.

The first major critique of Narrative Criticism which I have come across is that Narrative Criticism applies modern literary theories and concepts onto ancient literature. The assumption, therefore, is that Narrative Criticism is a contemporary method for interpretation and should not be utilized for the study of ancient texts; however, it is true that the foundations of this method can be traced all the way back to a time before the writing of the gospels. In fact, Narrative Criticism uses literary techniques based in large part on the work of Aristotle who explored literary theory in his *Poetics*.³⁶ Though it may be that some critics apply more contemporary theories onto the gospels, we must remember that, “much in modern literary theory is not applicable to our Gospels,”³⁷ and thus this argument is rendered moot. In many ways, all methodologies are contemporary tools, but this does not and should not deter our willingness or permissiveness to utilize them in order to make sense of the past.

Another critique, and perhaps the most important, is that Narrative Criticism treats the gospels (and other biblical literature) as a unified text when such is not the case.

³⁴ Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects,” in *Characterization* (ed. Rhoads and Syreeni), 264-85.

³⁵ These are the issues which are most relevant for this study. For a more complete list and examination of current critiques of Narrative Criticism see: Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects,” in *Characterization* (ed. Rhoads and Syreeni), 264-85.

³⁶ Aristotle. *The Poetics* (trans. S. H. Butcher; Kessinger Publishing, 2004).

³⁷ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 93.

This argument maintains that a gospel is a collection of redacted documents and therefore cannot and should not be read as having unity.³⁸ Merenlahti breaks this down into three separate yet related parts: “Are the gospels (1) unified enough to (2) be valued as literature, which would justify (3) a ‘literary’ approach?”³⁹ The question of unity is essential for the study of biblical texts from a narrative perspective. Indeed, Rhoads and Michie are quick to argue for the coherence of Mark’s narrative stating that the gaps and breaks in Mark’s gospel are intentional and that their study “reveals Mark’s narrative to be of remarkably whole cloth.”⁴⁰ The notion of Mark as a collator of various historical sources and as someone wishing to convey a particular theological message has swayed most to accept the ‘wholeness’ of Mark’s narrative. But one aspect of this unity which has not been addressed and which has troubled me is the fact that while Mark’s gospel may be unified, what we have as Mark’s text is anything but a cohesive work.

When narrative critics examine Mark, they readily comment on its wholeness or its overall literary structure. My contention with this is that the version of Mark’s gospel which these scholars (and myself included) are using for this literary analysis, is actually a text which is non-existent and is in many ways artificial. The Markan Gospel which is currently used and examined is the ‘critical text’ which, as a result, is eclectic and has been reconstructed from thousands of manuscripts. Therefore, what we have are thousands of different versions of Mark and what we use is a renovated edition which in and of itself is not an actual manuscript or in other words, not an actual literary piece.

³⁸ Witherington is one of these voices as he claims that there is, “[...] strong evidence that Mark is presenting a biography of Jesus [which] means that he will have proceeded like other ancient biographers in the gathering and use of sources.” (Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2001], 16).

³⁹ Petri Merenlahti, *Poetics for the Gospels? Rethinking Narrative Criticism* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 3; in this work Merenlahti also states that: “To prove, empirically, that the gospels are unified narratives is to prove that they qualify as literature, which will legitimate a literary approach,” 19.

⁴⁰ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 3.

Imagine a student submitting thousands of various assignments; each one the same yet slightly different. If you redact all of these and recreate the most likely original does that give you a text that the student submitted or are you left with your own recreation of their work? This issue is not a simple one to contend with. In fact, the logical way to deal with it would be to examine particular manuscripts individually. For example, one might pick up a particular uncial manuscript, say Codex W, and examine the *Gospel according to Mark* from that manuscript and use only that gospel as literature. That way, we can be certain that this is a whole and unified narrative; it was written by a scribe, and its intent and formation are purposeful. A completed gospel like the one found in Codex W holds its own unique theological value which is different than every other Markan version. But such a task is not simple nor is it feasible or practical. Examining thousands of different versions of Mark as thousands of different works of literature is not progressive. So how do we make sense of this? Some might argue that the ‘critical text’ currently employed is the version of Mark’s gospel which is closest to the ‘original text’ and thus what we are using is a manuscript which in most ways mirrors the ‘original Mark’. Unfortunately, a sceptic who is unconvinced might argue that there is no proof of there being an ‘original Mark’ and that the history of ancient manuscripts may be slightly more complex than we might easily assume. The vast number of manuscripts that we have in our possession today may be evidence that these texts were constantly transforming and evolving, and it may be that there never was a time when there was a complete ‘original text’. With so many changes, additions, and subtractions in all of the variants we have as witnesses, it might be impossible to decide (even with every single manuscript ever written in hand)

which one *we would consider* to be the ‘original’, since this decision likely rests upon a subjective and not an objective conclusion.

Fortunately, the issue of not having one version of Mark (like we have one version of many works of literature) is not a debilitating one. Rather, it is one that we must contend with and accept as part of the study of ancient texts. We live in a world far removed from these biblical texts and it is likely that we will not find our way back to all of them when they were composed. Nonetheless, this does not render futile the study of our critical edition of Mark’s gospel. This edition, though not perfect, has compiled the most common or likely features of Mark’s gospel and so we must accept this as a base text and proceed. Knowing the weaknesses and the issues surrounding our methods helps guide us and inform our readings and understandings as we work with these texts.

The final critique of Narrative Criticism I must discuss is the argument that Narrative Criticism treats the gospels as a work of fiction and not as historical documents. This critique is usually pointed out by traditionalists who employ historical-critical methods and do not venture into the narrative side of the text. Does reading the text as a narrative force one to forego any understanding of the text’s history? The answer is certainly not. One does not read Mark’s gospel as they would any literary work. It is not only important, but necessary to be aware of the historical elements of the gospel while making sense of its literary functions. Powell confirms this understanding as he maintains that the methodology, “demands that the modern reader have the historical information that the text assumes of its implied reader.”⁴¹ Therefore, a reader should be concerned with historical aspects of the text as well as its narratological aspects.

⁴¹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 97.

III.iii Diachronic Considerations

It is important, even when reading a text from a narrative-critical perspective to be aware of the historical aspects which surround the text and its reception. As Powell notes: “Effective use of narrative criticism, however, demands knowledge of the social and historical circumstances assumed by the narrative.”⁴² In my study of the clothing of Jesus, I am very much aware of the diachronic elements of Mark’s narrative and respectfully consider these in my examination. Past studies of the clothing of Mark’s gospel have, for the most part, been centered on the historical ways clothing was used in biblical times. I believe that such insights are important and I consider these interpretations as I encounter them.

In his re-evaluation of Narrative Criticism, David Rhoads highlights the openness of Narrative Criticism to include and work with other methodologies.⁴³ In this insightful vision for the future, I must agree with Merenlahti that it is difficult and perhaps impossible to object to anything that Rhoads’ puts forward.⁴⁴ Indeed, I subscribe to his notion that Narrative Criticism be inclusive of other methods and this includes a historical understanding of the text. The gospels, though they may be read as literature, are not the same as literature. It is clear that the gospel is a different type of text which simultaneously aims to inform the reader of historical events, details, and circumstances as well as tells a story in order to achieve such goals. Its narrative quality is undeniable in that the text is full of narrative elements such as narrator, characterizations, literary devices, etc. At the same time, a narrative-critic cannot deny the historical aspect of the

⁴² Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*. 86.

⁴³ Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects,” in *Characterization* (ed. Rhoads and Syreeni), 264-85.

⁴⁴ Merenlahti, *Poetics*, 2002.

story. The text has a history in its events, in its transmissions, in its collection of stories, in its theology, etc. Rather than deny the historical elements of the text which are clearly present, I wish to consider these and acknowledge the existence of the historicity of the text. My approach remains a narrative-critical one whereby I discuss and analyze the narrative features of the text, but when confronted with historical readings or historical questions, I address and deal with these in an appropriate manner. Surely, the best methodological approach is one which is open-minded to the limitlessness of interpretations and understandings of biblical texts.

**CHAPTER ONE:
'IF I BUT TOUCH HIS CLOTHES, I WILL BE HEALED': THE HEALING
POWER OF JESUS' CLOTHES (MARK 5:21-34; 6:53-56)**

1.1 Introduction

The first mention of Jesus' clothing in Mark's gospel occurs during the healing of the haemorrhaging woman in 5:25-34. This miracle – whereby touching the garment of Jesus is the catalyst for healing an ailment – also occurs in the second mention of Jesus' clothing in Mark 6:53-56 when he cures the sick in Gennesaret. These two events have been grouped together because both demonstrate a similar type of healing. In both cases, the clothing of Jesus plays a part in the healing of the sick.

This chapter explores the two aforementioned scenes and offers alternative ways of reading the clothing of Jesus in these accounts. First, I present the Greek passages of both episodes along with my own English translations. Immediately following this, I overview the history of thought and understanding in relation to the clothing within these passages and examine how scholars and commentators have analyzed the mention of the clothing of Jesus in these scenes over the past several decades. As I previously stated, Jesus' garments have been read, for the most part, as a secondary element within the narrative. By secondary, I refer specifically to the role in which clothing plays in the healing of the ailment. For many scholars, the role of faith on the part of the woman and the willingness of God to accomplish the miracle are often understood as the catalysts for the healings as opposed to placing any credit for the healing on Jesus' clothes. Following this examination of previous research, I engage these two Markan passages from a narrative-critical perspective in order to explore more specifically the importance and

role of Jesus' clothing in both scenes and how this reflects the importance of his clothing for the gospel of Mark overall.

1.2 Greek Text & English Translation

Mark 5:24-34

²⁴ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν μετ' αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς καὶ συνέθλιβον αὐτόν. ²⁵ Καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη ²⁶ καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα, ²⁷ ἀκούσασα περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὅπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ. ²⁸ ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἄψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι. ²⁹ καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς καὶ ἔγνω τῷ σώματι ὅτι ἴαται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος. ³⁰ καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξεληθοῦσαν ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ἔλεγεν· τίς μου ἤψατο τῶν ἱματίων; ³¹ καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· βλέπεις τὸν ὄχλον συνθλίβοντά σε καὶ λέγεις· τίς μου ἤψατο; ³² καὶ περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο ποιήσασαν. ³³ ἡ δὲ γυνὴ φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα ὃ γέγονεν αὐτῇ, ἦλθεν καὶ προσέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ³⁴ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιῆς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου.

Mark 5:24-34

²⁴ So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years ²⁶ and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, and touched his clothing, ²⁸ for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped and she felt her body cured from the affliction. ³⁰ Immediately Jesus, realizing his power came out of him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you and you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³² He looked around to see the one who had done this. ³³ But the woman was terrified and trembling, having known what had happened to her; she came, fell down before him, and told him the entire truth. ³⁴ Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Mark 6:54-56

⁵⁴ καὶ ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου εὐθὺς ἐπιγνόντες αὐτὸν ⁵⁵ περιέδραμον ὅλην τὴν χώραν ἐκείνην καὶ ἤρξαντο ἐπὶ τοῖς κραβάττοις τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας περιφέρειν ὅπου ἤκουον ὅτι ἐστίν. ⁵⁶ καὶ ὅπου ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο εἰς κώμας ἢ εἰς πόλεις ἢ εἰς ἀγρούς, ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ἐτίθεσαν τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν ἵνα κἂν τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ἄψωνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἂν ἤψαντο αὐτοῦ ἐσώζοντο.

Mark 6:54-56

⁵⁴ When they came out of the boat, immediately people recognized him ⁵⁵ and ran around that whole region and they began to carry the afflicted on mats wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ So wherever he went, into villages or into cities or into farms, they laid the sick in the agorae, and they begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his clothing; and all who touched it were healed.

1.3 Literature Review

An examination of the scholarly literature pertaining to the aforementioned episodes demonstrates two concerns on the part of commentators. Firstly, many commentators throughout the 20th century were intent on explaining and understanding the clothing of Jesus from a realistic perspective whereby they surmised, using passages from the Hebrew Bible and traditions of the Jewish people, on what types of clothes Jesus had been wearing. In other words, what did the ‘historical Jesus’ actually wear and which part of his clothing was touched? Secondly and perhaps most importantly, commentators have focused on the role of faith on the part of those being healed and on the willingness of God in order for the miracle to have transpired. These commentators often dismiss the importance of Jesus’ clothing in favour of understanding the miracle as being initiated by faith or by God.

1.3.1 Historical Understanding of Jesus' Clothing

Many commentators were very much concerned with the actuality of the events as portrayed in these healing passages. The focus was on the clothing of Jesus, but more specifically on the types of fabrics Jesus' clothes would have been made of, the color of his clothes, what types of garments he would have been wearing, and which part of his clothing would have been physically touched. Such concerns were with the actual clothing of Jesus and many scholars tried to discern as to what the clothing of the 'historical Jesus' would have been like.⁴⁵ In order to answer these tangible questions, explanations were drawn from passages of the Hebrew Bible and from Jewish customs of the time, particularly as expressed in the books of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*.⁴⁶ As Booth writes, the clothing of Jesus likely refers to, "one of the tassels which Israelites were obligated by Num. 15.38f. to wear on the four corners of their outer garment to remind them of the commandments."⁴⁷ While the line of inquiry into the physicality of Jesus' clothing is an interesting one, there exists an inherent problem in trying to understand these passages from a historical perspective.

⁴⁵ This understanding of Jesus' physical clothing is taken up by several commentators: Anderson states, "[...] the fringe of his garment: probably the tassel which every male Jew was required to wear (Num. 15:38-41; Dt. 22:12; cf. Mk 5:27)," (Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 180); Cranfield notes, "Jesus, as a pious Jew, wears the fringes or tassels commanded in Num. xv. 37ff., Deut. xxii. 12," (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 230); Johnson writes, "The fringe of his outer garment is perhaps the tassel or cicith which every Jew wore (Num. xv. 38-41; Deut. Xxii. 12)," (Johnson, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, 128); Jones comments, "[...] devout Jews wore multicolored tassels on the four corners of their outer garment," (Jones, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 119); and Nineham states, "*fringe*: Probably a reference to the blue fringe or tassel every male Jew was required to have on the corners of his robe," (Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 186).

⁴⁶ The following is a short list of commentators who do just that: Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 180; Mann, *Mark: A New Translation*, 205; Henry. B. Swete, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (3d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1908), 103.

⁴⁷ Roger P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7* JSNTSup 13; (Sheffield Academic Press: 1986), 110.

This concern (or problem) involves the tendency of some scholars to read a specific biblical pericope with ideas and information drawn from another passage. For example, during the healing of the haemorrhaging woman episode, Jesus simply refers to his clothing in a general way stating μου τῶν ἱματίων ‘my clothes’ (5:30); however, when the sick are healed by touching his clothes in Gennesaret, it is said that the sick touched τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ‘the fringe of his clothing’ (6:56). Many commentators, in writing about the healing of the haemorrhaging woman, mistakenly jumble the information about Jesus’ clothing in either scene. More specifically, when commenting on the story of the haemorrhaging woman in Mark, many mistakenly assume that the woman touches the fringe of Jesus’ garment.⁴⁸ While the woman is said to have touched the clothing of Jesus, it is never specifically stated in Mark that she touches the fringe of his garment. The specific detail concerning the fringe of Jesus’ garment is an element only present in the healing of the sick in Gennesaret from which it is likely influenced.⁴⁹ The coloured reading of a fringe may also be influenced, not just by the specificity of 6:56, but by an inter-textual parallel between the *Gospel according to Mark* and the *Gospel according to Matthew*. Matthew’s gospel also features the story of Jesus healing a haemorrhaging woman and in the Matthean version the woman is said to have ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ‘touched the fringe of his garment’ (Matt 9:20). Though it is instinctive, when reading Mark’s account, to assume that the woman touches the fringe of Jesus’ garment, it is important that one does not make

⁴⁸ This is apparent in William L. Lane’s work when he goes so far as to surmise that the hemorrhaging woman, “[...] may have known that others had touched him and had been made well (cf. Ch. 3:10; 6:56),” (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 192); Other examples can be found in: Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 180; “[...] it is probable at this time Jews wore the Greek chiton and himation not the Arab dress often portrayed in modern religious pictures,” (Johnson, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, 107); Swete, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, 103.

