

THE SEDUCTION OF JESUS: AN ALTERNATIVE READING OF MARK 7: 24-30

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ABSTRACT

This paper is guided by the question, is the function of the church household based on the teachings of Jesus Christ to excise and remove or to heal and restore? In addition, is the *Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* (EFKS) being seduced by power and authority, in so far as to misuse its status by removing instead of healing? Moreover, is the current general response regarding the EFKS in Samoa an over-reaction to the wisdom and counsel that needs to be afforded our current leadership as we move forward? The immediate sense of unrighteousness and impurity emanating from my Samoan context provides a gateway to revisit the idea of defilement and healing as found in the narrative of Mark 7:1-30, wherein the question I raise, can Jesus be read to have been seduced by the Syrophoenician woman to provide healing for her daughter? This study seeks to provide an alternative reading of Mark 7: 24-30, grounded in a close reading of the text using narrative criticism. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon's narrative elements of character, plot, setting, and rhetoric will provide the structure from which to re-read and reinterpret the well-known Syrophoenician woman and Jesus' pericope anew. Fidelity to the text is first and foremost.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis, which is 18,000 words in length, excluding the footnotes and bibliography, has been written by me, that it is the result of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, in any previous written work for an academic award at this or any other academic institution.

I also declare that this thesis has not used any material, heard or read, without academically appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

To my father, the late Falepauga Toalima Vitaoa, the son of the late Rev Elder Ketu and Moevanu Vitaoa Toalima – Magalo, who were other Samoan missionaries to Papua.

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Introduction

Questions surrounding the Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS) church's moral and ethical standards are being challenged publicly. Currently, the church has been front and center of public attention with all the good and not so good stories surrounding it and its members. According to published documents in the Samoa Observer, one can view the church as impure and unrighteous. The issue of deception within the EFKS has challenged the church's identity as an ethically moral and righteous religious institution.¹ The emergence of such publicized issues within the EFKS household highlights two key issues of interest to me: firstly defilement and secondly purity of our EFKS household.²

Given this, it is not my intention to question or justify the decisions passed down on these ministers or the EFKS leadership. Rather, it is to shed light on the roles and functions of our church, our Christian household. Simply put, is the function of the church household based on the teachings of Jesus Christ to excise and remove or to heal and restore? In addition, is the EFKS being seduced by power and authority, in so far as to misuse its status by removing instead of healing? Moreover, is the current general response an over-reaction to the wisdom and counsel that needs to be afforded our current leadership as we move forward?

The immediate sense of unrighteousness and impurity provides a gateway to revisit the idea of defilement and healing as found in the narrative of Mark 7:1-30, which raises the question, can Jesus be read to have been seduced by the Syrophoenician woman to provide healing for her daughter?

¹To quantify this, I refer to three major incidents in recent times, wherein the EFKS household has come under immense scrutiny from the outside world; resulting in the call to remove all ministerial titles from three prestigious ministers, including high ranking personnel who have been long serving, upstanding members of the EFKS. However, no final closures have been reached on these cases, although decisions have been made and rescinded. Only time will tell as to the final outcome for each of these ministers: Ilia L Likou, "Justice at Last for Rev Afereti Uili," *Samoa Observer*, 18 Jan 2017.; Pai Mulitalo Ale, "Toa Speaks: Why I Have Converted to Catholicism," *ibid.*, 05 Oct 2016.; Lanuola Tusani Tupufia, "Sex Allegation Mediation Outcome Confidential," *ibid.*, 12 Aug.; "Court Dismisses Lawsuit against Elders of Church," *Samoa Observer*, 20 May 2016.; Ilia L Likou, "Church Secretary Stripped of Key Roles over Sex Allegations.," *ibid.*, 13 May.; "Church Leaders Defer Decision," *Samoa Observer*, 20 Feb 2017. Please refer to the Appendix for further information.

² I will elaborate further on this issue within this paper, but household is used to refer to the EFKS church as a singular entity or one body.

The traditional understanding of seduction is mainly ‘to lead astray in order to engage in illicit sexual relations.’³ However, other scholars refer to conduct that is ‘deceptive’ or ‘hypocritical.’⁴ Proverbs 7: 21 talks about the persuasiveness of the harlot in seducing the young man. To persuade is to convince, to seek favour, cause to yield or to lead to a firm conviction. Additionally, seduction or persuade means ‘deceit’ and is found in the list of vices in Mark 7:21-23. Furthermore, seduction also involves the exchange of words and actions, whether between different or same genders. It involves privacy or a setting that is hidden from others so that no one will know. It discloses desires that abuse, corrupt and destroys personal convictions and beliefs. In Mark 7 a private movement from one house (in Israel) to another house (in Tyre) and a distant healing can be triggers that suggest the idea of Jesus’ seduction. I suspect that the desire of this supplicant to find healing for her daughter would leave no stone unturned. Her desperation is seen in her unwavering and unconventional search for Jesus. This goes against traditional 1st century cultural protocol, whether Jewish or Gentile. Such desperation, determination, and persistence speak of the intent, by all means necessary,’ even the seduction of a Jewish healer to induce healing. However, Jesus’ response with the ‘distant healing’ from within the *oikíān* (house-church, family or a household) changes everything. Is this a story of the ‘defilement’ and ‘impurity’ of a Jewish healer or the foreshadowing of the virtuous behaviour of a Messiah that extends salvation to all beyond the borders of Israel?

In Mark 7: 1-23, the narrative begins with the issue of ‘purity’ and ‘impurity/defilement’ due to unwashed hands. The Pharisaic law and the 1st century Jewish practice suggest that before eating, hands shall first be washed. The narrator’s understanding of the Pharisaic tradition is that defilement of the person is caused from impure things from the outside going into the body. However in verse 15, Jesus corrects this misunderstanding of impurity and states that defilement is not from things that go in, but things that come out of a person. This is explained, theoretically and privately, to the disciples in *the house* (verses 17ff: *oĩkov*). Immediately after this long encounter with the Pharisees, the Marcan Jesus provides a practical application of this

³ Elaine Adler Goodfriend, "Prostitution," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Doubleday: Bantón Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1992), 509.

⁴ Jennifer L. Manlowe, *Faith Born of Seduction: Sexual Trauma, Body Image, and Religion* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1995); Alice Bach, *Women, Seduction, and Betrayal in Biblical Narrative* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

understanding in what follows within the selected narrative of Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman as an example. In doing so, the Marcan Jesus departs alone (*ἀπῆλθεν*/he departed) and is placed in the far north, and in a private gentile house (verse 24: *οἰκίαν*) where he alone comes into contact with the Syrophoenician woman. The additional point of intrigue here in verse 24 is that Jesus did not want anyone to know (*οὐδένα ἤθελε γνωῶναι*).⁵ Why does he not want anyone to know that he is entering this house? What takes place in this encounter proves very troubling for the character of Jesus, not only from the Jewish perspective with respects to purity and defilement, but also what comes out of this encounter, the extension of salvation beyond the borders of Israel. But what is also troubling for the Christian reader is the portrayal of a Jesus without compassion and understanding for a supplicant in need during their interaction. However, before the Syrophoenician account, Mark provides a list of vices in verses 21-23 as a concluding statement of Jesus' explanation of defilement. These vices bridge the previous theoretical explanation of impurity/defilement with the Syrophoenician woman's story as the validation (praxis) of Jesus' earlier theoretical proof.