⁴⁹ Clearly, the hemorrhaging woman could not have known about what transpires in 6:56 since this event is recorded later in the chronological narrative time of the gospel.

assumptions about what the text is saying, but instead focuses solely on what is present within a given narrative. When attempting to make sense of an episode, it is crucial that one does not read into it an element which is not present since this can be problematic and detrimental to a proper understanding of the text.

1.3.2 Faith and Will as Healing Agents

The inquiries into the historical aspects of Jesus' clothing, while interesting, have been a secondary issue for most scholars over the years. What has been the most significant point of interest for previous scholarship has been trying to discern exactly who or what causes the healing to take place. In each episode, it is clear that the clothing of Jesus plays a part in healing the ailments of the haemorrhaging woman and of the sick in Gennesaret since in both the sick reach out to touch the clothing of Jesus and in either episode the clothing of Jesus is involved in curing ailments. However, many commentators have ignored this surface reading of the accounts and have instead postulated that the healing is *not* initiated by the clothing of Jesus; rather, some have hypothesized that the curative miracles come to pass as a result of one of two things. Either the sickness is healed on account of the faith of those people touching Jesus or they are cured because it is God who has willed it.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The following authors make note of the role of faith in the healing of the sick in Gennesaret episode: Guelich comments on Jesus' clothing saying, "But read in the context of 3:10, where the sick sought to touch Jesus, 3:27-8, where the woman sought to touch his clothes, the desire here to touch only the extremity of his clothing represents an intensification or progression not so much in Jesus' power to heal as the faith of those seeking his help," (Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* [Volume 34A of *Word Biblical Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989], 357); Lane writes, "The statement that as many as touched him were healed is to be understood in the light of Mark's treatment of this mutual relationship between Jesus and the afflicted in Ch. 5:25-34. What was involved was not simply material contact with Jesus' clothing, but the touch of faith," (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 240); Taylor notes that, "The action implies a belief in the healing virtues of contact, but the significant fact is the woman's faith," (Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 290).

When reading the two aforementioned stories, it is easy to spot a connection between the clothing of Jesus and the healing of diseases simply by reading the text at hand. The clothes of Jesus are touched and consequentially those with illness are cured. Despite this obvious detail most scholars have not read the healing as resulting from the touch of Jesus' clothes. The writing of Sherman Johnson highlights this tendency of many scholars as he notes that, "The[se] words must not be pressed too far; it was the divine power that accomplished the healing, and faith had made it possible to receive the gift."⁵¹ According to Johnson, the faith of the woman is what allows for her healing to take place and not necessarily the physical contact with the clothes of Jesus. This understanding of the role of faith is no doubt fueled by the rhetoric of Jesus at the end of the episode who says to the woman, "Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (5:34). From what Jesus remarks, it seems as though the woman's faith is what is responsible for her cure.

While, as already mentioned, several scholars see faith as an active agent in both healing stories this can be seen as yet another 'problematic' misreading whereby commentators are influenced by elements of one story and subsequently read these into another. The role of faith is an element clearly present in the healing of the haemorrhaging woman story since this is mentioned by Jesus; however, many scholars also see faith as an active agent in the healing of the sick in Gennesaret. As Kenneth R. Gros Louis writes when commenting on Mark 6:54-56: "[Jesus] cures with a touch, he can cure if he *is* touched, he can cure when he is absent. It is not Jesus himself, but faith

⁵¹ Johnson, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, 107.

in Jesus, that cures.”⁵² Though Gros Louis and many other commentators see faith as playing a role in the healing of both stories, it is important to note that ἡ πίστις (faith) is present only in the episode of the haemorrhaging woman and it is never mentioned in the latter. This fact is a crucial distinction and one we must keep in mind. If it is faith that causes or allows for the miraculous healing to transpire, then it is a curious thing that such is not mentioned in the healing of Gennesaret since here too the people come to touch the clothing of Jesus.

Leaving aside the question of faith and its function for those being healed, another interpretation and understanding sees God as the catalyst for the healings of the sick in these episodes. The inclusion of God is most likely due to the fact that the protagonist Jesus appears to be unaware of the healing which takes place with the haemorrhaging woman. Jesus states aloud in 5:30, “Who touched my clothes?” For some commentators, Jesus knew that power had gone forth from him, but simply asked so that the woman would confess her faith to him.⁵³ More plausible than this reading, Jesus was unaware of the healing and perhaps even unwilling for it to have transpired. Such a unique circumstance with Jesus not being directly or overtly involved with the miracle has perhaps been the rationale to see God as partaking in the healing stories. As C.E.B. Cranfield writes concerning this understanding:

⁵² Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974, 324.

⁵³ Cranfield notes that, “A good many earlier commentators (including Calvin) think that Jesus knew all the time who had touched him, and asked simply to make her confess her faith”. In Cranfield’s own opinion however, “It is more likely that he did not know, and sought the information, not because he wished to make the miracle conspicuous- which would be inconsistent with his injunctions to secrecy- but because he desired to draw away from his clothes to himself a perfect faith,” (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 185).

Though Jesus does not himself make a decision (at least so it seems) in this case, nevertheless God does. God controls his own power. He knows about the woman and wills to honour her faith in the efficacy of his power active in Jesus [...] The cure does not happen automatically, but by God's free and personal decision.⁵⁴

Whether it is the faith of the woman, the will of God, or both, it is clear that scholarship pertaining to these healing stories has focused very little on the importance of Jesus' clothing as a healing agent. Instead, the emphasis has oftentimes been placed on other parts of the narrative in order to explain the miracles within each of these two passages. The clothing of Jesus is regularly overlooked by scholars and is not given sufficient credit for what transpires within the story. Most often within previous scholarly literature, the words of Jesus – which imply the role of faith as healing agent – and/or the will of God have been used to explain how the healing miracles take place.

1.3.3 Mark's Sandwich Technique

Aside from historical analyses, there have also been many narrative studies of Mark's gospel and both of these scenes have been examined from synchronic perspectives. One of the recent insights into the gospel of Mark is the understanding of a Markan technique whereby the gospel writer splits one story with the insertion of another. This practice is commonly referred to by scholars as Mark's 'sandwich' technique.⁵⁵ The episode of the hemorrhaging woman is a prime example of this procedure at work since the account, as it is found in Mark's gospel, is strategically

⁵⁴ Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 185; This is similar to: Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), "It would seem that this is a case in which the miracle was performed directly by God, without the intervention of Jesus, of which Jesus becomes aware by the touch of the woman, but not by the loss of power" 96; Lane writes, "The healing of the woman occurred through God's free and gracious decision to bestow upon her the power which was active in Jesus," (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 193).

⁵⁵ For more information see: Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 39.

placed between the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter. The following table demonstrates how the healing of the hemorrhaging woman has been spliced into the other story:

Table 1: Mark's 'Sandwich' of the Hemorrhaging Woman Story

<u>Healing of Jairus' Daughter</u> Part 1	<u>Healing of the</u> <u>Hemorrhaging Woman</u>	<u>Healing of Jairus' Daughter</u> Part 2
Mark 5:21 – 5:24a	Mark 5:24b – 34	Mark 5:35 – 5:43
<i>Jesus is asked by Jairus to heal his daughter who is sick</i>	<i>Jesus' clothing is touched by the hemorrhaging woman and she is cured of her illness</i>	<i>Jesus heals Jairus' daughter</i>

From the above table, it is clear that the story of the hemorrhaging woman is actually a side quest of Jesus on his way to healing Jairus' daughter. During his ministry, Jesus is asked to heal Jairus' daughter and while on the way happens to find himself in another situation which, even without his knowledge, turns out to be another healing. After the hemorrhaging woman is cured of her ailment, Jesus resumes his initial undertaking which was to heal Jairus' daughter.

This uniquely Markan technique can be explained in several different ways, the two foremost being from a narrative and from a redactional perspective. Narratologically, the insertion, "triggers off an echo between the scene inserted and the scene into which it is inserted, and this echo produces enhanced meaning: the two scenes interpret each other."⁵⁶ Conversely, the technique may be seen as a redactional element of Mark's gospel whereby the beginning of verse 5:35, "Ἐτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος (While he was still

⁵⁶ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 39.

speaking) is likely connected to the words of Jairus in 5:23, where he is asking Jesus to help him and is cut off midsentence. This understanding carries some weight since the response from the person exiting the house in 5:35 is ὅτι ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἀπέθανεν· τί ἔτι σκύλλεις τὸν διδάσκαλον (“Since your daughter has died, why do you still bother the teacher?”). The rhetoric of the person is clearly directed to the father of the child Jairus; however, in the context of Mark’s gospel it would seem as though this person is speaking to Jesus because of the fact that Jesus is the last person to have spoken (5:34). Since the words from the one coming out of the house seem to be directed to Jairus and not Jesus, it would make sense that 5:35 may have originally followed 5:23 and that the scene of the hemorrhaging woman has been redactionally intercalated into this pericope.

While there have been recent narratological studies concerning the haemorrhaging woman and healing of the sick in Gennesaret episodes,⁵⁷ these rarely concern themselves with the clothing of Jesus or the role it plays. The lack of scholarship on this aspect of the story is partially what has prompted this study.

1.4 Narrative Analysis

Why are the clothes of Jesus mentioned in the healing stories, and what function do they serve? The clothing references have not found their way into the accounts by happenstance, nor are they additional information included in the narrative with no relevant purpose. As I demonstrate, the clothing of Jesus are mentioned not only because they have an incredible power in that they are able to heal independently of Jesus’

⁵⁷ Normand Bonneau, “Jesus and Human Contingency in Mark: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Three Healing Stories,” *Theof* 32 (2001): 321-40; Normand Bonneau, “Suspense in Mark 5:21-43: A Narrative Study of Two Healing Stories,” *Theof* 36 (2005): 131-54; Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*.

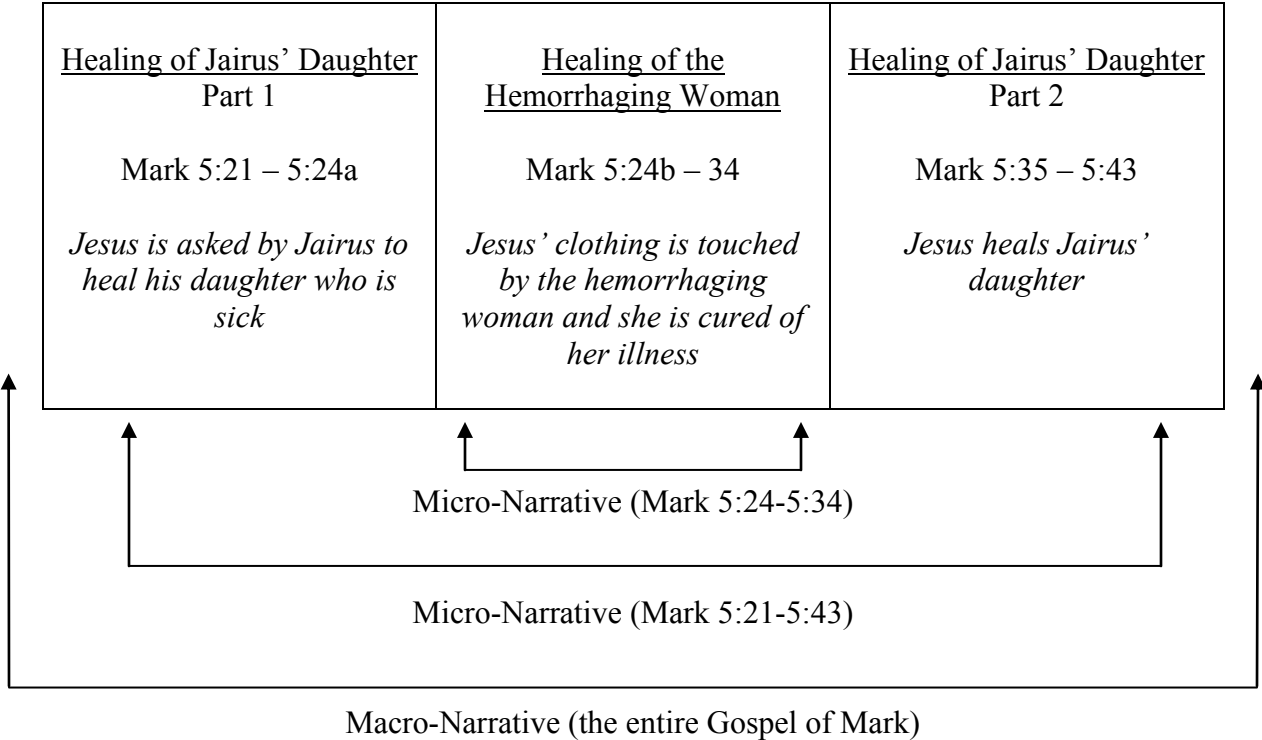
knowledge, but Jesus' clothes within these passages foreshadow the importance that his clothing will have in the later events of the gospel. While many commentators have attempted to explain the healings as manifested by faith on the part of those being healed or as the will of God, a narrative-critical analysis demonstrates that the clothing of Jesus would not need any mention if such were the case. Conversely, if the clothing of Jesus was all that was needed for the healing, then the woman's thoughts would not be required nor would Jesus need to point out her faith at the end of the passage. The clothing of Jesus is present in the pericopae and its presence serves an important literary function. Using a narrative-critical lens and focusing specifically on the role the clothing of Jesus plays I explore the healing of the haemorrhaging woman and the healing of the sick at Gennesaret stories.

1.4.1 Place

As mentioned earlier, the scene of the haemorrhaging woman is part of a Markan 'sandwich' technique, whereby it has been intercut in the episode of Jesus healing Jairus' daughter. The story of 5:24-34 is actually a micro-narrative within a micro-narrative of Mark's gospel (the entirety of the gospel of Mark being the macro-narrative).⁵⁸ The following table displays the literary relationship between these stories and shows the place of the healing of the haemorrhaging woman story in Mark's gospel.

⁵⁸ Marguerat and Bourquin offer definitions of these key concepts: "Macro-narrative: the maximal narrative unit conceived of as a whole by the narrator. Example: a Gospel or a historical book; Micro-narrative: the minimal narrative unit presenting a narrative episode the unity of which can be identified by the indicators of closure; Scene: sub-unit of a micro-narrative," (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 34).

Table 2: Mark's Narrative Sequence



1.4.2 Narrative Time

Since the episode of the haemorrhaging woman is a micro-narrative within another micro-narrative, time is an important part of the story. When reading the entire episode it is clear that time has elapsed between Jairus' request (5:22) and Jesus' arrival to Jairus' home (5:35). This lapse in time and the event with the haemorrhaging woman may actually account for the death of Jairus' daughter when Jesus arrives. The episode of the haemorrhaging woman then is a plot purposefully inserted⁵⁹ in order to depict the progression of time between the request on the part of Jairus and Jesus' arrival.

⁵⁹ See: Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 53-4.

To delve even further into the narrative structure of the haemorrhaging woman scene, the narrative time and events are presented.⁶⁰ While the reader has a perception of time as being chronologically linear, the stories in the gospels often present non-linear timelines as is the case with the haemorrhaging woman. The proceeding table demonstrates the narrative-time of actions in the healing of the haemorrhaging woman episode where on the left-hand side the events have been ordered as they are explained (listed) in the gospel. On the right-hand side, the events have been rearranged; the ordering of the events has been modified so as to reflect the chronological linearity of the occurrences as they transpired in time.

⁶⁰ For further explanations about events and narrative time see: Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975); Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Translated by J.E. Lewin. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988); Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*.

Table 3: Narrative Time (Original | Chronological)

Order of the scene as it is presented in the story

(Mark 5:24-34)

Chronological order of the scene as the events would have actually occurred in time

(Mark 5:24-34)

#1	5:24	So Jesus went with him.	#3	5:25	A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years
#2	5:24	And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.	#4	5:26	and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse.
#3	5:25	A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years	#5	5:27	She had heard about Jesus,
#4	5:26	and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse.	#1	5:24	So Jesus went with him.
#5	5:27	She had heard about Jesus,	#2	5:24	And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.
#6	5:27	came up behind him in the crowd	#8	5:28	for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed."
#7	5:27	and touched his clothing,	#6	5:27	came up behind him in the crowd
#8	5:28	for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed."	#7	5:27	and touched his clothing,
#9	5:29	Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped and she felt her body cured from the affliction.	#9	5:29	Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped and she felt her body cured from the affliction.
#10	5:30	Immediately Jesus, realizing his power came out of him,	#10	5:30	Immediately Jesus, realizing his power came out of him,
#11	5:30	turned around in the crowd	#11	5:30	turned around in the crowd
#12	5:30	and said, "Who touched my clothes?"	#12	5:30	and said, "Who touched my clothes?"
#13	5:31	And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you and you say, 'Who touched me?'"	#13	5:31	And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you and you say, 'Who touched me?'"
#14	5:32	He looked around to see the one who had done this.	#14	5:32	He looked around to see the one who had done this.
#15	5:33	But the woman was terrified and trembling,	#15	5:33	But the woman was terrified and trembling,
#16	5:33	having known what had happened to her;	#16	5:33	having known what had happened to her;
#17	5:33	she came,	#17	5:33	she came,
#18	5:33	fell down before him,	#18	5:33	fell down before him,
#19	5:33	and told him the entire truth.	#19	5:33	and told him the entire truth.
#20	5:34	Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."	#20	5:34	Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

In Table 3, the scene has been broken down into twenty separate events. As it is clear from either column, the sequence in which the events are presented to the reader in Mark are not in the same order as the actions take place chronologically within narrative time. As Culpepper has noted concerning narrative time: “The order in which the narrative tells of the events is not the same as the order in which they occur in the story.”⁶¹ As a way to illustrate this we will more closely focus on an example from the table (the description of the woman’s illness has been chosen randomly to showcase this):

Order of the Scene as it is presented in the story
(Mark 5:24-27)

Chronological Order of the Scene as the events would have actually occurred in time
(Mark 5:24-27)

#1	5:24	So Jesus went with him.	#3	5:25	A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years
#2	5:24	And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.	#4	5:26	and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse.
#3	5:25	A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years	#5	5:27	She had heard about Jesus,
#4	5:26	and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse.	#1	5:24	So Jesus went with him.
#5	5:27	She had heard about Jesus,	#2	5:24	And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

As it is clear on the left-hand side, the twelve years of suffering the woman has endured is the third event listed since the narrator informs us of this fact after Jesus went with Jairus and after a large crowd presses in on the protagonist; however, the twelve year suffering does not transpire as the third event in the story when considering the narrative

⁶¹ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 54.

time of the gospel in chronological order. Said differently, the haemorrhaging of the woman does not happen for twelve years after Jesus has walked towards the house of Jairus. In fact, the twelve years of blood flow which the woman endures have already elapsed by the time Jesus is walking in the crowd near her. Therefore, this insight offered to the reader by the omniscient narrator in 5:25-6 can be understood as a narrative feature referred to as an *analepsis*. Marguerat and Bourquin define ‘analepsis’ as the following: “a flashback evoking at a later stage an event which is anterior from the point of view of the story. The analepsis can be internal, external, or mixed.”⁶² In essence, the mention of the twelve years of blood flow works as a type of flashback sequence for the audience. The narrator informs the reader about the previous event as a summary so that it is clearer for the audience in order to make sense of who the woman is at the time when she enters the scene. If the woman were to have touched Jesus without the reader knowing about her past, then this would lead one to assume any number of things about her motives or her character. But since the flashback sequence is presented by the narrator then it aids the audience by telling them who the woman is and what her intentions are.

Examining the differences between the ordering of the gospel and the chronological order of the scenes in Table 3, there are apparent similarities and differences between them. From #1 – #8 there are several differences between the ordering of events whereas with #9 and onwards, both the gospel story and the actual chronology of events take place in exactly the same way. This makes it clear that the story begins with the audience being hurled from one time period to another until the halfway point where this back and forth through time ceases and the narrative continues in a steady chronological pace.

⁶² Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 96.

The shifting through time is not without its purpose; in order for the audience to better understand the current situation being presented, it is imperative to know the back-story to this woman's life so that her actions in the present will make sense. The omniscient narrator is aware of the events that have happened and that will transpire. The events of the woman's past are recounted to the audience in order for them to understand what takes place in the present (her actions in touching Jesus in order to stop her haemorrhaging) and for the audience to perceive her character as sympathetic. In the instance when the woman touches Jesus' clothing, the omniscient narrator informs the audience of her inner thoughts by noting the following: "for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed'" (5:28). The narrator anticipates a question from the audience who without this information would ask: 'Why is she touching his clothing?' This implied question is given a quick response: "If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed" (5:28). Therefore, the woman believes that if she touches the clothes of Jesus that she will be healed; she is touching his clothes as a means to an end. In addition, the audience is able to fully grasp and understand the woman's intentions and her reason for touching Jesus' clothes. Since the implied reader is aware of what she is doing they can sympathize with her and accept her actions, which may not have been so readily accomplished had she touched Jesus' clothes without knowing why she was doing such a thing.

The other element out of alignment in the story in terms of narrative time is the woman's past or the *analepsis*. In the gospel, the woman touches Jesus' clothes and then it is said that she was thinking that she would be healed because of it. The following is taken from Table 3 in order to demonstrate this misalignment more closely.

Order of the Scene as it is presented in the story
(Mark 5:27-29)

Chronological Order of the Scene as the events would have actually occurred in time
(Mark 5:27-29)

#6	5:27	came up behind him in the crowd	#8	5:28	for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed.”
#7	5:27	and touched his clothing,	#6	5:27	came up behind him in the crowd
#8	5:28	for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed.”	#7	5:27	and touched his clothing,
#9	5:29	Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped and she felt her body cured from the affliction.	#9	5:29	Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped and she felt her body cured from the affliction.

In fact, the woman would have had this entire thought (#8) prior to touching Jesus’ clothing. Her thoughts about the future outcome are a catalyst for her action which is the reason why they are taking place beforehand. The woman does not tell herself: ‘I am touching his clothes so that I can be healed’; rather, she states, ‘*if* I but touch his clothes’. The εἰ (if) is a conjunction which is indicative of future movement or action and since the woman says to herself ‘if’, it is clear that she had this thought prior to having accomplished the action of touching the clothing of the protagonist.

1.4.3 Plot

One of the major concerns already addressed is who or what causes the healing of the woman. In other words, what is it that allows the woman to be transformed? According to many commentators, the transformation takes place because of the faith of the woman as stated by Jesus in verse 5:34. If faith is all that was needed then why are the clothing of Jesus mentioned at all and why is faith not mentioned in the healing of the sick in Gennesaret? If the woman’s thoughts about being healed represent her faith in Jesus’ ability to cure, what purpose is the mention of the touch of Jesus’ clothing? In

order to help shed light on these questions, the scene of the haemorrhaging woman has been disassembled with the use of a *quinary scheme*.⁶³ This narrative tool has been implemented in order to examine more closely the five stages in which the plot of the episode is made up.

Table 4: Quinary Scheme of Mark 5:24-34

5:24-26	So Jesus went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. A woman who had been with haemorrhaging for twelve years and had suffered plenty under plenty of physicians had spent everything she had and did not benefit, but rather came out worse.	<u>Initial Situation</u>
5:27-28	She had heard about Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothing, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be healed.”	<u>Complication (Narrative Tension)</u>
5:29a	Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped	<u>Transforming Action</u>
5:29b-33	and she felt her body cured from the affliction. Immediately Jesus, realizing his power came out of him, turned around in the crowd He looked around to see the one who had done this. But the woman was terrified and trembling, having known what had happened to her; she came, fell down before him, and told him the entire truth.	<u>Denouement</u>
5:34	Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”	<u>Final Situation</u>

Table 4 has divided the episode into five distinct sections. The first three verses make up the *Initial Situation* of the story whereby the audience is presented with the

⁶³ A *Quinary Scheme* is defined as a structural model splitting up the plot of the narrative into five successive moments: initial situation (exposition), complication, transforming action, denouement (resolution), final situation. See: Marguerat and Bourquin. *How to Read Bible Stories*, 40-57.

information necessary in order to make sense of the circumstances at hand. Essentially, the information about who, what, and where is made clear to the audience. Who is this about? The characters enter the scene as Jesus went with him, a large crowd followed, and then we are introduced to the haemorrhaging woman – these are our three players in the story. What is happening? The problem is presented by the omniscient narrator who informs the reader that the woman has had a flow of blood for twelve years and that despite her efforts to be cured by plenty of doctors; all attempts at healing have been failures in the past. Where is this taking place? We are still following Jesus in his ministry as was described earlier in the story (5:21).

Now that the audience is aware of the characters and the issue at hand, we move on to the *Complication*. The *Complication* is not the woman's haemorrhaging as some might initially suspect; rather, it is the tension which sets the narrative into motion and which brings to light the need for a resolution of the problem. In this case, the woman has been sick for twelve years and Jesus is just now passing along near the region where she is. All of this is a set up for the complication which arises when the woman decides she will cross paths with Jesus. This crossing of paths is the complication which sets into motion the solution of the initial problem.

The *Transforming Action* is the element which will remove the disturbance initially presented. Here, at the beginning of verse 5:29, the story reaches a turning point: '*Immediately her haemorrhaging stopped.*' The confrontation between the woman and Jesus has a transformative effect whereby the woman has been healed from the blood flow.

After the woman has been healed comes the *Denouement* which describes the resolution of the problem: *she felt her body cured from the affliction*. The transformation stopped her blood flow; however, the fact that she feels better as a result of the drying of blood is the denouement. Interestingly in this case, the healing does not simply end with the woman's blood flow, but it has a rippling effect so that Jesus too feels a change. As a result of his questioning she comes before him and tells him what has transpired.

Jesus' rhetoric in 5:34 is the *Final Situation* of the story. The *Final Situation* is recognition of the change after the problem has been resolved. The situation is now altered and a new condition has been attained. As it pertains to this story, Jesus' words recognize the woman's actions and though before she was in a state of agony because of her illness, now she can go along in peace. There is a new level attained whereby the transformation has set in motion a new situation. Whereas before the woman was sick and she had only heard of Jesus, now she is well and she and Jesus know each other. The element of knowledge is just as important as the healing. Though before the woman had only heard of Jesus, now after this event they both know each other. Jesus did not know her even when she touched his clothing, as is evidenced by his asking about whom it was that touched him. Here, at the end of the story, the woman is healed and Jesus is aware of her presence.

1.4.4 Symbolism of Clothing

Who or what is responsible for the drying of the woman's blood flow and causes this miracle to transpire? What element of the story has led to the transforming action? From what we can tell, it is obvious that Jesus is likely not the source. Though he feels a power coming out from him, he asks who has touched him which makes it clear he is

oblivious to what has actually transpired. So has the clothing of Jesus healed the woman or was it her faith as Jesus proclaims? Though it is enticing to say either her faith has saved her or her touching of Jesus' clothes has saved her, it seems as though one cannot exist without the other because the transformative action takes place as a result of the woman's faith *and* the woman's touch.

While most scholars have placed emphasis on the faith of the woman, it is clear that her faith has done little to heal her. Her faith, as expressed psychologically in 5:28, is not all that will transform her. The faith in Jesus' ability to heal her of her affliction is symbiotic with her touching of Jesus' clothes. The story does not tell us that if she simply had faith in her heart, Jesus would cure her ailment, nor does it say that she touches his clothes without any prior reliance and dedication. The faith and the action are connected: one is dependent on the other. Her faith in Jesus incites her to touch his clothes and the touch of his clothes is contingent on her faith in the power of Jesus' clothes healing her. Both elements are interconnected whereby the touching of his clothing is a manifestation of her faith.

Understanding the cause for her healing in this way allows us also to appreciate the dual nature of the clothing of Jesus whereby the material and immaterial are connected. The clothing in this passage is an incidental item (or 'prop') with a symbolic function. The woman touches the material clothing and yet this material has immaterial qualities in that it heals her haemorrhaging. There is a type of current or electric charge running through Jesus' garment which parallels with the woman's blood flow. Whereas the woman had blood flowing from her like a fountain, verse 5:30 tells us that, "Immediately Jesus, realizing his power came out of him." There is a parallel between the

blood flowing from the woman and the power that flows from Jesus and his garment.⁶⁴ The clothing of Jesus encapsulates the physical and material into one, whereby it has the supernatural ability to heal while at the same time being grounded as fabric in a material world. This duality is symbolic of the woman's predicament whereby she has blood flowing from her and is suffering in the physical world, but her faith is immaterial – even psychological – in that it is rooted within her mind and her thoughts. Thus, the clothing of Jesus manifests itself as material and supernatural and it symbolizes this duality and the duality of the woman in its qualities.

1.4.5 Healing of the Sick on Mats

As it pertains to the second episode in which Jesus' clothing heals the sick in Gennesaret (6:54-6), this event can be seen in close relation to the story of Jesus' healing of the haemorrhaging woman since both stories demonstrate the importance of Jesus' clothing and its function in the healing. In this account, it is specifically stated that the sick (in this case more than one person) begged Jesus to touch the fringe of his garment and all those who did were healed. Edwards notes that, "Unlike other healing stories in Mark, this one contains no teaching of Jesus, no dialogue with the ill, indeed no word from him at all."⁶⁵ Since the episode lacks such details which are commonly found throughout the gospel, it feels as though the omniscient narrator is using the account to reemphasize the importance of the clothing of Jesus and their function. The clothes have not only healed one woman, but rather can heal many sick people as evidenced by the

⁶⁴ For more on the duality between the blood flowing from the woman and Jesus' power flowing from him see: Candida R. Moss, "The Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25-34," *JBL* 129 no 3 (2010): 507-19.

⁶⁵ Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans: 2002.

short account. Again, it is interesting to note that there is no mention of faith in this episode in relation to healing. Rather, it is stated that the people recognized Jesus and that the sick that begged to touch his clothing and did were healed. The recognition of Jesus on the part of the people may be conjectured as having to deal with the faith of the people. Guelich notes: "But read in the context of 3:10, where the sick sought to touch Jesus, 3:27-28, where the woman sought to touch his clothes, the desire here to touch only the extremity of his clothing represents an intensification or progression not so much in Jesus' power to heal as the faith of those seeking his help."⁶⁶ Like in the episode of the haemorrhaging woman, it appears as though the healing of the sick must be attributed to a duality of causes. On the one hand, the recognition of Jesus and the faith of the people to bring the sick on mats and touch Jesus' clothing is an integral part of the healing, since it is this faith which allows the secondary characters to physically reach out and touch the clothing of Jesus. By the same token, one cannot discount the importance of Jesus' clothing and its ability to cure the ailments of the sick. This ability to heal stresses the importance for Jesus' clothing within this passage and foreshadows the importance his clothes will play in the development of his character throughout the gospel story.

1.5 Conclusion

What is fascinating about these two healing stories is that Jesus himself is not responsible for the healing as is the case in the other miracle stories;⁶⁷ rather, it is the clothing of Jesus which is able to cure sickness.⁶⁸ Though many scholars have postulated that the healing in both stories is carried out by faith or by the willingness of God, it is

⁶⁶ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 357; also noted by Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 240.

⁶⁷ Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 5:35-43; 7:31-7; 10:46-52.

⁶⁸ See: Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 102.

clear from these passages that the role of clothing and faith work in unison. These first passages reveal a key component of Mark's narrative, namely that the clothing of Jesus is a pivotal part of it. These first references to clothing are a clue for the audience that Jesus' attire is and will continue to be a vital part of the narrative. The clothing here sets up the rest of the narrative in that it is made clear they have an important role in the story which will be seen in what is to come later on for Jesus. While many scholars and commentators overlook the clothing of Jesus in either scene or fail to comment on its relevance, as it has been shown Jesus' clothing plays an important role within these episodes and have not been mentioned simply in happenstance.