Was this healing part of the Marcan narrative to keep such a critical saying of Jesus intact as a way to raise an important issue about the divisive internal affairs of the Jewish faith? Furthermore, does this represent a change or expansion of the missionary purposes of a Jewish Jesus wherein the vices for the Jews have been replaced by a virtue for the Jewish Christians that see the mission as expanding to include 'all nations'? This paper will examine, elaborate, and expand further these questions.

This is where I make the assertion that it wasn't Jesus entering the house that defiled him as a Jew as the narrative progresses. Rather, it is what came out of the house, the 'healing from a distance', that would be understood as what defiles according to Jesus' understanding of the traditional Jewish practices. If so, is it possible to say that Jesus was seduced by this Syrophoenician woman to render such a healing? If not, why did Jesus not physically go to the daughter to heal her like he did for Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-43)?

In 1st century socio-cultural understanding, honour and shame are great cultural pillars that guide relationships. Therefore, in a patron-client relationship, the idea that services rendered comes with a repayment is reinforced by the maintenance of one's

⁵ This is a repeated theme in Mark.

honour.⁶ Can Jesus' actions be classified as a repayment of services within this house/household? I use the term *house* (*oikíav/oĩkov*) loosely as the image of a family, household, and/or church. If the church is a community of God's people according to Rev. Semo Tapaleao,⁷ are the current events on display within the media for the whole world to see an indicator of the impurities and defilements found within that finds expression externally?

This paper is not an attempt to generalize the state of the EFKS church based on these events. Instead, it is an endeavour to fuse the world of the Bible with our everyday world. In other words, are the events of the Bible still speaking to us today? If so, what is the reminder and what is the faith response of a Christian believer? These findings will be discussed further in the Discussion and Conclusion section of this paper. Therefore this study seeks not to annul the traditional view of Mark 7: 24-30, but to provide an alternative reading grounded in a close reading of the text using narrative criticism. Fidelity to the text is first and foremost.

The study is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 gives a historical background of the whole gospel, which offers authenticity to my task of exegesis. Concerning this background, I focus only on authorship, dating/setting, purpose and theme in order to establish the context and setting from which the issue of purity occurs. Was the idea of purity the stumbling block for the young Christian movement expanding into foreign territories and if so, how were the Jews and Gentiles able to learn from this pericope moving forward? Chapter 2 is a review of literature mainly on purity/defilement, healing from a distance and the idea of seduction. Chapter 3 discusses my preferred methodology of narrative criticism. Chapter 4 is my exegetical analysis section of the passage. Last but not least, Chapter 5 is the Discussion and Conclusion of my research in relations to my context and a concluding remark of how to move forward from my findings.

⁶Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996); John G. Peristiany, *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

⁷ Semo Tapaleao, "House of God Is the Community of People: The Communal Emphasis of Oikos Tou Theou.," (Malua: Malua Theological College, 2004).

Chapter 1

General Background of Mark

Introduction

This chapter sets a brief background of the Gospel of Mark; its authorship, dating/setting, purpose and theme. It is my belief that these historical backgrounds illuminate the world in which Mark lived and shaped his material about 'his' Jesus' earthly ministry. It is important to visit this background with regards to my exegetical work which constitutes the bulk of this paper.

The Gospel according to Mark reveals two worlds, the world in the gospel and the world of Mark. It is not fundamental that such worlds cannot be authenticated. However, consulting the background provides the necessary context from which stemmed the world of the story, which is important to narrative criticism.

1.1 Authorship

In most biblical studies, the authorship of the Gospel According to Mark, which is the second gospel in the New Testament canon, is described by two different evidences; the external and the internal. I have adopted the study of Edmond Hiebert concerning these evidences,⁸ for this purpose of my thesis.

External Evidence

The traditional view of the early church suggests that Papias, bishop of Hierapolis and leader of the church in the second century⁹, provides the most conclusive external evidence to support authorship; although contradicted by other scholars.¹⁰ According to Papias' writings, the gospel of Mark is dated somewhere between 70-150 CE.¹¹ Papias labels Mark as Peter's interpreter who is precise in writings but not in

⁸D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection*. (Waynesboro: Gabriel Publishing, 2003), 81.

⁹Ibid.; Richrad A. Burrige, "Mark," in *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*, ed. Pat and David Alexander (England: Lion Publishing, 1999), 577.

¹⁰David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, eds., *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 2.

¹¹Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection*., 81.; C Clifton Black, "Mark," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Including Apocryphal Deuterocanonical Books*. , ed. Harold W. Attridge (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2006), 1722.

order.¹² Hiebert in his view suggests that ‘*Mark was a compiler-translator of records already written by Peter, in Aramaic.*’¹³ It is believed that Peter was not good with the Greek language. Though he spoke in Aramaic, Mark translated Peter’s words into Greek. This view is supported by quotations from Eusebius and Irenaeus.¹⁴ Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, commented that Mark was Peter’s disciple who wrote down what Peter and Paul preached in Rome. After their deaths, Mark transmitted everything in a written form. This view is further supported by scholars like Justin Martyr in his *Memoirs of Peter*, Clement of Alexandria in 195 CE and Origen in 230 CE.¹⁵ These scholars support Papias’ point that Mark was the interpreter, which Rhoads, Dewey and Michie otherwise refer to as the interpreter of the apostle Peter.¹⁶

It is noteworthy to see the words ‘interpreter of’ and ‘compiler-translator’ attributed to Mark as the author. Mark gathered the information he obtained, either directly (as argued below) or indirectly through Peter and weaved together a groundbreaking story of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, and the saviour of all humanity. Based on this story, Matthew and Luke were able to craft their stories which emphasised other attributes and themes of importance for a community of believers trying to formulate a religious identity under Roman and Jewish leadership during the 1st century.

Internal Evidence

According to Hiebert, there are reliable features of the Gospel that links Mark and the Gospel with Peter in the external view. These are the few and innocuous words for example “*and Peter*”, “*they and we*”, which are Aramaic expressions of incidents that omit the honor of Peter, as well as the mention of Mark in the story of Acts (10:34-43).¹⁷ Mark 16: 7 is taken by Hiebert as the only place in Mark where “*and Peter*”¹⁸ is

¹²Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 84.; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 2.

¹³ Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 84.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 84-85. Justin Martyr uses the title "Boanerges" in Mark 3: 17. The Latin fragments found called Anti-Marcionite Prologue in Ad 160-180 says that Mark was the interpreter of Peter written in the regions of Italy after the death of Peter. Irenaeus mentions Mark as the disciple and interpreter that his writings was transmitted to them. Clement of Alexandria declares the one who followed, remembered, recorded, delivered the Gospel. Origen testifies that Mark wrote the second Gospel as Peter guided him.

¹⁶Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 2.

¹⁷Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 86.