**CHAPTER TWO:
“HIS CLOTHES BECAME SHINNING WHITE”: THE PROLEPTIC WHITE
CLOTHES OF JESUS (MARK 9:2-8; [16:1-8])**

2.1 Introduction

Six days after Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, he takes Peter, James, and John with him atop a high mountain (9:2a). There, he is transfigured in front of them so that his clothes become whiter than anyone on earth can whiten them (9:2b-3). After Moses and Elijah appear and speak with Jesus, a cloud enters the scene and a voice from that cloud proclaims: “This is my Son, the Beloved; Listen to him” (9:4-7). Then, suddenly, everything goes back to normal and Jesus’ three disciples once again find themselves alone with Jesus (9:8).

The following chapter examines the episode of the transfiguration and the white clothing of Jesus. First, the scholarly literature concerning this passage and the white clothing of Jesus is overviewed. This is followed by a narrative analysis of the shining white clothes. This chapter considers the white clothing at the transfiguration episode as a means of connecting two characters: the protagonist and the young man who appears in the tomb of Jesus dressed in a white robe (16:1-8). The white clothing not only ties the two characters together, but also ties the episode of Jesus’ resurrection with that of his transfiguration. The transfiguration episode and the white garment work as a *prolepsis* concerning Jesus’ unseen resurrection. When, at the end of the gospel, a youth in white explains that Jesus is raised, the white clothing connects the two episodes together and works as a *proleptic* window for the resurrection of Jesus.

2.2 Greek Text & English Translation

Mark 9:2-8

² Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, ³ καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν, οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι. ⁴ καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεὶ καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ. ⁵ καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ· ῥαββί, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεὶ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν. ⁶ οὐ γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἀποκριθῆ, ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο. ⁷ καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. ⁸ καὶ ἐξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν.

Mark 9:2-8

² Six days later Jesus takes with him Peter, James, and John and leads them up a high mountain in private. And he was transfigured in front of them, ³ and his clothes became shining white, such as no bleacher on earth is able to whiten them. ⁴ There appeared to them Elijah with Moses and they were speaking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter replied saying to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ But he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud came overshadowing them, and there came a voice from the cloud, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸ Suddenly as they looked around, they no longer saw anything, but Jesus alone with them.

Mark 16:1-8

¹ Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ [τοῦ] Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμη ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν. ² καὶ λίαν πρῶτὴ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου. ³ καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἑαυτάς· τίς ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου; ⁴ καὶ ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν ὅτι ἀποκεκύλισται ὁ λίθος· ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα. ⁵ Καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν. ⁶ ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· μὴ ἐκθαμβείσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ⁷ ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰπάτε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτόν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν. ⁸ καὶ

ἐξεληθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις· καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.

Mark 16:1-8

¹ After the Sabbath had concluded, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day after the Sabbath, they went to the tomb [when] the sun had risen. ³ They were saying to themselves, “Who will roll away for us the stone from the entrance of the tomb?” ⁴ When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, for it was very large. ⁵ Entering into the tomb they saw a young man, sitting on the right side and dressed in a white robe; they were amazed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be amazed! You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look at the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, and report to his disciples and to Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he said to you. ⁸ So going out they fled from the tomb; for terror and ecstasy had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

2.3 Literature Review

The concerns surrounding the transfiguration episode have often dealt with issues of historicity. There have been several questions posed about the episode such as: Upon which mountain did the transfiguration take place? Who was with Jesus when the event transpired? How did this transpire in real life? Such inquiries have often been focused on the ‘historical Jesus’ and how the episode of the transfiguration might have unfolded during his ministry. The following section offers a brief overview of the scholarly literature concerning the transfiguration episode and how this has been viewed historically. The clothing of Jesus, aside from its historical understanding, has also been read intertextually, and such understandings are also taken into consideration. Finally, the chapter also overviews and explores the symbolic understandings of the white clothing put forth by Edgar Haulotte before delving into a narrative-critical analysis of the white clothes of Jesus.

2.3.1 Historical Understanding of Jesus' Clothing

One of the important historical understandings of the transfiguration episode has been centered on whether or not Mark's transfiguration account may have served as a resurrection of Jesus story in the time before Mark's gospel was written. The idea, put forth by some commentators, is that before the transfiguration story reached Mark it was originally an account of the resurrection of Jesus. In the process of writing his gospel, Mark redacted the story of the resurrection and altered it so that it became a part of Jesus' ministry. Robert Stein writes about the popularity of this theory amongst commentators:

In several recent works on Mark the thesis that Mark has purposely transferred the story of the transfiguration, which was originally a pre-Markan resurrection account, into the lifetime of the historical Jesus forms the basis for a particular view of why Mark wrote his gospel.⁶⁹

Theodore Weeden is one of the scholars who has put forth this hypothesis which argues that the account of the transfiguration in Mark's gospel was originally a resurrection story of Jesus.⁷⁰ While the theory had been popular for quite some time amongst scholars, it does begin to lose its footing in light of newer understandings. In his article concerning the transfiguration episode, Stein thoroughly critiques and ultimately dismisses the ease of the claim concerning the redaction on Mark's part which had been put forth by scholars such as Weeden and others.⁷¹ For a comprehensive dismissal of this theory we can turn to the writing of Morton Smith who offers the following:

⁶⁹ Robert H. Stein, "Is the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) a Misplaced Resurrection-Account," *JBL* 95 (1976): 79.

⁷⁰ Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 119.

⁷¹ For an overview of this theory and its claimants see: Stein, "Is the Transfiguration," 79.

The common supposition that this is a misplaced resurrection story is unsatisfactory because the story contains no reference to resurrection. Moreover, this supposition (a) is supported only by trivial similarities—shining garments, visions of men, etc—expectable in any report of a vision of supernatural beings; (b) fails to account for the characteristic and essential elements of this story—transfiguration, identification of the men as Elijah and Moses, Peter's speech and its content, the cloud (and the voice, if original), the sudden disappearance; and (c) is based on rationalistic faith, as expressed by Bultmann, that "das visionäre Schauen des leiblich anwesenden Jesus doch ein kaum glaubliche Sache ist" ("that Jesus was seen in visions while he was still present in the body is, after all, something unbelievable.")⁷²

The common understanding of this scene as having originally been a resurrection story is no doubt partially based upon the fact that this episode presents what looks like a resurrected Jesus. This entire notion of a resurrection account nestled into Jesus' ministry is further explored in the narrative analysis section below. While I do not further this redactional theory as it has hitherto been presented, in my analysis I explore the connection between the transfiguration account and the resurrected Jesus from a unique narrative perspective.

2.3.2 Intertextuality

The white clothing of Jesus in the transfiguration episode has also traditionally been associated with the Hebrew Scriptures.⁷³ As Lane writes concerning this:

In the OT the glory of God is always conceived as shining brilliance or bright light. The reference to the glistening character of Jesus' clothing reflects this

⁷² Morton Smith, "The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story," *USQR* 36 (1980): 41.

⁷³ In addition, the white clothing has also been associated with apocalyptic works. As Anderson points out: "[...] the notion of the clothing of the glorified righteous in pure white garments is a common feature of apocalyptic works (cf. En. 62:15-6; 2 En. 22:8; Rev. 3:4; 4:4; 7:9 etc.). The homely additional touch in Mark's as no fuller on earth could bleach them, merely corroborates for his readers the supernatural glory of Jesus' status." Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 225.

concept and the language of apocalyptic where the image of radiance and resplendent light is borrowed to describe the glory of the Messiah.⁷⁴

In the book of *Exodus*, a story concerning Moses is perhaps the closest parallel to the transfiguration episode.⁷⁵ In the account, Moses comes down from Mount Sinai and his face shines because he has been speaking with God (Exod 34:29-30). In this story, as in the transfiguration episode, the following similarities are present: a mountain, a cloud, Moses, God, the notion of a shining brilliance which frightens those around, etc. Though Mark's version does not mention that Jesus' face shone bright, the accounts of Luke and Matthew do include this specific detail since these gospel writers likely intended to make more obvious the connection between the transfiguration episode and the account of Moses at Mount Sinai (Matt 17:2; Luke 9:29).

In a recent article, Candida Moss examines the transfiguration episode in the *Gospel according to Mark*. While the author overviews some of the existing theories already touched upon here (such as the notion that the episode was originally a resurrection account or that there may be Jewish motifs in relation to the story of Moses from the book of *Exodus*), Moss puts forth a very interesting understanding of the transfiguration account. This unique aspect of the article is the author's suggestion that there may be strands of Hellenistic motifs embedded into the Markan transfiguration scene and that such 'accommodations' may have been purposefully implemented as a means of appealing Mark's gospel to a wider audience.⁷⁶ What is noteworthy with respect

⁷⁴ Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 318.

⁷⁵ As noted also by Evans: "The whiteness of Jesus' garments transcends the power of the best launderer on earth. The closest parallel is probably the shining face of Moses (Exod 34:30), but the faces of other saints are described as shining," Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (Volume 34B of *Word Biblical Commentary* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 35.

⁷⁶ Candida R. Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *BibInt* 12 (2004): 69-89.

to the clothing of the scene is Moss' observance of similar stories in Hellenistic literature which she highlights as akin to the account of the transfiguration in Mark.⁷⁷ The author writes the following concerning this:

Throughout Greek myths of divine epiphanies the most frequently recurring motif is the illumination of the divine subject. The extraordinary brilliance of the divine body is almost unbearable to the human eye, [...] This is certainly analogous to the 'dazzling white' garments of Jesus that shine brighter than 'any fuller on earth could bleach them' in Mark 9:3.⁷⁸

Moss' work presents an interesting parallel between Hellenistic literature and the Markan account. Such connections between Hellenistic literature and the *Gospel according to Mark* may provide some keen insights into the story and to its understanding though they are not readily addressed in the narrative analysis of this thesis.

2.3.3 Symbolism of White Clothes

While many understandings of the white clothing have focused on historical or intertextual elements, Edgar Haulotte offers an interesting symbolic understanding for the white clothing of Jesus. While Haulotte regrettably engages the episode by combining the various accounts of the scene from the synoptic gospels,⁷⁹ his insights are nonetheless noteworthy.⁸⁰ He writes concerning the symbolism of the white garment:

⁷⁷ Moss uses as an example of the Goddess Demeter who in Hellenistic literature transforms and her clothes become bright with lightning; this is also the case with Aphrodite. Moss, "The Transfiguration," 78-9.

⁷⁸ Moss, "The Transfiguration," 79.

⁷⁹ It is regrettable for this thesis since the focus is solely on Mark and not on the other canonical gospels. Since Haulotte examines the transfiguration episodes all together, his conclusions can sometimes be reflective of all of the transfigurations combined as opposed to only that which is in Mark.

⁸⁰ His insights are still noteworthy for the study of this feature of clothing within the confines of Mark's story despite its shortcomings.

Le vêtement [blanc] s'identifie ici avec la gloire divine dont il est le signe. Il révèle la Transcendance de la Personne qui le porte: sa profondeur personnelle plonge dans la sphère divine. Une fois encore, notons que, selon le cadre du récit, ce corps qui resplendit et s'habille de sa propre lumière intérieure, va être livré, du plein gré de Jésus, à la Passion. Cette gloire est pénétrée de cette relation intime que Jésus entretient avec son Père et qu'il va établir au niveau des hommes.⁸¹

Here, Haulotte understands the white clothing of Jesus during the transfiguration as a symbol of his divine glory and his transcendence into the divine realm. In addition, the author also notes an important function for the white clothing in relation to the resurrection of Jesus.

Un autre aspect significatif de ce resplendissement, sanctionné par la Parole sortant de la nuée qui l'enveloppe avec les trois témoins, c'est de rendre *perceptible*, en quelque sorte, le caractère incorruptible de la Présence qu'aura Jésus parmi les siens, *après* sa disparition sensible hors du monde des apparences. Car cette gloire rayonnante est celle dont resplendira son *corps incorruptible*, après l'Ensevelissement et la Résurrection.⁸²

Haulotte connects the episode of the transfiguration with the image of Jesus after his burial and resurrection. Though the author does not mention it in his monograph, this connection is strengthened when taking into consideration the young man's white robe at the empty tomb. This concept and connection is taken up below in the narrative analysis of the transfiguration as a *prolepsis* of the resurrection account.

The author Haulotte also writes of the symbolism of the white clothing as revelatory of the duality of Jesus' natures.⁸³ The shift of Jesus' vestment informs the audience of Jesus' passing from an earthly space to the divine realm.⁸⁴ These symbolic interpretations present an interesting method of reading and understanding Jesus' white

⁸¹ Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 202.

⁸² Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 202.

⁸³ Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 202.

⁸⁴ Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 202.

garment at the transfiguration. Haulotte's analysis falls in line with what Resseguie has noted; namely that clothing in biblical texts can function as a narrative 'prop' in order to reveal a character's inner landscape or spiritual status.⁸⁵ Haulotte's perception of the white clothing as symbolic of Jesus' divine state is also shared by Tolbert.⁸⁶ Though neither Tolbert nor Haulotte define what they mean by the 'divinity' of Jesus' character, it would seem that they speak of a being or entity which falls short of godhood, but who lies outside of the human realm. By Jesus' 'divinity' they refer to his otherworldliness whereby he is not simply human in nature. This symbolic understanding of Jesus is an intriguing and enticing understanding, but not entirely convincing in its current embryonic stage. In the narrative analysis below I put forth an understanding of Jesus' white clothing as working symbolically, though not of Jesus' divine state. Rather, the white clothes of Jesus are understood as being symbolic of the protagonist's immortality as this theory is, for the most part, based upon the connections of the white garment of Jesus with the episode of the empty tomb and the young man.

2.4 Narrative Analysis

The following is an analysis of the white clothing of Jesus at the transfiguration episode from a narrative-critical perspective. This examination explores an understanding of Jesus' clothing as foreshadowing his resurrection at the end of the gospel. The hypothesis about the function of Jesus' clothing is argued and substantiated by noting the similarities in attire between the protagonist and the mysterious young man in Mark's gospel (who wears white at Jesus' empty tomb) and by the fact that Jesus' death and

⁸⁵ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 106.

⁸⁶ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 280.

resurrection is foretold for the first time in the scene immediately preceding the transfiguration account. As a result, the analysis also traces the connection between the two episodes of the transfiguration of Jesus and his empty tomb. While the theory put forth by many scholars concerning the transfiguration as a redacted resurrection account is not restated nor endorsed, this author does present an understanding of the transfiguration as a type of vision of the resurrected Jesus. This visual depiction of a resurrected Jesus furthers an understanding of the white clothes as symbolizing the immortal state of being of Jesus within Mark's gospel.

2.4.1 Young Man & Jesus

The young man (*νεανίσκος*) in Mark's gospel is a mysterious figure who appears enigmatically at Jesus' arrest in 14:51-2 and at the end of the gospel in the tomb of Jesus where he instructs the terrified women in 16:1-8. Little is said in Mark about the character, though in both accounts, the clothing of the youth is noteworthy. In the first episode at Jesus' arrest, the young man is said to be wearing a linen cloth which is taken away from him, and in the second episode in the tomb, he is depicted wearing a white robe. These aspects of clothing in relation to the youth are interesting elements of his character. Throughout the history of scholarly research pertaining to the young man, the identity of the character has been disputed to a great degree. Some have seen the youth as an angel or as Mark himself, while yet others have dismissed the two mentions of the youth as pertaining to the same character.⁸⁷ Until now, there remains to be consensus

⁸⁷ For a discussion on the scholarly debate about the young man in Mark's gospel and the history of ideas and perspectives consult the following: Calogero A. Miceli, "A Foil for Jesus: The Narratological Role of the Young Man in the Gospel of Mark," *Theof*, vol. 50, no. 2 (2011): (forthcoming).

regarding the youth in Mark, but the character is still one that has several important ties with the protagonist Jesus. The following analysis specifically examines the clothing of the youth at the empty tomb; however, this figure is reassessed in Chapter Four in light of its ties with the last mention of Jesus' clothing (the linen burial cloth).