¹⁸ Others argue this is a sign that Peter’s denial of Jesus disqualify (at least temporarily) from being viewed as a disciple.

distinguished from the disciples during the resurrection of Jesus. The interplay of *they* and *we* suggests that Mark is present as an eyewitness.¹⁹ The relationship between Peter and Jesus is indicative of the use of the Aramaic language in the Gospel.²⁰

Further internal evidence of Marcan authorship is Mark 14: 51-52.²¹ This information concerns someone who has no name that '*fled naked from Gethsemane*.'²² Hiebert supports this view by noting that verses 51-52 'was Mark himself.'²³ Hiebert also highlights the familiarity of Mark with Paul and Barnabas in the Missionary Journeys in the Acts.²⁴ Hence gives much of it as his sources of writings. But before this, Hiebert points out Mark as a 'well informed participant' of Jesus.

1.2 Date/Setting

The date of composition is generally a difficult task to verify. I have tried below to make obvious the less questionable and doubtful information from different studies obtained from early traditions. There are numerous assertions that the date the gospel was written is prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The most supported perspective is that Mark was written in Rome by a Jewish author for a large gentile Christian community, and the presence of many Latin words in the gospel tends to be proof.²⁵ Firstly, the traditional understanding derives from Irenaeus, Clement and Origen.²⁶ Irenaeus points to the date after the death of Peter and Paul. Clement and Origen place it during the lifetime of Peter. These views appear different somehow, but proven not different.²⁷ According to Hiebert, those who study the life of Peter indicate that the death of Peter is the separation of Peter from Mark around 64 CE. The most probable

¹⁹Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection*. "...the experience of one who had been a disciple of Jesus"

²⁰Ibid. Hiebert's biblical references - Mark 5: 41; 7: 11, 34; 14: 36

²¹Rev Alesana Eteuati, "Summary Notes for Nt 101: Term 1, 2014," New Testament (Malua: Malua Theological College, 2014), 1.

²² Alesana Eteuati emphasized that Mark is portraying himself.

²³Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection*., 88.

²⁴ Rev Dr Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "Lecture Nt 204 Term 3 2015," New Testament (Malua: Malua Theological College, 2015), 7. The study of Assistants of Paul by Nofoaiga reveals two sites which are the houses and the missionary journey. The houses refer to the house of Mary in Jerusalem and the house during Peter's imprisonment under Herod Agrippa 1. The journey is the second missionary journey where Barnabas refused to go with Paul due to an undisclosed reason, then Mark replaced Barnabas. In 2 Timothy 4: 11 Paul urges Timothy to bring Mark while he was in prison; probably closer to the time of Paul's persecution.

²⁵Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 41.

²⁶Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection*., 92.

²⁷Ibid.

dating held strongly by the traditional view is 64-70.²⁸ This dating specifies the Roman persecution of the early church and the war between Palestinian Jews and the Romans in 66-73.²⁹ The dating seems credible to my focus on the idea of seduction in Mark 7: 24-30, because compliance to Roman/Jewish authorities or ruling activities could be factors of seduction. Compliance ensured survival and well-being for those Christians living in a predominantly Greco-Roman and Jewish context. Therefore, from this perspective, there seems to be a connection between the text and the date/setting it was written.

My understanding is that the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees regarding purity reflects the confrontation between the early church and the ruling powers, whether the Romans or Jews. Joel Marcus indicates that Mark understood what was to happen in 70 CE.³⁰ Therefore, Mark foreshadows what would soon happen to the early church during the dispersion.³¹ Is persecution and seduction intricately connected, where one is a consequence of the other? But what can the church do? Does the church need to be a steadfast witness before internal and external hostilities? Does the term *witness* reflect the purity of the church that originates from within that is expressed externally? If Jesus contends that purity from within must be expressed externally, then Jesus' healing from a distance within a house (Mark 7: 24-30) redefines the entire mission of a Jewish faith that is carried forward by the Christian church. This will be discussed further in my exegesis.

It is fundamental to my research that the context of Mark and the context of Jesus are intertwined, because the fictive narrative that Mark creates with his 'gospel' speaks from an experience/context that is re-contextualized within the historical

²⁸Burridge, "Mark," 577.; Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 92-93.; Werner Georg Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament.*, revised ed. (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973), 98.; Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 28.; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 2.; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus.*, 40-41.

²⁹Joel Marcus, "Mark, the Gospel Of," in *Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 859-61.; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus.*, 41."...the political context of the imperial capital under Nero (54-68 C.E.), four emperors (68-69), Vespesians (69-79)."

³⁰Marcus, "Mark, the Gospel Of," 860."...Mark seems to know of or to foresee the Roman destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. and references to wars and rumors of war, false messiahs and false prophets, and the desolating sacrilege..."

³¹Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 48-49. Under the narrative element, foreshadowing and retrospection are considered to be two ends of a thread describing the fulfillment of what is to come.

narrative of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus it is a fundamental premise that Mark inserts his story of Jesus into his own historical reality.

1.3 Purpose

According to Hiebert and others, the gospel of Mark has no statement to suggest a clear purpose. However, according to Rhoads, Dewie and Michie, Mark writes “in order to give people courage to live for the rule of God despite opposition and threat.”³² This demonstrates a threat/persecution of a certain way of life by both the Jewish and Roman authorities within the local and regional context as well as from the larger imperial context. Thus, the persecution was the betrayal of Christians or the early followers of Jesus and the Way to live under Roman authority.³³ This can also be read as the seduction of the Christians. In support of this view Hiebert says that the “hostility against Jesus was initiated...by the religious leader.”³⁴ The tension between Jesus and the religious leader as portrayed by Mark is symbolic of that between Roman authorities and the Christian church. This suggests a relationship between the idea of purity and impurity in the household as I contend. It is my interest to identify this hostility against Jesus as matters affecting the purity of the church. The church is viewed as the achievement of glorious victory through apparent defeat.³⁵ I will discuss the church in my study of the significance of *οἶκον* in Mark.

1.4 Theme

One of the major themes to follow closely in reading Mark's narrative is Discipleship.³⁶ In Mark 7: 1-30, the disciples interact with the Jewish authorities from Jerusalem and then interact with Jesus in Mark's motif to demonstrate a lack of understanding to contrast that of the unknown and unnamed Syrophoenician woman.

³²Ibid., 2.; Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 94. Hiebert claims "to win converts to Christian faith."; Black, "Mark," 1722-24. The claim by Black is the reinterpretation of messiahship in times of the Jewish war with the Romans. Mark presents Jesus as the suffering servant, but not a military leader as the Jews are expecting. Hiebert's portrait of Jesus is the busy servant. Tapaleao, "House of God Is the Community of People: The Communal Emphasis of Oikos Tou Theou.," 19. This study reveals 4 purposes of Mark adopted from Alan Cole's study. Tapaleao uses only the purpose of 'To encourage those facing persecutions'.

³³ Tapaleao, "House of God Is the Community of People: The Communal Emphasis of Oikos Tou Theou.," 20.

³⁴Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Three Volume Collection.*, 95.

³⁵Ibid., 96.

³⁶Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," *American Theological Library Association* (1983): 29-32.