The several mentions of the young man's clothing in Mark's gospel parallel with that of the protagonist not only in the fact that they both sport a linen cloth and are nude, but also in that both the young man and Jesus wear white in Mark's gospel.⁸⁸ The word λευκός, used to describe the clothing of Jesus at the transfiguration is mentioned in only one other place in the Markan gospel. During the last scene (16:5), the young man present in the tomb of Jesus is described as wearing στολήν λευκήν (a white robe). The fact that the young man and Jesus both wear white in Mark's gospel and that these are the only times when white garments are mentioned infers a relationship and a connection between these two characters. The youth and Jesus both wear white in Mark and this is a significant literary feature, since from a narrative perspective, this 'prop' bridges the two figures.

2.4.2 Prolepsis / Depiction of the Resurrected Jesus

The white clothing not only connects the young man with Jesus, but it also ties the transfiguration episode with that of the empty tomb (16:1-8). The white clothing which Jesus wears at the transfiguration works in foreshadowing the end of the gospel when the women enter the tomb and find a young man dressed in white. Not only can this link lead the audience forward – in terms of foreshadowing a future event – but, the connection

⁸⁸ See Appendix A.

between the white clothing of the characters also functions as a *prolepsis*. Marguerat and Bourquin define *prolepsis* as the following: “a narrative manoeuvre which consists in anticipating or relating in advance an event which is later from the point of view of the story.”⁸⁹ The transfiguration and the empty tomb are linked by the white clothing of Jesus and the young man at the tomb, and as a result of these connections, the reader, who happens upon the end of the incomplete gospel is reverted back to the episode of Jesus’ transfiguration. The ending of Mark is unsatisfactory in several respects, one of which is that it fails in visually showcasing Jesus’ resurrection which has been promised to the audience and the disciples.⁹⁰ The only clue the audience is given that their hero has indeed resurrected must be derived from the rhetoric of the youth in the empty tomb. Since the white clothing connects the youth with Jesus and the transfiguration with the empty tomb episode, this clothing can be seen as functioning as a type of *prolepsis* in that it helps to visually depict a later event at an earlier time in the narrative.

Beforehand, the theory put forth by scholars that the transfiguration story was originally a resurrection account that Mark fused into Jesus’ ministry was presented. In

⁸⁹ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 96; note that *prolepsis* and foreshadowing are quite similar in terms of narrative functions. They are essentially two words which describe the same type of literary function.

⁹⁰ When the reader happens upon the ending of Mark at 16:8, it is both anticlimactic and unsatisfying as an ending to a gospel story which promised more to the audience than what has been delivered. Throughout the *Gospel according to Mark*, the prophetic Jesus foresees a great number of events, many of which come into fruition. Jesus foretells Peter’s denial (14:30) and this event indeed takes place (14:66-72). Jesus also foresees the disciples fleeing (14:27) and they flee from him soon after (14:66-72). The many predictions of Jesus are fulfilled throughout the course of the ending of the gospel. This leads the reader to trust the protagonist of the story. Jesus’ prophetic wisdom is sound as the audience is aware time and time again that what he predicts comes to fruition.⁹⁰ However, there are some prophecies of Jesus which remain unfulfilled by the end of the gospel. While Jesus informs the disciples that he will arrive in Galilee before his disciples after he is raised (14:28), the audience is never a witness to this event. The only ‘completion’ of it is realized by the young man in the tomb of Jesus who tells the women at the end of the story that Jesus will be in Galilee “just as he said to you” (16:7). The young man in the tomb is clearly aware of the hero’s prophecy during the course of the gospel and attempts to fulfill it for the absent Jesus. The young man dressed in white undoubtedly fulfills the prediction of Jesus’ resurrection at the end of the gospel even if the implied reader does not physically witness it.

this analysis and understanding of the white clothing, the intention is not to support or elaborate this hypothesis which concerns itself with the history of the transfiguration account and Mark's supposed redaction of it. Instead, I am arguing that the figure of Jesus dressed in white who is presented to the audience at the transfiguration episode functions as a visual representation of the unseen resurrected Jesus. It is important to note that the transfiguration account presents an extraordinary event and that after the transfiguration is ended everything in the story reverts back to normal: "Suddenly as they looked around, they no longer saw anything, but Jesus alone with them" (9:8).⁹¹ What the Markan narrative does with the transfiguration scene is that it offers to the audience a unique and atypical glimpse of Jesus' character; however, this window is very quickly shut at the conclusion of the episode. Since, in the previous episode, Jesus foretells his resurrection for the very first time in the gospel and since Jesus' white clothes are so closely connected with the white clothes of the young man at the tomb whose rhetoric fulfills the resurrection prophecy, the white clothes of Jesus at the transfiguration can be seen as offering a glimpse at what the resurrected Jesus may look like (since this is never visually depicted in Mark's gospel). While I do not subscribe to the theory that the transfiguration was originally a resurrection account modified by Mark in the formation of his gospel, I do believe that there are reasons why so many have subscribed to such views and why many have believed that the episode in question was originally a resurrection account. The reason is because, of all of the stories in Mark's gospel, the transfiguration offers an event which seems, on the surface at least, the most probable for a resurrection account. Though I do not advocate that the story was originally a

⁹¹ After the mountain scene Jesus is once more with his disciples and the reader must assume that the bright clothes are gone.

resurrection account redacted by Mark, I do contend that the connections between the white clothing, the characters and the episodes strongly point to the figure of Jesus in white garments as depictive of the unseen resurrected Jesus.

2.4.3 Symbolic of Immortality

As previously mentioned, some scholars have put forth an understanding of the white clothing of Jesus as symbolic of his 'divinity'. While attempting to understand the character of Jesus as 'divine' in Mark's gospel tends to lead one onto shaky Christological / Ontological grounds, I believe it may be simpler and more accurate to see Jesus' white clothes as symbolic of the hero's immortality within Mark's gospel. By immortality I refer specifically to the prophecies of Jesus' resurrection and the fulfillment of those at the end of the narrative. Since Jesus' white clothes connect the scene of the transfiguration with the scene of the empty tomb and the character of Jesus with the character of the young man, then the white clothes as eternal or everlasting become much more considerable. The white vestment connects the young man with Jesus and it is only from this youth that the resurrection of Jesus is known to have transpired in Mark. The white clothes of the youth point back to the transfiguration episode whereby a visualization of the resurrected Jesus is feasible. As a result of this *proleptic* feature, the white clothes of Jesus can be understood as symbolizing Jesus' immortality and his triumph over a physical demise. The protagonist, unlike a mere mortal, has been able to overcome a tragic death and this feat is visually depicted via the transfiguration episode and the otherworldly white clothing.

2.5 Conclusion

The white clothing of Jesus' transfiguration works as an important narrative device in several different, but unifying ways. The white garment of the transfiguration ties the protagonist with the character of the young man who, at the empty tomb, is shown to be dressed in a white robe. The transfiguration account and the resurrection episode are also tied together by the white clothing. As a result, Jesus' white clothes not only foreshadow the fulfillment of his prophecy and resurrection at the end of the gospel, but they also work as a type of *prolepsis* by visually reminding the audience of Jesus' fulfilled prophecy. What the resurrection of Jesus might visually entail is entertained in the episode of his transfiguration whereby the clothes of Jesus are symbolic of this immortality. The white clothes perform important narrative functions in Mark's gospel and are a small part of the connection between Jesus and the young man.

**CHAPTER THREE:
'HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!': IRONY AND SYMBOLISM AT JESUS' DEATH
(MARK 15:16-26)**

3.1 Introduction

Between the time of Jesus' arrest and his crucifixion, the Roman soldiers dress the protagonist in a purple garment, weave a crown of thorns, and place it on his head (15:16-17). After beating him, mocking him, and spitting on him, the soldiers strip Jesus of the purple garment and dress him back into his own clothes (15:19-20). Finally, the soldiers crucify Jesus and divide his clothes amongst themselves by casting lots (15:24). These mentions of Jesus' clothes have been grouped together since they are all referenced at the time of his crucifixion and death.

This chapter first investigates how scholars have seen the purple garment and the crown of thorns in the aforementioned scenes. The clothing forced onto Jesus has most often been read in historical, ironic, and symbolic ways. Following this overview of the scholarly literature, Jesus' clothes are analyzed from a narrative-critical lens. Such a reading reaffirms the ironic notion of clothes already put forth by specialists. The utilization of the clothing of Jesus as a narrative device is prevalent in this section of Mark's gospel in that the purple garment and the crown are emblematic of Jesus' kingship and the imminent kingdom of God. The chapter also explores why the omniscient narrator uses irony as a literary technique and concludes by analyzing the event of Jesus' clothes being divided amongst the Roman soldiers', and how this ties in with the tearing of the curtain in the temple at the time of Jesus' death.

3.2 Greek Text & English Translation

Mark 15:16-26

¹⁶ Οἱ δὲ στρατιῶται ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν ἕσω τῆς αὐλῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν πραιτώριον, καὶ συγκαλοῦσιν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν. ¹⁷ καὶ ἐνδιδύσκουσιν αὐτὸν πορφύραν καὶ περιτιθέασιν αὐτῷ πλέξαντες ἀκάνθινον στέφανον· ¹⁸ καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀσπάζεσθαι αὐτόν· χαῖρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων· ¹⁹ καὶ ἔτυπον αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν καλάμῳ καὶ ἐνέπτυσαν αὐτῷ καὶ τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ. ²⁰ καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ, ἐξέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν πορφύραν καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἐξάγουσιν αὐτὸν ἵνα σταυρώσωσιν αὐτόν. ²¹ καὶ ἀγγαρεύουσιν παράγοντά τινα Σίμωνα Κυρηναῖον ἐρχόμενον ἀπ’ ἀγροῦ, τὸν πατέρα Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ῥούφου, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ. ²² Καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Γολγοθᾶν τόπον, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον Κρανίου Τόπος. ²³ καὶ ἐδίδουν αὐτῷ ἐσμυρνισμένον οἶνον· ὃς δὲ οὐκ ἔλαβεν. ²⁴ Καὶ σταυροῦσιν αὐτὸν καὶ διαμερίζονται τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ’ αὐτὰ τίς τί ἄρῃ. ²⁵ ἦν δὲ ὥρα τρίτη καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν. ²⁶ καὶ ἦν ἡ ἐπιγραφή τῆς αἰτίας αὐτοῦ ἐπιγεγραμμένη· ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

Mark 15:16-26

¹⁶ But, the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (which is a Governor’s headquarters); calling together the whole cohort. ¹⁷ They dress him in a purple garment, and they place on him a thorn covered crown which they had weaved. ¹⁸ And they began to acclaim him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ¹⁹ They were beating his head with a staff, they were spitting on him, and bending their knees they were worshipping him. ²⁰ After they mocked him, they stripped him of the purple garment and dressed him in his own clothes. Then they led him out so that they might crucify him. ²¹ They forced into service someone passing by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, so that he might lift up his cross. ²² Then they brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is known as the place of a skull). ²³ They were giving him wine, mixed with myrrh, which he did not take. ²⁴ Then they crucified him, and divided his clothes among themselves, casting lots on them to decide what each should be taking away. ²⁵ It was the third hour and they crucified him. ²⁶ The inscription of his accusation read: “the King of the Jews”.

3.3 Literature Review

Previous scholarship which has dealt with the purple garment, the crown of thorns, and the casting of lots for Jesus’ clothes have most often explored these in three

different ways. The first approach – as is the case with the other approaches to Mark’s gospel in the early and mid 20th century – was most often from a historical-critical perspective. Commentators tried to understand the clothing of Jesus and pondered on the various materials that may have been used, where they may have come from, or what types of traditions or practices were employed during that time period. Aside from this historically-centered methodological outlook, many scholars have also noted and commented upon the presence of intertextuality between the clothing of Jesus as mentioned in Mark’s gospel and interesting parallels with previous biblical literature. The connections most often noted are between Jesus’ clothing and *I Maccabees* and *Psalms*. Finally, many writers have also employed narrative analyses of the texts and have noticed a level of irony pertaining to the clothes of Jesus in this scene. The attire that Jesus is forced to wear by the Roman soldiers works in a symbolic and ironic fashion in that it is understood to be symbolic of Jesus’ kingship. This literature review examines these types of readings already put forth by scholars concerning the symbolic and ironic quality of Jesus’ clothes.

3.3.1 Historical Understanding of Jesus’ Clothing

In writing about the purple cloak and the crown of thorns, many scholars have tried to make sense of these two items from a historical context. What materials were used to make up these garments? Why is the robe purple? Where or from whom did these pieces of clothing come from? What traditions existed during this time period and how did these influence what happened to the clothing in the scene? All of these questions

seem to have been prevalent in the minds of scholars writing about the aforementioned passages during the pre-narrative-critical period of New Testament studies.

3.3.1.1 Purple Garment and Thorn Covered Crown (15:16-20)

The garment Jesus is forcefully dressed with by the soldiers is indeed curious since the text specifically states that he was dressed in πορφύραν (a purple garment).⁹² The consensus amongst scholars concerning the coloration of the garment is that this was most likely one of the cloaks of the Roman soldiers who, from our knowledge of history, most probably wore such garments during this time period.⁹³ The same historical lens has also been utilized for understanding the crown made of thorns worn by Jesus.⁹⁴ Hugh Anderson's commentary on this section demonstrates these types of historical concerns for the reality of such items as they may have served during Jesus' time as he writes: "The purple cloak is perhaps the scarlet cloak worn by Roman soldiers, and the crown of thorns is not necessarily an instrument of torture, but a mock imperial crown, made of

⁹² The word πορφύραν also appears in Luke's gospel (16:19) in which it is used to denote the fine clothing of a rich man. See also the same word in the book of *Revelation* 17:4; 18:12, 16.

⁹³ Nineham writes, "a purple cloak: No doubt one of the red-coloured cloaks regularly worn by the soldiers," (Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 420); Cranfield notes that, "The soldier's cloak was perhaps used as the nearest substitute," (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 453); Mann comments that "*Porphura* is found at Luke 16:19 and Rev 18:12; it denotes a purple fish, or purple dye, or a cloak. Possibly it means a soldier's red military cloak which had faded," (Mann, *Mark*, 642); Jones states the following: "purple cloak; the *sagum* or short red cloak of Roman soldiers suggesting the imperial purple," (Jones, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 235); James R. Edwards writes, "Purple, the most expensive and prestigious of ancient dyes, symbolized royalty. The crown, normally made of gold leaf, signified royalty or military valor," (Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 466).

⁹⁴ Jones writes concerning this: "crown: possibly a fillet but perhaps more probably in form of a rough bonnet as in the 2nd cent." (Jones, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 235); Lane, "The so-called crown of thorns was not meant primarily as a torture but was part of the mock royal attire, like the robe. It may well have been an improvised caricature of the radiant crown signifying divine kingship and frequently depicted on coins then in circulation," (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 559-60); Edwards, "Purple, the most expensive and prestigious of ancient dyes, symbolized royalty. The crown, normally made of gold leaf, signified royalty or military valor" (Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 466).

thorny twigs.”⁹⁵ Such ideas were prevalent amongst scholars who probed into the world of the first century in order to grasp the realism of the event and how it might have transpired. The conjecture is that the soldiers in charge of Jesus would have likely used one of their own purple cloaks in order to mock Jesus, since these were easily available to them. On the other hand, they likely had no crown and this is probably the reason why the text specifically states that they had to fashion one.⁹⁶ Throughout a large portion of scholarly literature, academics have focused on how the clothes were used during the time period and how the event may have transpired in a real world setting.

3.3.1.2 Casting Lots on Jesus’ Clothes (15:21-26)

In the *Gospel according to Mark*, the soldiers are said to have cast lots for the clothing of Jesus. Some scholars have regarded this act historically by noting that such a practice was common amongst Roman soldiers.⁹⁷ They would keep the clothes of those whom they crucified, and since there were likely more soldiers than clothes to be passed around, they cast lots in order to separate the garments amongst each other. Though it is not explicitly stated in the gospel text, the implication is likely that Jesus was crucified naked and that this was not at all uncommon during the practice of crucifixion.⁹⁸ Such a

⁹⁵ Anderson: “The purple cloak is perhaps the scarlet cloak worn by Roman soldiers, and the crown of thorns is not necessarily an instrument of torture, but a mock imperial crown, made of thorny twigs.” (Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 339).

⁹⁶ The text includes the verb πλέξαντες which is from the root verb πλέκω meaning: to weave.

⁹⁷ Taylor states, “The garments of the condemned were the prerequisites of the soldiers who guarded the cross. That they should have divided them by casting lots, using the dice by which they whiled away the time, is natural, and need not be regarded,” (Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 589); Cranfield writes, “It was customary for the condemned to be crucified naked, and his clothes were a recognized prerequisite of his executioners,” (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 455); Mann notes: “The clothing of those condemned to death belonged to the attendant soldiers, and the well-known addiction of Roman soldiers to games of chance with dice sufficiently explains this incident without reference to Ps 22:19 (which Mark certainly had in mind),” (Mann, *Mark: A New Translation*, 646).

⁹⁸ Cranfield notes: “It was customary for the condemned to be crucified naked, and his clothes were a recognized prerequisite of his executioners,” (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 455); Harry

historical understanding of the Roman crucifixion has played an important part in scholarly literature and academics' understandings of this scene.

3.3.2 Intertextual Parallels

Aside from historical conjectures, some commentators have also noted intertextual parallels between this section in Mark and verses from the Hebrew Bible. One of these connections sees the clothes Jesus wears in this episode in relation to particular verses from *I Maccabees*. In the story of *I Maccabees*, a wreath of leaves and a purple robe are presented to Jonathan by King Alexander as a gift in return for his allegiance (I Macc. 10:15-20). In fact, the mention of a purple garment features in several instances within this book. As Lane points out, Jesus' crown of thorns and purple garment are an imitation of, "[...] the purple robe and the gilded wreath of leaves which were the insignia of the Hellenistic vassal kings (cf. I Macc. 10:20, 62, 69; 14:43 f.)."⁹⁹ While the parallels between the two mentions of similar articles of clothing links the account of *I Maccabees* with Jesus in this Markan scene, it must be pointed out that the clothes used in either story are done so in different ways. The purple garment and the crown are not intended as gifts, nor are they used as a means of acquiring allegiance from Jesus. What the author of Mark may have intended with such an obscure reference is uncertain. As a result, the connection between the two is questionable. It is certainly possible that while there exists a connection between the mention of clothing in the two

Fleddermann writes: "There is, however, considerable emphasis on Jesus' clothing in the passion narrative in Mark. [...] Although it is not stated explicitly, the implication is that Jesus hangs on the cross naked," (Harry Fleddermann, "The Flight of a Naked Young Man [Mark 14:51-52]," *CBQ* 41 [1979]: 417).

⁹⁹ Lane: "In imitation of the purple robe and the gilded wreath of leaves which were the insignia of the Hellenistic vassal kings (cf. I Macc. 10:20, 62, 69; 14:43 f.)," (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 559); Also noted by Schweizer: "These were the items presented to Jonathan Maccabaeus as 'the king's Friend' for special bravery (I Macc. 10:20)," (Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, 341).

different books, these may be purely coincidental. At the present, a more thorough understanding of the relationship between the two texts would be necessary in order to support this connection.

Another intertextual parallel exists between this episode and the Hebrew Bible, more specifically between the action of dividing of Jesus' clothes by the soldiers (15:24) and with the following quote from the book of *Psalms*: "For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shrivelled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps 22:16-18). The connection between these two passages has been noted by many scholars throughout the years.¹⁰⁰ Anderson writes that the Markan story is a fulfillment of *Psalms* and that while, "ownership of the prisoner's clothes normally passed to the executioner, evidence is wanting of any Roman practice of casting lots for them, and it is reasonable to suppose that this detail in the narrative owes a great deal to the OT text and the Church's reflection on it."¹⁰¹ This notion of the dividing of clothes as a fulfillment of the *Psalms* is shared by several other scholars as well.¹⁰² This intertextual reference, however, is similar to the one mentioned in *I*

¹⁰⁰ Nineham writes: "[...] for the early Church its significance lay in its fulfillment of Ps. 22:18, and it is impossible to say how far that passage has influenced the Gospel tradition at this point," (Nineham, *The Gospel of Saint Mark*, 424); Schweizer notes, "The use of the words of Psalm 22: 18 presents the dividing of his clothing as the fulfillment of the Old Testament statements, although this is not asserted explicitly," (Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, 346); Ernest Best also notes a connection between this verse (15:24) and Psalm 22:18; see Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 68; Mann, "The clothing of those condemned to death belonged to the attendant soldiers, and the well-known addiction of Roman soldiers to games of chance with dice sufficiently explains this incident without reference to Ps 22:19 (which Mark certainly had in mind)," (Mann, *Mark: A New Translation*, 646).

¹⁰¹ Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 342.

¹⁰² Schweizer writes, "The use of the words of Psalm 22:18 presents the dividing of his clothing as the fulfillment of the Old Testament statements, although this is not asserted explicitly," (Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, 346); Richard T. France notes that, "Mark's interest is not in describing the physical suffering so much as in tracing the fulfillment of scripture in the disposal of Jesus' clothes after he was stripped for the cross, his description of which closely echoes LXX Ps. 21[22]: 10[18], with the

Maccabees whereby the connection is in need of further scholarly evaluation before it can be readily accepted. While both of the intertextual parallels noted by scholars are intriguing, they are lacking further development in order to convincingly showcase the relationship between the Hebrew Bible and Mark's gospel on that specific point. It remains unclear whether or not Mark had these texts in mind when writing the passion narrative and, if so, how this informs our understanding of Jesus' character at the time of his crucifixion.

3.3.3 Symbolic and Ironic Understanding

Historical and intertextual concerns about the provenance of the purple garment and the thorn covered crown give way to more ironic and symbolic views of Jesus' vestment. What is symbolism and how does this relate to the ironic significance of the clothes? Symbolism, according to Marguerat and Bourquin, is defined as "the effect of meaning by which a motif in the story bears a wider significance, without this being spelt out by the narrative."¹⁰³ For many commentators, the crown and the garment with which Jesus is adorned are not used as devices of torment by the soldiers; rather, they serve as symbolic imagery mocking the hero's kingly reign.¹⁰⁴ This reading is based upon the rhetoric of the soldiers in the scene ("Hail, King of the Jews!") as well as their beating, spitting, and bowing to Jesus. The clothing the protagonist is forced to wear are those

addition of the explanatory clause τίς τί ἄρη to account for the casting of lots which the psalm passage mentioned," (Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002], 643-4).

¹⁰³ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 119.

¹⁰⁴ Nineham notes concerning this: "a crown of thorns: This will have been intended as a mock symbol of kingly, or imperial, dignity rather than as an instrument of torture," (Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 420); David J. Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion: Irony and the Narrative Rhetoric of the Ending of Mark," *JSNT* 57 [1995]: 76.

normally worn by a king and thus, these serve to symbolize kingship albeit in a mocking manner.

The purple garment and the crown, aside from being understood by scholars as symbols, have also been seen as ironic.¹⁰⁵ Donahue and Harrington explain the irony of the clothes by noting that, “From the perspective of Mark’s readers [...] Jesus really is King of the Jews, and so what the soldiers do in hailing Jesus as the King is correct (ironically) at the most profound level.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, the soldiers’ actions are understood as being ironic since the reader of the gospel is well aware of the hidden fact that Jesus is actually a king. This understanding has been elaborated over the years and several different levels of irony have been noted. There are two distinct types of irony at play in this scene; the first of these two levels is known as *verbal irony* and the second is referred to as *dramatic irony*. The verbal irony is defined in literary terms as a speaker who says one thing, but whose words actually mean something else.¹⁰⁷ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie explore this type of literary device and how it affects the text at hand:

The most obvious examples of verbal irony in Mark are the ironic jeers of Jesus’ opponents. The soldiers mock him by hailing him as “king of the Judeans.” They mean the opposite: How ridiculous that this pathetic man should be considered a king!¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Culpepper notes the following concerning irony in biblical texts: “The ‘silent’ communication between author and reader assumes its most intriguing form in the ironies of the gospel. The implied author smiles, winks, and raises his eyebrows as the story is told. The reader who sees as well as hears understands that the narrator means more than he says and that the characters do not understand what is happening or what they are saying,” (Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 165f).

¹⁰⁶ Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 435; The device of irony is not only used by Jesus but against him. An example can be seen in the soldiers’ mocking: “the soldiers think that Jesus is the victim, when the reader knows the truth of the situation. There is nothing more devastating for the *real* victims than to use an irony of mockery which will be turned against them,” (Smith, *Lion with Wings*, 225); Tannehill, “The Gospel of Mark,” 79.

¹⁰⁷ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie. *Mark as Story*, 60.

¹⁰⁸ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie. *Mark as Story*, 60.

Dramatic irony, on the other hand, involves an inconsistency between what a particular character expects as an outcome and what actually happens (or between what a character thinks a situation is and what it really turns out to be).¹⁰⁹ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie write:

In dramatic irony, the characters are blind to the irony of the situation, while the reader sees the ironic contrast between what the speaker says and the way things really are. For example, the illustrations of verbal irony given above turn out to be part of a larger dramatic irony. When the opponents ridicule Jesus for claiming to be the king of the Judeans, the reader sees that the statements they intend as verbal irony *really are true* in the larger drama of the story: Jesus can prophesy; in a different sense, he really is king of the Judeans; and he cannot save himself except by losing his life.¹¹⁰

The scene in question has been read as involving both levels of irony working congruently. The purple garment and the thorn covered crown are symbolic of Jesus' kingship and his regal status, but the symbolism works ironically for the Roman soldiers. In this case, the characters truly do not understand what is happening and they are unable to really grasp what they are saying. The soldiers are mocking Jesus as a king in both their words and in their actions, but they are unaware of the latent meaning behind these. The omniscient narrator has clued the audience into the irony of their satire of Jesus. While the Roman soldiers believe that they are mocking Jesus and think that they are having their way with him, in fact their actions only serve to prove Jesus' previous statements in the gospel.

The words of the soldiers act as verbal irony in that what they say is actually meant as sarcasm; they do not actually mean that Jesus is the king of the Jews, they mean this only mockingly. In addition to the satirical nature is the fact that their words express

¹⁰⁹ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie. *Mark as Story*, 60.

¹¹⁰ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie. *Mark as Story*, 60; This notion is also taken up earlier in a monograph by Wayne C. Booth. *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 28-9.

a truth which the narrator and audience are aware of, but that these characters have missed. The irony of the scene is made dramatic or situational by the actions of the guards who not only hail Jesus as king in their words, but go so far as to dress him, mock him, and bow down to him. The irony here is not only that they do and say such things without actually meaning them, but also that what they do and say is ‘true’ of Jesus in a different sense. The audience is aware of Jesus’ prophesying of the impending kingdom of God (4:11; 12:34). The royal attire of Jesus functions as a narrative prop within the scene and elicits the ironic fact that while the soldiers ridicule him as a king, they are in fact helping to bring forth the kingdom of God. The function of irony in this scene is for the narrator to demonstrate to the audience that even when Jesus’ enemies believe that they have won or that they are on top, they are only still helping him to fulfill his destiny; they are not in any way hindering him. This ironic conception of the scene and of the garments has been a prevalent reading amongst many scholars and academics to this day.

3.4 Narrative Analysis

The following is a narrative-critical analysis of the clothing of Jesus in the scene in which he is mocked and crucified by the Roman soldiers. The analysis begins by exploring how the clothing of Jesus progresses from the start of the micro-narrative to the end of it. The protagonist goes through several different changes of wardrobe, some of which occur behind the curtain of the gospel, but all of which are connected. The current notion of irony and symbolism already put forth by several scholars is expanded upon as the clothes of Jesus are seen to serve as symbolic of Jesus’ kingly status. In addition, the current scholarly view and understanding of irony working within this scene is expanded

upon. The hypothesis put forth suggests that the reason for the inclusion of irony as a narrative device is utilized in order for the audience to be able to connect with the worldview put forth by the narrator. The omniscient narrator uses irony as a literary technique in order to make into villains the ignorant Roman soldiers. Following this, the chapter concludes by analyzing the event of Jesus' clothes being divided amongst the Roman soldiers' and how this mention may tie in with the tearing of the curtain in the temple at the time of Jesus' death.

3.4.1 Purple Garment and Thorn Covered Crown

The clothing of Jesus alters several times throughout the *Gospel according to Mark* and before he is crucified there are a number of different changes which take place. The following table charts the progression of the protagonist's clothing in the scene where the soldiers mock Jesus.

Table 5: The Progression of Jesus' Clothing in Mark 15:16-26

	Events	Passage	
#1	[Jesus' clothes are taken off of him]	n/a	Soldiers take Jesus' clothes
#2	The Roman soldiers dress Jesus in a purple garment, and place on him a thorn covered crown.	15:17	Soldiers give Jesus clothes
#3	The soldiers strip Jesus of the purple garment	15:20a	Soldiers take Jesus' clothes
#4	The soldiers dress him in his own clothes.	15:20b	Soldiers give Jesus clothes
#5	The soldiers remove Jesus' own clothes from him so that Jesus can be crucified naked.	n/a	Soldiers take Jesus' clothes
#6	The soldiers divide his clothes among themselves, casting lots on them to decide what each should be taking away.	15:24	Soldiers take Jesus' clothes

From the table above it is apparent that some of the changes in Jesus' wardrobe occur offstage in the sense that the narrator does not inform the audience that Jesus is already wearing his own clothes or that these are removed from him (#1 & #5). As it pertains to event #1, the implied reader must infer that Jesus' clothes were removed from him. It is not possible that the purple garment was placed on top of his existing clothes since at 15:20b the narrator informs us that ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ (his clothes were put back on him). In light of this, the audience must assume that his clothes had been removed prior to 15:17, though this event is never mentioned.

If we imagine, as Marguerat and Bourquin do, that, “the narrator can construct his micro-narrative in the same way as a film director”¹¹¹ then it is clear that the narrator here is very much concerned with the clothing of Jesus. When writing, one is free to focus on any aspect of the story and in this scene, the narrator could easily have offered the implied reader more information about the cross or the nails or even the people who were there; however, the narrator intentionally chose to spend more time explaining the clothing of Jesus to the implied reader. The question is why, in such a short passage, are there so many transitions and mentions of clothing? Is it important or even relevant for the audience to know that Jesus is dressed back into his own clothes? Why does the narrator bother to mention these seemingly unimportant details? While these questions cannot be answered with any complete certainty, a narrative reading does offer some insights into the mentions of Jesus’ clothing and how these work in the mechanics of the story. Such a narrative-critical lens allows for a better comprehension of their literary function within the scene and attempts to uncover why they are mentioned so abundantly.

3.4.2 Emblematic of Jesus’ Kingly Status

As was discussed earlier, many scholars have already noted the narratological quality of the clothes of Jesus in this episode and they have remarked that the purple garment and the thorn covered crown work, not as torturous items, but as symbolic of Jesus’ kingship. Throughout the Markan gospel and before the scene of Jesus’ crucifixion, the protagonist speaks of the kingdom of God several times (1:15; 4:11-12, 26-32; 9:1; 10:13-16, 23-27). The link between this forthcoming kingdom of God and Jesus’ dress in kingly clothes is an important connection. I would argue that the clothes in

¹¹¹ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 36.

this episode do symbolize Jesus' kingly status. It is through the clothes that the narrator demonstrates to the audience that the prophecies of Jesus are now being realized and that the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus' first words in the gospel of Mark are relevant here since in these he claims that, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (1:15). Now, at the end of the life of Jesus on earth, the kingdom of God becomes visible to the audience, but this cannot be shown. Instead, the clothing of Jesus, dressed as a king, infers Jesus' kingly status and conveys to the audience the imminence of the kingdom of God which Jesus spoke of at the outset of his ministry. The clothes of the hero serve as emblematic of Jesus' kingship and the fulfillment of the arrival of the kingdom of God.

3.4.3 Hero and Villains

In the analysis of scholarly literature above, the views of the episode as ironic were explored as many commentators have written that the scene works as irony; the soldiers' rhetoric is ironic in that while they mock Jesus, they actually are speaking the truth (that Jesus is King). The second level of irony focuses on the situation whereby the audience is aware of the dramatic level of the story and how the soldiers' actions are contradictory of what is really taking place. The audience is aware that the Roman soldiers are making a mistake. While the soldiers believe that they have Jesus in a vulnerable position, the implied reader knows that things are not the way the soldiers see them. These two levels of irony are invaluable for understanding the clothing of Jesus in this scene.