Jack Dean Kingsbury emphasises discipleship as bonding with Jesus with full submission.³⁷ It is a matter of following Jesus and particularly obeying his will in an immediate fashion. Its nature is universal according to its mission purpose.

In my selected passage, Mark 7: 24-30, the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus, the unnamed and unknown woman is a startling image of discipleship to contrast the named and known disciples of Jesus' and Mark's time. The portrait of discipleship in Mark according to Kingsbury is to learn Jesus' way of interaction that is prone to humanity, a way of life that is not so rigorous and confined so that it is unable to bend and flex in the face of human sorrow, suffering, and tragedy. However, before this healing account (7: 24-30) unfolds, the earlier story of the tradition of the elders, Mark 7: 1-23, discusses the purity rituals and laws of the Jews/elders as a way to speak about the rigors and structures of institution that comes in to direct conflict with the humanity that Kingsbury alludes to as Jesus' way of interaction.

1.5 Purity Law

According to R.A Finlayson, purity is merely ceremonial³⁸ but ritual and moral in its Old Testament usage. It has been strongly transformed into a moral and spiritual issue in the times of Jesus. In ancient Jewish ceremonies, purification was about hygiene and ethical behaviour. Again, Jesus' teachings expanded this idea from its rigid application to be more inclusive of wholeness. It is a connection between the physical and spiritual realm that exceeded the laws of nature as well as that of the Jews. Rather, it enforced a way of life for the household of God. It was not structured and rigid, but flexible and accessible by all humanity through love and faith; a wholeness that exceeds the boundaries of race, culture, and faith.

My reading of Mark 7: 1-23 depicts a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, a Jewish identity that either serves a tradition of the elders or God. Verses 24-30 situate

³⁷Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 90.

³⁸R A Finlayson, "Purity," in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 991.; Jr Frank H Gorman, "Ritual," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 1131. Ritual practices maintains traditional beliefs. The most occurring Jewish purity system in the Gospel of Mark is found in Mark 7: 1-23. The Christians in time of Jesus are under the control of this purity system. However the apostle Paul freed them from this law. Yet, there are only two rituals consistent in biblical texts: baptism and holy communion. The fact is, Jesus considers the inner part as the state of purification. Baptism and holy communion once again serve this purpose.

purity and defilement into a real world example of the cost of discipleship. Taking a stand and making that tough choice. In Mark 7: 14-23 the narrative discusses the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples privately within a house and indicates the theory of purity in verse 15. The initial narrative regarding the tradition of the elders concludes with a set of vices to mark the conclusion of Jesus statement to the disciples within the house. Implementing the practice of Jesus' teachings, Mark changes his setting of Jesus to the gentile region where defilement is clearly illustrated. This part of my thesis will now consult rabbinic literatures regarding the Jewish view of purity in Palestine during the early centuries to ascertain the general rule and understanding of its importance to understanding the issue faced by Jesus and his disciples.

*Oral Tradition: The Mishnah*³⁹

Jacob Neusner briefly states 'the Mishnah is the classification of primary law codes of Judaism in a hierarchical order'. It is dated around 200 CE. The Mishnah covers both theory and practice. However, many theoretical matters bore no practical consequence at the time of the formation of the code.⁴⁰ The Mishnah is divided into six major categories: Agriculture, appointed times or Holy seasons, women, damages, Holy things and purities.⁴¹ I will use only the second, third, fifth and sixth categories.

The appointed times or holy seasons refers to the sanctification of the land and the temple during holy time. This deals with village boundaries and a spatial re-ordering of the land to match boundaries and temple when holy time arrived, like the festival of harvest.⁴²

In the category of women, it focuses on the point of disorder. This affects the status of a woman and a man. As Neusner portrays 'it is the transfer of the disordering anomaly, woman, from the regular status provided by one man to the equally trustworthy status provided by another.'⁴³ This abnormality arises from political institutions where economy are exchanged and the state of household and families are

³⁹Jacob Neusner, "Rabbinic Literature: Mishnah and Tosefta," in *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, ed. Graig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Groves, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 893-97.

⁴⁰Ibid., 893.

⁴¹Ibid. Agriculture: Zeraim; Appointed times or Holy seasons: Moed; Women: Nashim; Damages: Neziqin; Holy things: Qodoshim; Purities: Tohorot.

⁴²Ibid., 894.

⁴³Ibid.

effected. Thus the Mishnah indicates un-holiness if any Israelite falls outside the holy land because of economical and any other unrecognized issues.

The category of Holy Things and Purity work coherently, according to Neusner. The Holy things concern the daily routine of the temple, with which a daily sanctification of the temple is conducted. It is only disturbed by the will of the human act.⁴⁴ The sixth category implies a system of clean and unclean. It all depends on human will. The will wishes and acts to convey uncleanness and susceptibility.⁴⁵

Regarding my thesis, the sixth category relates directly to the idea of purity being discussed overall. The other categories will serve a purpose during the Discussion section of my paper.

The law code demands the washing of hands. The sixth category under the tractate *Yadayim* explains the amount of water used to wash one hand to a combination of many hands.⁴⁶ This is where the Pharisees attack Jesus and his disciples in Mark 7: 1-23. The unwashed hands before eating impart defilement of a person according to the law.⁴⁷ The basis of the attack defends the outward purification of the being. However since Lightfoot portrays the pollution of man as from a creeping thing, an unclean act, by the dead, from a leper, from water of purification and others,⁴⁸ my next step is to identify few incidents in Mark's narrative, that will unpack this Purity law.

Purity examples in Mark's Gospel

Mark 7: 1-23 maintains the aspect of Jewish purity system.⁴⁹ However, in chapter one, the Marcan Jesus heals in various environments and different events, without any mention of purity, cleanliness, and defilement. The tour goes on until Mark 7 designates a Gentile healing that brings the issue of defilement front and centre for the Marcan Jesus, according to the law. The following encounters between Mark's Jesus

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 895. Neusner implies that the movement from sanctification to uncleanness takes place when human will and work precipitate it.

⁴⁶*The Mishnah: A New Translation* (London, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1014-16.; John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew - 1 Corinthians* (New York: Hendricksen Publishers, 1979), 417-19.

⁴⁷Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, 1014.m.yad.1.1.A,B,C,D,E: 1/4 log of water to wash one or two hands; 1/2 a log to wash three or four hands; 1 log of water to wash five, ten or hundred hands.

⁴⁸Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew - 1 Corinthians*, 417-18.

⁴⁹Gorman, "Ritual," 1131.

and the people (needing healing or having been healed) demonstrates how defilement or uncleanness was overlooked in order to focus on a much larger or greater issue for Mark's narrative:

Mark 1: 21-28; 29-34; 39; 40-45; 2: 1-12; 13-17; 3: 1-6; 7-12; 20-30;
5: 1-20; 21-43; 6: 30-42; 53-56; 7: 24-30; 31-26.⁵⁰

Jesus breaches the purity tradition of the elders by making contact with the sick, poor, and marginalized. Of all these contacts made by the Marcan Jesus, it is this one singular event with a foreign pagan woman seeking healing for her demon-possessed daughter that brings the idea of purity into question. The point of interest is that purity here is not so much within one's own community, but becomes a point of greater concern when national and cultural boundaries are being crossed wherein the external poses a greater threat than anything internal. Not only does Jesus transform the purity law in his encounter, but concedes the limits of leaving Israel to heal the Syrophoenician woman's daughter from a distance.