Using this ironic understanding as a base, the question is the following: why does the narrator employ this literary device and implement irony through the clothing of Jesus? What purpose does the irony serve? I argue that this literary device functions in the story as a way of bringing the audience to the same judgemental or evaluative viewpoint as the narrator. The irony of the scene allows the audience to connect with the narrator in feeling sympathetic for Jesus, while simultaneously showcasing the ignorance on the part of the soldiers. The implied reader is witnessing the ironic ignorance of the soldiers' words and actions and is left feeling antipathy for the Roman soldiers. In the scene, Jesus does and says almost nothing. He is, like an object, void of anything concrete at the time of his crucifixion. Jesus does not speak throughout the episode (save for his final words), he does not carry his cross, nor does he dress or undress himself; it is written that the soldiers dressed and undressed the protagonist rather than forcing him to do this himself. The helplessness and inaction of the hero allows for the audience to feel sympathy for him, but this sympathy is coupled with the knowledge that Jesus is a victim of a crime he has not committed, but a crime which he had nonetheless foreseen (8:31-9:1; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). His proleptic predictions, as have been the case throughout the gospel, are being realized in this scene. The audience has been privileged by the omniscient narrator, who has previously offered this information to the implied reader throughout the gospel. Having read Jesus' predictions, the audience is aware that their hero intended for all of this atrocity to take place, and this is information the soldiers are clearly unaware of. Their presence in the episode is at the forefront as the actions and rhetoric are largely focused on them: they mock Jesus, beat and spit on him, continually dress and undress him, force a passerby to carry his cross, and ultimately crucify him.

Their beating of Jesus and the irony with which they mock and ridicule him is apparent to the audience and this cruelty is part of what makes the soldiers unsympathetic characters. They are overly aggressive with someone who is innocent and nonviolent. The irony of the scene allows the audience to connect with the worldview put forth by the narrator who, by picking and choosing the elements of the scene to relay, paints a negative portrait of the ignorant soldiers. The hero is made far more sympathetic by the contrast of the villain since the more villainous the antagonist, the more valiant the protagonist.

3.4.4 Dividing of Jesus' Clothes and Tearing of the Temple Curtain

As it is clear in Table 5, Jesus' clothes do not stay on him for very long. Only four verses later his clothes are divided amongst the soldiers who gamble for his vestment. Mary Ann Tolbert notes an interesting parallel between the dividing of Jesus' clothes at his death and the tearing of the temple veil in 15:38.¹¹² Tolbert explores the spiritual and physical realms and how these are crossed in Mark's gospel with the use of the verb $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ which literally means 'to tear'. The verb occurs twice in Mark's gospel: at the time of the tearing of the temple curtain when Jesus dies, and at the beginning of the gospel when he is baptized and the heavens are literally torn open (1:10). Tolbert sees the dividing of Jesus' clothes as a symbol of his figurative departure from the physical world and the curtain's tear symbolizes and emphasizes this shift. While the temple curtain is not a part of the clothing of Jesus, these have nonetheless been considered as mentions of clothing in Mark's gospel.¹¹³ Tolbert is correct in noting the similarities between clothing and the fabric of the temple curtain. Even the use of the verb $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ indicates the material

¹¹² Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 280-2.

¹¹³ See Appendix A.

essence of the curtain and of the heavens and how these are connected in Mark's story. It is interesting that the destruction of the temple curtain is illustrated with the tearing of material, a parallel with the material nature of Jesus' clothing and the removal of these from Jesus' body. Tolbert neglects to mention yet another interesting parallel between the temple curtain and the clothes of Jesus whereby the following is written in the book of *Exodus* concerning the curtain: "You shall make a curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim skilfully worked into it" (Exod 26:31). The purple garment that Jesus wears may point to the temple curtain which is torn shortly thereafter. The removal of the purple garment from Jesus, along with the eventual removal of all of his clothing, may foreshadow and parallel the impending destruction of the curtain of the temple.

3.5 Conclusion

While scholars have already noted the symbolic and ironic quality the clothing of Jesus serves at the time of his crucifixion, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate why the omniscient narrator implements these and their narrative role within the Markan gospel. The clothes of Jesus function as symbolic of Jesus' kingly status and the imminent kingdom of God. The crown and the purple robe are not mentioned as filler; rather they are utilized as a coherent narrative strategy. In addition, this chapter has also briefly surveyed the importance of the dividing of Jesus' clothes and how this may point to the tearing of the temple curtain. The destruction of the temple curtain is illustrated with the tearing of material, a parallel with the material nature of Jesus' clothing and the removal of these from the protagonist's body. It is interesting to note that the tearing of

the temple curtain is attached to the centurion's proclamation of Jesus as God's son (15:39).¹¹⁴ The scene of the temple curtain being torn is a cutaway scene whereby the narrator cuts from Jesus' last breath to the curtain temple tearing back to the centurion watching Jesus. The tearing of material and the closeness with Jesus' identity as Son of God is paralleled at the time of Jesus' baptism when the heavens are torn and God proclaims Jesus as his son (1:10-1). The closeness of material and Jesus' identity is interesting since, as has been argued in the previous chapter of this thesis, the hero's clothes often seem to point to his latent status. An interesting avenue of inquiry for future studies might be to examine the tearing of cloth and the connection between fabric and Jesus' identity in Mark.

¹¹⁴ Chronis wonders: "What does the veil-rending have to do with the climactic recognition of Jesus as Son of God (υἱὸς θεοῦ)?" Harry L. Chronis, "The Torn Veil: Cultus and Christology in Mark 15:37-39." *JBL* 101 (1982): 108-9; See also: Donald Juel. *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1977).

**CHAPTER FOUR:
“HE WRAPPED HIM IN THE LINEN CLOTH”: THE NARRATIVE FUNCTION
OF JESUS’ BURIAL GARMENT (MARK 15:46; [14:51-52])**

4.1 Introduction

Following Jesus’ crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea is said to have taken Jesus’ body down and wrapped it in a piece of linen cloth he had purchased (15:46a). The body is subsequently placed in a tomb and a stone rolled against the door of it (15:46b).

In this chapter, the last references to Jesus’ clothing are explored. The mention of the linen garment, the final time Jesus’ clothes are spoken of in Mark’s gospel, has received the least amount of scholarly attention of all of the clothing passages. Despite this lack of attention, there has been some interesting insight put forth in the work of David Hester who suggests a narrative function of the linen garment of Jesus. In the following chapter, Hester’s theory is critiqued and expanded upon. As such, this chapter also explores the clothing of the young man at Jesus’ arrest (14:51-52).

4.2 Greek Text & English Translation

Mark 15:46

⁴⁶ καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδόνα καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησεν τῇ σινδόνι καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας καὶ προσεκύλισεν λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου.

Mark 15:46

⁴⁶ Buying a linen cloth and taking him down, he wrapped him in the linen cloth and placed him in a tomb which was cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Mark 14:51-52

⁵¹ καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνηκολούθει αὐτῷ περιβεβλημένος σινδῶνα ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, καὶ κρατοῦσιν αὐτόν· ⁵² ὁ δὲ καταλιπὼν τὴν σινδῶνα γυμνὸς ἔφυγεν.

Mark 14:51-52

⁵¹ A certain young man followed him, wearing a linen cloth on his naked body.¹¹⁵ They arrested him,⁵² but he left the linen cloth and fled naked.

4.3 Literature Review

The linen cloth mentioned at the near end of Mark's gospel has received little scholarly attention over the years. The fact that the mention of the clothing is obscure and not immediately relevant to the story is likely the reason behind the inattention. Notwithstanding the negligence, a few scholars have begun to see the linen cloth from a narrative perspective and have proposed a connection between the two mentions of σινδῶν (linen cloth) in the burial of Jesus episode and the earlier use of this word during the scene of his arrest, where a fleeing young man leaves his linen cloth in the hands of the crowd (14:51-2).¹¹⁶ The following section examines the lack of scholarly literature pertaining to the linen cloth as well as the narrative function of the garment as put forth by Hester.

4.3.1 Linen Cloth Ignored

While a great number of monographs, articles, and commentaries have, over the years, examined the minute details of Mark's gospel, few of these have focused a great

¹¹⁵ ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, lit. "on naked." The word 'body' has been supplied. Some Latin MSS read: *supra nudum corpus*, "over [his] naked body."

¹¹⁶ σινδῶν is mentioned only four times in Mark's gospel, twice at the arrest of Jesus in connection with the young man (14:51-2) and twice in relation to Jesus at his burial (15:42-7). See Appendix A.

deal of attention on the mention of the linen cloth for Jesus' burial (15:46). No doubt, the lack of attention on the part of commentators can be attributed to the fact that this specific detail about Jesus being buried in a linen cloth is an element of the story which is obscure and not immediately relevant. The episode about Jesus being taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb with a rock in front is an important element of the narrative sequence, since it prepares the audience for what is to come when the women arrive at the tomb (16:1-8). Jesus needs to be transported from the cross to the tomb and this transition is explained as having been initiated by Joseph of Arimathea. What is not immediately important for the story, however, is the fact that Joseph bought a linen cloth and wrapped Jesus with it. Why the narrator bothers to mention this detail remains ambiguous.

4.3.2 Linen Cloth and the Young Man

While the literature concerning the linen cloth has been lacking, more recently it has been examined from a narrative perspective especially in connection with the young man in Mark's gospel. The word *σινδών*, used to describe the burial clothing of Jesus, is also mentioned in the scene involving the mysterious youth who flees from the crowd during Jesus' arrest.¹¹⁷ Harry Fleddermann, in his article concerning the mysterious young man in Mark's gospel, notes the importance of the connection between the two episodes in which the term is present:

The young man is wrapped in a linen cloth; and when he is arrested, he leaves the linen cloth and flees naked. The word *sindōn* also occurs twice in the pericope of

¹¹⁷ See Appendix A.

Jesus' burial. The fact that it is used twice in the present pericope and twice in the burial account and nowhere else is clearly significant.¹¹⁸

Fleddermann's article focuses on the young man in Mark's gospel, and in writing about the connection between Jesus and the youth, the author brings up the previous work on this topic by John Knox and Albert Vanhoye.¹¹⁹ Knox and Vanhoye associate the young man with the protagonist especially because of the connection between their clothing in Mark's gospel.¹²⁰ The correspondence between the characters is elaborated upon in the work of Hester.

Hester engages the young man of Mark's gospel and attempts to understand the mention of the linen garment which he remarks that "alone seems to be a completely useless detail."¹²¹ Hester's symbolic interpretation of the garment is explained as the following:

The references by Mark to the fate of Jesus' clothing (15.7, 20, 24) from the time of the arrest (and the stripping of the young man) to the time of the crucifixion (and the wrapping of the naked body of Jesus for burial) help symbolically to emphasize the singular fate of Jesus in the narrative [...] I suggest a possible interpretation of the significance of the entry of the detail of the linen into the story. It too becomes a 'cipher', a literary device which causes the reader to reflect upon its previous presence in the narrative, to remember those scenes in which it appears, to ponder both the narrative dynamic and the presence and portrayal of characters. It serves to intensify the isolation of Jesus during his trials.¹²²

For Hester, the selected mentions of σινδόν work as a literary device employed by the author Mark. The purpose of mentioning the linen cloth at Jesus' burial is for the reader

¹¹⁸ Fledderman, "The Flight," 417.

¹¹⁹ John Knox, "A Note on Mark 14:51-52," *The Joy of Study: Papers on New Testament and Related Subjects Presented to Honor Frederick Clifton Grant* (ed. Sherman E. Johnson; New York: Macmillan, 1951), 27-30; Albert Vanhoye, "La Fuite du Jeune Homme Nu (MC 14, 51-2)," *Bib* 52 (1971): 401-6.

¹²⁰ Knox, "A Note on Mark 14:51-52," 27-30; Vanhoye, "La Fuite du Jeune Homme Nu," 401-6.

¹²¹ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 76.

¹²² Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 76.

to recall an earlier passage concerning the young man's escape at Jesus' arrest. In doing so, one is able to reflect upon the story of Jesus and this remembrance intensifies Jesus' seclusion. Since the characters surrounding Jesus flee him at the arrest, the mention of the same garment reinforces this event as the audience is again witness to an unaccompanied Jesus who, this time, is also alone after his death. Hester notes:

By reflecting upon its previous presence in a depressing scene depicting flight, the presence of this 'same' garment only reinforces the tragedy as it is used to wrap the dead body of Jesus. All that the characters have been able to do is leave Jesus to his fate. The garment in this pericope is a purely literary creation used to amplify the reader's sense of distance from the events of the passion, thus intensifying the tragedy of the events to this point.¹²³

Hester's conjectures concerning the garment go on by adding that the purpose of the clothing is also to bridge the scenes of the arrest with that of the tomb. In both instances, we find the presence of a young man.¹²⁴ The linen garment, for Hester, functions as a cipher which connects all of these various events and causes the audience to intercede and ascertain meaning. Hester's interpretation about the clothing of the young man and Jesus is interesting and quite unique especially given the fact that there exists a lack of consideration of the linen cloth in this episode in scholarly literature.

4.4 Narrative Analysis

The following narrative-critical analysis overviews the theory put forth by David Hester who sees the linen garment in the Markan narrative functioning as a literary device. In what follows, this theory is explained and each component examined and critiqued. Hester's understanding of the cloth as a narrative device, while convincing, in

¹²³ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 77.

¹²⁴ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 77.

some cases does tend to go too far. Following the critique of the hypothesis, a modified understanding of the linen garment as a narrative device in Mark's gospel is put forth.

4.4.1 Rethinking Hester's Narrative Understanding of the Cloth

Hester sees the linen garment at Jesus' arrest as a literary device which would point the implied reader back to the fleeing of the young man. His understanding of the garment is that it: 1) reemphasizes Jesus' disassociation with his disciples at his arrest and his death, reminding the implied reader of the faithlessness of the other characters, 2) reinforces the tragedy of the event, and 3) points forward to the young man in the tomb, since the garment bridges the scenes between Jesus and the young man.¹²⁵

4.4.1.1 Diverging with the Dissociation of the Disciples

Does the linen garment at Jesus' burial reemphasize the fleeing of the disciples as Hester suggests? This understanding of the linen cloth is based upon the presupposition of the young man's role in the Markan narrative. Hester cites and subscribes to the theory put forth by authors such as Kermode, Farrer, and Fleddermann which state that the young man serves to emphasize the disciples' fleeing from Jesus at the time of his arrest.¹²⁶ This interpretation of the figure of the young man clearly informs Hester's own perception of the role of the linen cloth. Since the author believes that the youth reemphasizes the fleeing of the disciples, then the conjecture is that the linen cloth at Jesus' burial also shares the same meaning, since the disciples of the protagonist are not around at the time of his death. As I have already argued in a forthcoming contribution,

¹²⁵ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 76-7.

¹²⁶ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 74.

the fleeing of the young man at 14:51-2 should not be viewed as a reemphasis of the flight of the disciples.¹²⁷ The reason why this reading of the youth's role is problematic is based upon the verse immediately preceding the youth's arrival into the gospel. The importance of the episode of Jesus' arrest is that it succeeds in setting about the passion narrative and also that Jesus' earlier prediction of the event (14:27) comes to fruition. The implied reader is aware that earlier on Jesus had predicted his own arrest. In fulfilling this, the narrator clearly and succinctly informs the audience that the disciples escaped by noting that: "All of them deserted him and fled" (14:50). How then can the purpose of the young man be to reemphasize the fleeing of the disciples if this has just been stated? If the narrator does intend on reemphasizing the abandonment of the disciples why would he then use the young man to do this? What function is there in informing the audience that the person following Jesus is a young man or that he is wearing nothing but a linen cloth over his naked body or that he leaves his linen cloth behind? All of these specific details and this particular character do not lend themselves to reemphasizing what the narrator has already confirmed and explicitly stated. The prophecy of Jesus has been fulfilled and the youth does not convincingly work in restating what has previously been mentioned. Unfortunately, Hester's theory about the linen cloth at Jesus' burial rests on his understanding of the young man and the premise that the youth serves to underscore the flight of the followers of Jesus. While the linen cloth points back to the scene of the youth, it need not function to remind the audience of the faithlessness of the characters surrounding Jesus. Rather, the linen garment is bought and used for Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea whom the narrator tells us is: "a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God" (15:43). Though Jesus is not

¹²⁷ Miceli, "A Foil for Jesus," (forthcoming).

with his disciples – since they have abandoned him – he is not alone either. He is being taken care of by a man who, like the disciples, also awaits the fulfillment of Jesus’ final prophecy concerning the kingdom of God. Therefore, the linen garment cannot be seen as functioning as Hester suggests. The linen cloth does not put emphasis on Jesus’ disassociation with his disciples during his arrest/death, nor does it remind the audience of the faithlessness of the characters surrounding him since, as has been shown, the character with Jesus (Joseph of Arimathea) does have faith in the kingdom of God.