1.6 Accounts of healing from a distance

The 'healing from a distance' provides impetus to support the idea that Mark's Jesus knew the limitations of his transgression by not completing the healing by going to the Syrophoenician woman's daughter, like he did with Jairus' daughter (5:21-43) and other characters that needed direct contact with the Jewish healer/messiah. Within Mark's story as well as that of the other gospel writers, there are only two incidences in which Jesus healed from a distance, the Syrophoenician/Canaanite Woman story (Mark 7:24-30 and Matthew 15: 21-28) and the Centurion soldier's servant (Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10).

The Centurion Servant and the Syrophoenician Woman

The Syrophoenician woman's story in Mark 7: 24-30 is paralleled in Matthew's account of the Canaanite woman with alterations (Matthew 15: 21-28).⁵¹ However, missing in the Marcan account is the story of the Centurion soldier's servant found in Matthew and Luke. Although there are few differences in each evangelist's portrayal,

⁵⁰Examples from the New Revised Standard Version. .

⁵¹Kurt Aland, "A Table of Parallel Passages in the Four Gospels," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (New York: Haper Collins Publisher, 2006), 1653-63.

the event of healing from afar is alarming and perplexing for a Jewish healer always in close vicinity and in contact with his supplicants. The healing of the centurion's servant occurs in Capernaum. There is an exchange in sayings between Jesus and the centurion but without insults.⁵² The dialogue reveals two things. First is Jesus' offer to visit and cure and the second is Jesus' healing from afar. In Mark's account of the Syrophenician woman, the dialogue of Jesus and the woman is offensive and critical. Although offensive in their interaction and tone, Jesus heals immediately. However, it is noteworthy out that these particular healings occur in different settings. For the Centurion soldier, Jesus was out in the open amongst the people, dialoguing whether to go or not, from which stemmed the healing from a distance. However, with the Syrophenician woman, Jesus purposefully left his disciples behind in a house in Judean land, in order to enter a foreign home in Tyre, wherein healing from a distance occurred. By entering the foreign *οἶκον*, which Matthew corrects by having the Canaanite woman coming out of that region to see Jesus (Matthew 15:22), the question raised is why the secrecy and why did Matthew need to address it in his version of the same story?

1.7 Significance of *οἶκον*

Based on the writings of Rev. Tapaleao, the 'significance of *oikos tou theou* in Mark is that the Marcan Jesus uses a house to house strategy to spread the good news, due to the problems associated with the Temple and synagogues for preaching and teaching by Jesus from the Jewish and Roman authorities.⁵³ Furthermore, Tapaleao describes the strategy as 'Jesus' base of opposition before the cleansing act'. According to Tapaleao, it is the emphasis of a new ministry where the spread of the good news depends mostly on members of the household.

According to Tapaleao's findings, the significance of an *οἶκον* ministry was twofold. Firstly, the instability of the Temple and synagogues and secondly, the use of *οἶκον* as a secret base of operation for a community in search of an identity within the Roman and Jewish milieu. In connection with the Marcan narrative, it is not clear if Mark portrays Jesus as the head of the household or the head of opposition. However, as

⁵²This is my own reading of Matthew 8: 5-13 in the NRSV.

⁵³Tapaleao, "House of God Is the Community of People: The Communal Emphasis of *Oikos Tou Theou*," 23.

a rabbi and leader of this grassroots movement, Jesus assumed the role of head of household, especially in connection with the Pauline understanding of body as the church/household and the head/Jesus Christ in his early 1st century writings. Placing the significance of *oîkon* into contextual perspective, it is reasonable to assert that there are private conversations, dialogues, contacts and interactions between Jesus and those within the household. For instance, according to Mark, in the *oîkon* Jesus interacts with his household members such as his disciples (Mark 7: 14-23). In the foreign *oikíav* (feminine form of the noun to suggest a house associated with the Syrophoenician woman and not Jesus) Jesus interacts with an unknown and unnamed Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7: 24-30). These interactions juxtapose the ideas of purity and impurity/defilement as mentioned earlier by going outside of his normal boundaries of interaction.

Taking into consideration the significance of house as Jesus' 'base of opposition', was this Marcan narrative of Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman an account to oppose the tradition of the elders? Was Jesus taking a stand to say that the vices which began with fornication and concluded with folly in 7:21-23 are a foreshadowing of the effect the Syrophoenician story would have on its readers or hearers, wherein sexual indiscretion is shown to be absurd, with the real issue being demonstrated by the periscope as wickedness and deceit, vices that lie in the middle of the list? If so, what is the wickedness and deceit? Furthermore, was the secrecy of the meeting is another example of Mark's Messianic Secret motif that is interwoven throughout his gospel with Jesus reminding his healed supplicants' not to say a word of their encounter? The acceptance and spread of the good news is what is expected as a symbol of purity within the household; hence the healing from a distance in Mark 7: 24-30 presupposes the same expectation. Healing as an example of salvation from sickness and death is the good news of Mark's Jesus. However, the issue of discipleship is not about the physical miracles that are seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, but rather the spiritual transformation of the whole person which goes beyond the boundaries of land, law, and nature. If this is indeed a house-to-house strategy, then the shift in setting is part of the narrative plot to demonstrate a shift in mission from the people of Israel to now the people of God.

1.8 Text of Mark 7: 14-30

Theoretical and Practical argument of Jesus about Purity - Mark 7: 14-30

When following Tapaleao's view on the significance of *oîkon* and his house-to-house strategy, it is possible that this strategy uses the issue of purity to speak about a much larger and more intricate issue of inclusivity or expansion beyond the boundaries of Israel. As mentioned earlier, this strategy encounters the loss of the temple and synagogues as places of preaching and teaching of Jesus due to Roman persecutions, distractions and seductions; but Jesus did not lose access to this reason. It is also enhanced by the dating of setting of this gospel in Rome around or immediately after the fall of the Temple.

The theoretical discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees about purity and defilement outside of Jerusalem and the house (Temple) is made more significant by the misunderstanding of his disciples and the understanding of a foreign Syrophoenician woman. She is not the Canaanite woman of Matthew to conjure up the idea of the 'ultimate other', but a foreigner nonetheless to make known that an outsider gets it, while those supposedly on the inside (Pharisees and disciples) still do not know the mission and identity of Jesus.

In verses 14-23, after denouncing the Pharisees in 1-13, Jesus theoretically attacks his disciples. The key words are *ἀκούσατέ* (listen) and *ούνετε* (understand). Jesus' insights counter both the crowd and his disciples. The way that the disciples asked Jesus about his parable is a good indication of their theoretical misunderstanding. Then how would this theoretical misunderstanding be resolved? Mark continues by placing a parable as a real life contextual example of the divine realm of God's kingdom as found in 7: 24-30. Mark's motif of lack of understanding in discipleship, weaves together a collection of all the small pieces that explodes on the cross and empty tomb, wherein naivety can no longer be an excuse for not knowing who Jesus Christ is. This is an outstanding feature of Mark's gospel and the ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ. The theoretical insight that is preceded by a concrete illustration. A study by T. A. Burkhill about the 'congruence of Mark 7: 24-31 suggests that the Syrophoenician woman

pericope is an illustration of defilement in verses 1-23.⁵⁴ Furthermore, he adds that a 'new doctrine is translated into action, where Jesus is practicing what he teaches'.⁵⁵

This summarises the background that establishes the time and context upon which Mark writes his narrative of Jesus Christ in order to demonstrate how this pericope (7:24-30) adds to the many contours of Jesus' character as the Messiah/Saviour of the world. The story world of this narrative unit (7:1-30) unfolds with actions and events that are riddled with gaps and uncertainties, providing a platform by which to re-read those holes through the lens of narrative criticism to further understand and highlight what the purpose or intent of this final Marcan narrative for the reader today. What is the teaching regarding the tradition of the elders? Why are there vices to conclude the earlier section and how does Jesus address those issues and any other inter-connected issues with the parable of the Syrophoenician woman? These questions will be carried forward as this thesis will now focus on what has been written about the Syrophoenician woman from the perspective of purity/defilement, healing from a distance, and coercion/seduction. This is to determine what has been said and what more needs to be said about this vital story within the Marcan Jesus narrative.

⁵⁴T. A Burkill, "The Syrophoenician Woman: The Congruence of Mark 7: 24-31," *American Theological Library Association*: 23-37.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 29.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the scholarly research on the Syrophoenician woman in reference to purity/defilement, healing from a distance and seduction. Again the questions of Jesus' actions towards this supplicant, the private audience within the *οἶκον*, and the healing from a distance will guide the review of literature. This chapter will illustrate what has been said about this story and/or character and what more needs to be said from a narrative critical perspective.

2.1 Purity/Defilement

Purity law accustomed by the Jews included that a man is defiled when eating with unwashed hands.⁵⁶ Purity, as Jesus contends is that a man can only be defiled spiritually and morally. Thus there are two kinds of defilements, the outward and the inward defilement. The outward defilement is uplifted by the Pharisees and the scribes to attack Jesus and his disciples, while the inward defilement refers to the list of vices in verses 21-23 used by Jesus to demonstrate the lack of understanding in his disciples. After attempting various, though similar, interpretations on Mark 7: 1-30, it is clear that Jesus does not manipulate the purity law but sharpens it, as with the Greek word *κοινῶς* which is translated *unwashed* in the NRSV. This helps as a starting point.

According to Bruce, in his comparative study between Matthew and Mark on the same account, *κοινῶς* is translated 'profane',⁵⁷ similar to 'unwashed'. He identifies it as the Jewish ancient custom of purification starting from the fist, then dipping and the bathing of the whole body.⁵⁸ This is known as outward, ceremonial or ritual purity. About verses 14-16, he states 'the ceremonial defilement with unclean hands is done away and a foreign thought is introduced'.⁵⁹ The foreign thought, Bruce claims, is

⁵⁶NRSV: Mark 7: 2

⁵⁷Rev. Alexander Balmain. Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. M. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1990), 386-87.

⁵⁸Consult my writings on the Mishnah - The Jewish Literature.

⁵⁹Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, 388.

Jesus' list of vices in verses 21-23 called the 'moral sphere'. The moral sphere refers to corrupt and impure matters issuing from within the body.⁶⁰ In his concluding statement, these unwanted attributes 'cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration circumstances not mentioned in the narratives'⁶¹, such as this Syrophoenician account. In comparison with the Matthean account, the disciples want Jesus to dismiss the woman and avoid any confrontation/contact. This is not recorded in Mark and provides a point of interest to determine why Matthew felt he needed to have the disciples present and involved in the meeting. Was there a controversy during Matthew's writing of his gospel concerning Jesus' secret meeting in a foreign *oikía* with the Syrophoenician woman? My exegesis will try to explore this issue further.

Along the same line, a comparative study by Hugh Anderson supports the concept of defilement and moral proceedings from within the person's being as induced by Bruce.⁶² The moral proceedings used in his analysis answers the misunderstanding of the disciples in verse 18. This lack of understanding leads to the idea that the story of the Syrophoenician woman 'could only appear to be defiled in the Jewish eyes.'⁶³ Anderson states a 'new way and the new dispensation of Jesus',⁶⁴ using the list of vices, similar to the 'foreign thought' imposed by Bruce. This study is on Jewish legalism, denoting verses 1-23 the 'old day of the law' and the account of the Syrophoenician woman as a 'new day of freedom'. Furthermore, he states 'barriers of legal righteousness are broken down'. One thing worth noting is that Anderson describes the new dispensation of Jesus as the 'ethical responsibility'.⁶⁵

In the same vein, a literary study by William L Lane demands internal purity, denoting the 'capacity for fellowship' with God.⁶⁶ This is similar to the 'foreign thought' of Bruce and the 'ethical responsibility' of Anderson. To strengthen his view on the 'capacity for fellowship', the 'sexual sins' in the list of vices is heavily emphasised. At the end, it is presupposed, that Mark places the episode (Syrophoenician

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., 390-91.

⁶²Hugh Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark* (London: Marshall, Mogan & Scott Publications Ltd, 1976), 188.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 188.

⁶⁶William L Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 258.

woman) immediately to provide a concrete disregard of the scribal concept of defilement, the outward purity.⁶⁷

A couple of decades later, James R Edwards in his narrative analysis of Mark 7, shows the contrast between the story of Pharisees with the law, and the story of a non-Jewish woman without the law.⁶⁸ He then offers three points to describe the term dog.⁶⁹ Firstly, if the Syrophoenician episode juxtaposes the previous controversy with the Pharisees, then Mark's Jesus regards the woman as 'an unclean dog'.⁷⁰ Interestingly, Edwards imagines how Jesus opposes the defilement in the Jewish law in 7: 1-23 while preserving it still, in his contact with the Syrophoenician woman. Secondly, the use of the Greek term is in its diminutive form, meaning that Jesus did call her a dog but not in a diminutive meaning. Lastly is its significance in traditional distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles.⁷¹ The naming of the woman as 'an unclean dog' indicates a contact that highlights 'ethical responsibility' and 'capacity for fellowship'.⁷² Edwards concludes that Jesus finally treated the woman, not as a dog but as a child in order to participate in God's rule over the nation.⁷³ Did Jesus heal the woman because he wanted to illustrate 'ethical responsibility' and 'capacity of fellowship' to his misunderstood disciples?

Similarly, Robert A Guelich conducts a narrative analysis on Mark 7, with particular emphasis placed on his definition of purity (verses 1-23) and the Syrophoenician woman (verses 24-30). By defining purity, he attempts to find the 'consequence' of eating with defiled (*κοινῶς*) hands. However, he finds, that it 'has no consequence', instead, 'evil thoughts, attitudes and conduct emerge from within one's heart' makes an individual 'defiled or unworthy of a direct relationship with God'.⁷⁴

⁶⁷Ibid., 259.

⁶⁸James R Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 216.