4.4.1.2 Diverging with the Tragedy of the Event

The second part of Hester’s perception of the linen cloth hinges on the fact that its literary purpose is to reinforce the tragedy of the event. This notion is similar to the first in that the tragedy of the story is that, “all that the characters have been able to do is leave Jesus to his fate.”¹²⁸ Once more it must be noted that this understanding of the garment is problematic since the story of the gospel is not a tragedy and Jesus’ fate is not a tragic one. In literary terms, Meyer Abrams explains that a tragedy is “applied to literary, and especially to dramatic, representations of serious actions which eventuate in a disastrous conclusion for the *protagonist* (the chief character).”¹²⁹ While the hero of Mark’s gospel does suffer a tragic death at the brutal hands of the Roman guards, the overall story is not a tragedy. Jesus, throughout the *Gospel according to Mark*, is depicted as a clairvoyant character and foresees his impending demise on a number of different occasions (8:31-38; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). As a result, the scene in which Jesus is crucified is not as shocking for the audience since they have come to expect that such would occur. In

¹²⁸ Hester, “Dramatic Inconclusion,” 77.

¹²⁹ Meyer H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (8th ed., Boston: Thomas Wadsworth, 2005), 331.

addition, the story does not end with a disastrous conclusion or with a funeral (as most tragedies do). The *Gospel according to Mark* does not end with Jesus' death on the cross as one might expect of a tragedy; rather, it ends at the *empty* tomb where Jesus' prophecy concerning his resurrection is fulfilled through the words of the young man (16:1-8). The protagonist is victorious at the end of the story and so the linen garment he is buried in cannot be understood as an emphasis of his tragic death. In view of the fact that almost everything which takes place has been foreseen by Jesus, the cloth, from a narratological point of view, does not serve to intensify tragedy.

4.4.1.3 Connecting Once More the Young Man with Jesus

The final portion of Hester's theory is that the purpose of the linen garment is to bridge the scene of the arrest with that of the tomb since the young man is present in both places.¹³⁰ This is perhaps the most logical interpretation of the linen cloth put forth by Hester. His idea that Jesus' burial garment connects various episodes of Mark seems quite plausible. This connection forces the audience to reflect on the clothing and its role within the text. The following table demonstrates the relationship between the linen garment and the two scenes:

¹³⁰ Hester, "Dramatic Inconclusion," 77.

Table 6: σινδών in Mark's Gospel

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)	σινδόνα (14:51) τὴν σινδόνα (14:52)
The Burial of Jesus (15:42-7)	σινδόνα (15:46) τῇ σινδόνι (15:46)

The linen garment, mentioned at Jesus' arrest, is a literary prop which creates a unity between the hero and the young man. As was the case with the connection between the protagonist and the youth in Chapter Two, their clothes here are similar which establishes some kind of relationship between them. The fact that Jesus is buried in a linen garment points the audience back to the mention of the cloth at Jesus' arrest. The literary function of the burial cloth is to further connect the youth to Jesus. The linen cloth in Mark 15:46 points the implied reader back to the linen cloth in 14:51-2. While we might come to see the cloth as part of a burial practice,¹³¹ it functions as a literary device by bridging together two characters and two important events in the story.

4.4.2 Foreshadowing Jesus' Escape from the Linen Cloth

If Jesus' white clothes at the transfiguration scene foreshadow the white clothes of the young man at the empty tomb, we can then also note that the undressing of the young man's linen garment in Mark 14:51-2 foreshadows Jesus' escape from the linen burial

¹³¹ This is mentioned in John's Gospel: "They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews" (19:40).

cloth at the end of the gospel, when he will be resurrected. At the end of the gospel, the young man tells the women to look at the place where Jesus' body was buried because it is no longer there. The body of Jesus has been raised and in essence, the protagonist has escaped the linen burial cloth. The main character fulfills his prophecy and is resurrected. This escape from the linen garment – which represents an escape from mortality – is foreshadowed at the outset of the passion where the young man flees from the crowd leaving his linen cloth in their hands. The same way the youth escapes with his life by leaving the linen garment so too will Jesus later on escape his linen garment and be resurrected. The linen garment connects Jesus and the youth, and it functions as a narrative device which foreshadows Jesus' own escape.

4.5 Conclusion

Though the linen garment mentioned at Jesus' burial has received little scholarly attention, it does nonetheless serve an important narrative function in Mark's gospel. Hester's understanding of the garment, while not entirely flawless, does offer great insight and a sound understanding for the narrative function of this prop. The linen garment furthers the connection between the protagonist and the young man. When the audience learns that Jesus has been buried in a linen garment, they can reflect upon the outset of Jesus' death, namely the time of his arrest and how the youth was stripped of his linen cloth. The undressing of the young man's linen garment in 14:51-2 foreshadows Jesus' escape from the linen burial cloth at the end of the gospel when he will be resurrected.

CONCLUSION

Since the clothes Jesus wears in each scene are never dire to the overall plot, these minute details are an element of Mark's story which the narrator could have easily skipped over. Said differently, if the narrator would have chosen not to mention the linen garment or the white clothes of Jesus, the main story of the gospel would not be affected and the audience would not miss this information. The details concerning Jesus' vestment are similar to other additional details of the gospel which are included in the story but do not form the heart of the account. One can imagine that Jesus' character ate, slept, ran, laughed, etc. All of these are elements which the protagonist would have gone through but which are not always recounted to the audience; the omniscient narrator did not see them as relevant for the audience to know. The role of the narrator, in the structure of storytelling, is to inform the implied reader of the story and by doing so the narrator picks and chooses which events and elements are crucial enough for the audience to know, so as to merit inclusion in the story. As a result, if something is mentioned (such as the clothing of Jesus) then we must regard this detail as relevant for our understanding of the text and not as inconsequential or haphazard. The clothing of Jesus in the *Gospel according to Mark* cannot be overlooked as random details. Their place within the account of Jesus is not by accident, but by design.

At the outset of this thesis several questions were posed: Why does Mark take the time to mention the clothing of Jesus? What is the purpose or the role of the garments of Jesus within the Markan narrative? Is there a reason or reasons for mentioning such specific physical details of the story or are these references to Jesus' clothing simply additional information with no intended purpose? As has been argued throughout, the

mention of clothing in Mark's gospel is not information included by happenstance. The narrator informs the audience about Jesus' character and uses clothing as a narrative device in order to showcase this symbolically. In other cases the clothing of Jesus works as a means of foreshadowing, irony or as a bridge to another character or another scene. The clothing of Jesus in the Markan gospel is an important part of the characterization of the protagonist and it serves as different crucial literary functions. While we can, from a purely historical point-of-view, understand the clothes of Jesus as pertaining to a realistic portrayal of the 'historical Jesus' or as elements of the text which point to a credible event, it is more fruitful, in my opinion, to make sense of the clothing from a narrative perspective (all the while understanding and being sensitive to historical uses for clothing during this time period). From a narrative-critical perspective, it is clear that the clothes of Jesus serve different literary functions within the narrative.

Of the nineteen episodes in Mark's gospel in which clothing is mentioned, six refer specifically to the clothing of Jesus and in the course of this thesis, all of these mentions have been explored. In addition, the thesis has also examined the two mentions of clothing in relation to the young man and how these also work in the text and the rapport they have to Jesus. In this thesis, the term $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ has also been briefly explored for its relevance and relation between Jesus' clothing and the tearing of the temple curtain (though we find this term used also during the baptism of Jesus episode). As a result, there remain nine mentions of clothing in Mark's gospel which have not been explored in this thesis, but which may perhaps shed light on the current research on clothing as a narrative device in Mark's gospel overall. The nine remaining episodes are the following:

1. The Proclamation of John the Baptist (1:1-8)
2. The Question about Fasting (2:18-22)

3. Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)
4. The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13)
5. The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)
6. Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)
7. Jesus Denounces the Scribes (12:38-40)
8. The Desolating Sacrilege (13:16)
9. Jesus before the Council (14:53-65)

All of these episodes are interesting in their treatment of clothing. In particular, I have been fascinated with the question of whether or not the removal of clothing in Mark entails a positive or negative connotation. In the healing of Bartimaeus, the secondary character removes his clothing before being healed by Jesus (10:50), and similarly when Jesus enters into Jerusalem, two of his disciples throw their clothing onto the colt for him to sit upon and then many people spread their clothing onto the road (11:7-8). These events seem to point to a removal of clothing as positive,¹³² and can perhaps signify a type of removal of oneself from the material world. In his own words, Jesus denounces the scribes for their attire and this seems to lend itself to the notion that clothing can be negative in Mark's gospel. However, in the account of the Gerasene demoniac it is noted that after the man is cured of his unclean spirit he is seen "clothed and in his right mind" (5:15). In this episode, clothing seems to be a symbol of normality or freedom from an unclean spirit. How does this shape the notion that the removal of clothing is negative? This question is an interesting one since on the surface it appears that clothing can be a positive or a negative prop. Future research has a great task of discerning the importance of clothing in Mark's gospel, and whether this gospel writer sees clothing as something which is positive, negative or perhaps both.

¹³² For more on clothing as positive see: Haulotte, *Symbolique du vêtement*, 86-9.

The use of clothing within biblical narratives is not restricted to Mark's gospel; this treatment is prevalent in both canonical and non-canonical texts. Future research might also consider focusing more on the theme of clothing within the other gospels, either directly related to Jesus' character or in a broader sense.¹³³ In the non-canonical texts, there are many references to clothing which might inform us on the use of garments in biblical literature in general. In addition, there is literature which exists outside of the scope of biblical texts which may be worth exploring. Intertextual studies with Hellenistic literature might also prove to be a fruitful means of looking at clothing in ancient stories in general.

Finally, while this thesis has employed a narrative-critical lens for making sense of the clothing of Jesus in Mark, this is by no means the only way to approach such a topic. There are a variety of new and sometimes very insightful methodological approaches which have been used in order to better understand biblical literature. I have no doubt that some of these may bring to light various aspects of the clothing of Jesus which may yet be obscure.

The aim of the thesis has been to literally "undress Jesus" in the gospel of Mark and to explore and uncover the narrative functions of the mentions of his clothing. The goal was to enhance the current understanding of Mark's gospel and argue convincingly that the references to Jesus' clothing are not insignificant details as some might infer. Each mention of the clothing of Jesus in Mark's gospel works as a literary device. While

¹³³ Some have already begun to explore the importance of clothing in various biblical texts. The following is by no means an exhaustive list but a good starting point of this research. See: John R. Huddleston, "Divestiture, Deception, and Demotion: The Garment Motif in Genesis 37-39," *JSOT* 98 (2002): 47-62; Victor H. Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," *JSOT* 65 (1995): 25-36; Ora H. Prouser, "Suited to the Throne: The Symbolic Use of Clothing in the David and Saul Narratives," *JSOT* 71 (1996): 27-37.

the study of this area is far from being completed, the thesis does provide an overture and avenue for the future study of clothing in the gospels from a narrative-critical perspective. Undressing Jesus in the gospel of Mark, while somewhat flagrant, entails a deconstruction of Jesus' clothes in Mark's gospel which is exactly what this study has hoped to achieve.

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF MENTIONS OF CLOTHING IN MARK'S GOSPEL

	ιμάτιον	πορφύρα	στέφανος	σινδών	γυμνός	στολή
The Proclamation of John the Baptist (1:1-8)						
The Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)						
The Question about Fasting (2:18-22)	ιμάτιον (2:21)					
Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)						
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (5:21-43)	τοῦ ἱματίου (5:27) τῶν ἱματίων (5:28) τῶν ἱματίων (5:30)					
The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13)						
Healing the Sick in Gennesaret (6:53-6)	τοῦ ἱματίου (6:56)					
The Transfiguration (9:2-8)	τὰ ἱμάτια (9:3)					
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)	τὸ ἱμάτιον (10:50)					
Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)	τὰ ἱμάτια (11:7) τὰ ἱμάτια (11:8)					
Jesus Denounces the Scribes (12:38-40)						στολαῖς (12:38)
The Desolating Sacrilege (13:16)	τὸ ἱμάτιον (13:16)					
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)				σινδὼνα (14:51) τὴν σινδὼνα (14:52)	γυμνοῦ (14:51) γυμνός (14:52)	
Jesus Before the Council (14:53-65)						
The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)	τὰ ἱμάτια (15:20)	πορφύραν (15:17) πορφύραν (15:20)	στέφανον (15:17)			
The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)	τὰ ἱμάτια (15:24)					
The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)						
The Burial of Jesus (15:42-7)				σινδὼνα (15:46) τῇ σινδόνι (15:46)		
The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-8)						στολὴν (16:5)

	λευκός	ράκος	σχίσμα	σανδάλιον	χιτών
The Proclamation of John the Baptist (1:1-8)					
The Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)					
The Question about Fasting (2:18-22)		ράκους (2:21)	σχίσμα (2:21)		
Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)					
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (5:21-43)					
The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13)				σανδάλια (6:9)	χιτώνας (6:9)
Healing the Sick in Gennesaret (6:53-6)					
The Transfiguration (9:2-8)	λευκὰ (9:3)				
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)					
Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)					
Jesus Denounces the Scribes (12:38-40)					
The Desolating Sacrilege (13:16)					
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)					
Jesus Before the Council (14:53-65)					
The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)					
The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)					
The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)					
The Burial of Jesus (15:42-7)					
The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-8)	λευκήν (16:5)				

	καταπέτασμα	ἐνδιδύσκω	ἐκδύω	περιβάλλω	στίλβω
The Proclamation of John the Baptist (1:1-8)			ἐνδεδυμένος (1:6)		
The Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)					
The Question about Fasting (2:18-22)					
Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)					
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (5:21-43)					
The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13)			ἐνδύσηθε (6:9)		
Healing the Sick in Gennesaret (6:53-6)					
The Transfiguration (9:2-8)					στίλβοντα (9:3)
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)					
Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)					
Jesus Denounces the Scribes (12:38-40)					
The Desolating Sacrilege (13:16)					
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)				περιβεβλημένος (14:51)	
Jesus Before the Council (14:53-65)					
The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)		ἐνδιδύσκουσιν (15:17) ἐνέδυσαν (15:20)	ἐξέδυσαν (15:20)		
The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)					
The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)	καταπέτασμα (15:38)				
The Burial of Jesus (15:42-7)					
The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-8)				περιβεβλημένον (16:5)	

	ἰματίζω	ζώνη	ὑποδέω	διαρρήγνυμι	σχίζω
The Proclamation of John the Baptist (1:1-8)		ζώνην (1:6)			
The Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)					σχιζομένους (1:10)
The Question about Fasting (2:18-22)					
Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)	ἰματισμένον (5:15)				
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (5:21-43)					
The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13)		τὴν ζώνην (6:8)	ὑποδεδεμένους (6:9)		
Healing the Sick in Gennesaret (6:53-6)					
The Transfiguration (9:2-8)					
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)					
Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)					
Jesus Denounces the Scribes (12:38-40)					
The Desolating Sacrilege (13:16)					
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)					
Jesus Before the Council (14:53-65)				διαρρήξας (14:63)	
The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)					
The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)					
The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)					ἐσχίσθη (15:38)
The Burial of Jesus (15:42-7)					
The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-8)					

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