⁶⁹Ibid., 220.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²My search on seduction of Jesus still asks why Jesus uses the term 'dog' in his reply. It is not known whether Mark softens it in its Greek diminutive form if Mark uses it for a strong purpose. This would be proven in my exegesis but I have noted that Alexander Balmain Bruce suggests that this account cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration things that are not mentioned in the narrative. Edwards imagines that Jesus regards the woman as an unclean dog. The list of vices describe unclean things. For me, there is a possibility that Jesus has been seduced or coerced to grant healing.

⁷³Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 222.

⁷⁴Robert A. Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," in *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David A Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1989), 380.

This highlights, defilement of a man's heart has a determining consequence. In his verse-by-verse analysis, it is found that Mark makes two arrangements: the removal of defilement and the depiction of lack of understanding in the disciples.⁷⁵ Added to this, Guelich claims, Mark locates the issue of defilement 'just prior' to the story of the Syrophoenician woman.⁷⁶ The second arrangement positions the disciples in a 'private' contact with Jesus instead of 'the crowd'. As a result, the placement of the two episodes allows the disciples to 'act as a foil' in Mark's theme of discipleship.⁷⁷

Overall, my own assessment is that the practice of defilement in the Syrophoenician woman's episode and the theme of discipleship, are related to 'ethical responsibility' and 'capacity of fellowship'.⁷⁸ In essence, being ethically responsible in fellowship with God is where God, through Jesus Christ, offers healing, as part of His universal ruling.

2.2 Healing from a distance

The original question about healing from a distance revolved around Jesus' actions to grant the Syrophoenician woman's request from within a house (*εἰς οἰκίαν*) and at a distance from the child in need. Although the traditional interpretation of this episode is God's universal ruling, it still begs attention as to why Jesus rarely used such a method of healing. Furthermore, why does it only occur for two non-Jewish supplicants?⁷⁹ For Jesus, in his humanity and given his Jewish identity, why did the healing from a distance take place? He already crossed the threshold of defilement and ritual purity by crossing over into foreign territory and into a foreign *οἰκίαν*. Why not just continue in his opposition to the tradition of the elders by providing his reinterpretation of the purity law? This section will look at these questions and what scholars have done with this issue during Jesus' earthly ministry.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶ I would rather say that the context of the Syrophoenician woman is the practice of Jesus' theoretical list of vices.

⁷⁷Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 381.

⁷⁸Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," 36. The story of the haemorrhaging woman is another reference to ritual contamination. Bodily purity is not a criterion for followership.

⁷⁹Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 382. The healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-10, Luke 7: 1-10 and John 4: 46-54. Scholars designate this type as a miracle story with a missing healing act, miracle story with a dialogue added, an act of healing itself or a distance healing narrative.

Guelich's form-critical analysis finds that the healing from a distance could be a 'coincidence' taking place 'for purity reason'⁸⁰, suggesting that the episode has no place in the formal pattern of the narrative but only fits in the content of the story.⁸¹ In other words, the healing from a distance was a book-end conclusion to round out the narrative by returning to the topic of purity.

However, Lander E Keck argues that the healing from a distance was Mark's way of showing that Jesus 'never preached in the Gentile cities' or 'to demonstrate that Jesus did not violate purity rules'.⁸² This argument is based on the healing as 'her victory' after Jesus loses a 'verbal sparring match' with her.⁸³ It is a confirmation that Jesus was still ritually pure by not coming into contact with the sick child, but what about the contact with the foreign Syrophoenician woman in a foreign house? Would that not have defiled Jesus?

In addition to this, Hugh Anderson describes verses 29-30 as a 'miracle story' and the effect it provides. It seems that he dwells on the statement made by Jesus in verse 27, rather than the healing in verses 29-30. His emphasis is on the issue of Jew-Gentile relationship. According to Anderson, this miraculous healing from a distance is an unnecessary act by Jesus.⁸⁴ However the traditional view says if it was not a miracle, the divinity of Mark's Jesus could not be realised; hence, God's universal ruling is misinterpreted. But to Anderson, there is 'no hint' 'nor is there any indication' of Jesus' mission beyond boundaries in this particular context.⁸⁵ The healing, in fact, was not about 'Jesus' supernatural knowledge' but a 'miracle of healing from a distance' to affirm God's gracious love to everyone.⁸⁶ Yet it still lies in the open that the humanity of Jesus could have an important issue in relation to 'ethical responsibility' and 'capacity of fellowship', and the theme of discipleship that Jesus wanted to show to his misunderstood disciples.⁸⁷ Thus the humanity of Jesus could also be an alternative

⁸⁰Ibid., 383.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Leander E Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles on the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 609.

⁸³Ibid.; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 222.'...she has struggled, contended and sparred with Jesus...'

⁸⁴Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark*, 189.

⁸⁵The Syrophoenician woman episode. Mark 7: 24-30.

⁸⁶Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark*, 191.

⁸⁷Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, 390.'...he hope to get some uninterrupted leisure....eis oikian-is considered as Christ's desire for privacy...desires to be private...'

possibility why he granted the healing from a distance, through a pagan woman who acts as a vehicle to his universal ruling.

Thus based on the afore mentioned studies, the healing from a distance served the Marcan Jesus' characterisation as a divine, ritually pure, and compassionate healer. Furthermore, it served to address a much larger issue, 'universalism', wherein the people of God were not confine to an ethnic or religious affiliation, but rather those whose faith transcends boundaries (ethnic, religious, and gender).

2.3 Seduction/coercion

The traditional understanding of seduction is 'to lead astray in order to engage into illicit sexual activities'.⁸⁸ My intention here is not to discuss nor elaborate on sexual acts, but rather to explore and unpack other means or methods by which one leads astray, seduces, and/or coerces.⁸⁹ According to an article written by Lillian M. Nutu:

It is not the written word, 'the dead and rigid knowledge shut up in biblia, piles of histories, nomenclatures, recipes and formulae,' as Derrida volunteers, but the spoken word, the Logos, the reason, the wisdom, that comes forth and through the veil of written paper; and it is precisely the dynamics of these relationships, that between speech and writing and that between text and reader that preoccupy me here and that entice me to a good chase...What is clear to me is that all genesis seduces...with the promise of a good story. Everyday language is indeed far from innocent or neutral. It is the language of Western metaphysics, and it does carry with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics, which, although little attended to, are knotted in a system.⁹⁰

In collaboration with Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes, Nutu demonstrates how words can seduce another's behaviour to act and respond. It is this means and method that piques the interest in this pericope wherein Jesus' and the Syrophoenician woman's

⁸⁸ Goodfriend, "Prostitution," 509.

⁸⁹ Robert Greene, *The Art of Seduction* (London: A Joost Elfers Book, 2001). Greene offers a variety of descriptions. On page 67 he suggested that seduction is the ability to delay satisfaction. The seducer is thus called 'The Conquette'. These are masters of the game, orchestrating a back and forth movement between hope and frustration. On page 79 he called the seducer The Charmer with the idea that charm is seduction without sex. Greene's other focus was The Seducer's Victim. To seduce is to enter the victim's spirit (page 219) and to create suspense (page 241). To enter the spirit is to play by their rules, enjoy what they enjoy, adapt yourself to their moods. To keep them in suspense is to lead the seduced along and create a calculated surprise by giving the victim a thrill with a sudden change of direction.

⁹⁰ Liliana M. Nutu, "The Seduction of Words and Flesh and the Desire of God: A Poststructuralist Reading of John 1:1, 14 and *The Pillow Book*," *Biblical Interpretation* 11 no. 1 (2003): 89.

interaction demonstrates how she seduces/coerces/leads Jesus astray from action expected of his Jewish understanding of ritual purity in order to grant healing; whether in person or from a distance.

2.4 Contextual views

A hermeneutical reading of Mark 7: 24-30 by Latu Foti Afioga, seeks to explore the relationship between Jesus and the Syrophoenician, with his Samoan understanding of the brother-sister relationship (as hermeneutical lenses).⁹¹ His hermeneutic is used together with socio-rhetorical criticism as his method of interpretation. Consequently, he asserts certain things: The text is 'problematic for me as a *tuagane*', 'women's mistreatment', 'philosophy of overcoming various obstacles', 'heroic Syrophoenician woman', 'attitude that is subversive towards women', 'inequality' and so forth.⁹² He concludes that Jesus is very abusive.

Furthermore, Fatilua Fatilua explores 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 using socio-rhetorical criticism, to understand the relationship between the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) and the Courts litigation.⁹³ The focus is mainly on resolving internal disputes within the church, as the church has the capacity to do so. He reasoned it through Paul's challenge to the Christian community in Corinth, and using the Samoan concept of '*soalaupule*' as a social-cultural value for an open dialogue, giving an opportunity for everyone to be heard. The court appears to be the context of the minority and the marginalised to have an equal voice in any conversation.

2.5 My analysis

There were no scholarly studies that looked primarily at seduction as a possible event which transpired in this interaction. The majority of articles looked at purity, healing, and universalism as the underlining theme in this interaction. However, there was one interaction, between Jesus and the woman at Bethany (14:3-9), which alluded

⁹¹ Latu Foti Afioga, "A Tuagane Reading of Jesus' Conversation with the Syrophoenician Woman: Mark 7: 24-30" (Malua Theological College, 2016).

⁹² Ibid., 46-47.

⁹³ Fatilua Fatilua, "The Church and Court Litigation: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11." (ibid.).

to a seductive act.⁹⁴ Such a reading was based on the woman's actual touching and anointing Jesus, whereby seduction falls within the realm of physical or sensual/sexual contact. However, this section will reinforce other forms of seduction by which words have the power to seduce/coerce and/or alter a prior understanding. The hermeneutical reading by Afioga does not also give any indication of seductive force by the woman. It is because he labels Jesus 'abusive', who exhibits an attitude that is rebellious to women. Yes he is right; however, the Syrophoenician account as a whole, is a healing pericope which is not abusive to women. Jesus' abusiveness can only be possible in the idea of sparring to counter any seductive action.

The 'verbal sparring' referred to earlier in this paper represents a starting point that needs to be unpacked. To 'spar' requires two or more individuals. Thus, the verbal altercation indicates an intense and heated dialogue, discussion, and conversation between two or more people. The purpose serves to convey a point of view or perspective which one deems to be correct or the way things are done. It is my view that the Syrophoenician woman's narrative is an example of a form of seduction or coercion.⁹⁵ By 'verbally sparring' with Jesus, she pleads her case and does whatever she believes humanly possible to receive healing for her ill daughter.⁹⁶ Thus I will take a closer look at this conversation in the exegesis section, premised on the idea of purity and defilement with a list of vices in order to determine why the conversation was so heated. Furthermore, to persuade is to convince, to seek favour, cause to yield or to lead to a firm conviction. Additionally, it means 'deceit' and is found in the list of vices in Mark 7:21-23.⁹⁷

In addition, as already mentioned, we are not told of the dialogue between Jesus and the woman. However, there are two noteworthy points: they were alone in the

⁹⁴ Gaye Strathearn, "Simon and the Woman Who Anointed Jesus' Feet.," *Religious Educator* 5, no. 2 (2004): 43-51.

⁹⁵ Peter Carell, "Beyond the Word of a Woman: Recovering the Bodies of Syrophoenician Women," *Colloquim*, no. 42 (2008): 106-08. 'the deft craft of her answer'; Nutu, Liliana M Nutu, "The Seduction of Words and Flesh and the Desire of God: A Poststructuralist Reading of John 1: 1, 14 and the Pillow Book," *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2003): 92. 'seduction is power of words, their efficacy'. Nutu quotes Barths view on seduction in that 'the word and the wisdom assume a material body as an instrument of communication'...Nutu adds that 'text' is a mean of seduction.

⁹⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction: New World Perspective* (Montreal: CTheory Books, 2001), 19. '...winning strategy of challenge is a form of seduction...'

⁹⁷ Ibid., 10, 47. 'seduction is evil, deceitful, spontaneously intelligent, need not be demonstrated' Baudrillard asserts that 'instead of sexual endowed it is gestural, sensual and ritual game; more singular and sublime than sex. She called this Transvestism.

house, and she used a form of argumentation that was subtle and not argumentative to persuade, 'coerce' or 'seduce' Jesus.⁹⁸ Arguably, it can be viewed in a variety of ways, with seduction being a possible interpretation.⁹⁹ If we look at the narrative (7:1-30): a theoretical point (1-23) with a practical example (24-30), shows a compassionless Jesus interacting with a desperate woman. The means and methods by which she as a mother would go through to achieve this end have brought me to this path. A path wherein seduction becomes a viable possibility that needs to be explored further in order to provide greater depth of understanding to this pericope.

This chapter has looked at the various interpretations of the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus interaction, revealing that little if nothing has been done around the topic of seduction. The history of interpretation has revolved around the issues of purity/defilement and healing from a distance as a springboard to the much larger theme of 'universalism.' Based on this review, it appears that the seduction of the Jewish healer/Messiah/Lord/and/Savior has not found any traction. It is not the intent of this paper to answer why; however, I would like to explore this idea based on a close reading using narrative criticism to see what caused a critical Jesus to reverse his course of action and grant the healing that the Syrophoenician woman sought. The next chapter will discuss narrative criticism to demonstrate its interpretational potential for unpacking and further revealing the interaction between Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman.

⁹⁸Ibid., 2. In religion, seduction is a strategy of the devil, whether in the guise of witchcraft or love.; *ibid.*, 31. 'speaks gently or rebuke sharply for the sake of form'; Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," 36. 'clever reply.....convincing him (Jesus) to change his mind'

⁹⁹Baudrillard, *Seduction: New World Perspective*, 47. '...it is not something internal to sexuality but a circular, reversible process of challenges, oneupmanship and death.' In a similar sense, Baudrillard suggests that the 'strength of the feminine is seduction. A universe that can no longer be interpreted in terms of psychic or psychological relations, nor those of repressions and the unconscious, but must be interpreted in the terms of play, challenges, duels, strategy of appearances; that is, the terms of seduction' (7). Consider also the 'winning strategy of challenges' (19).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter offers a brief synopsis of narrative criticism and the literary elements to interpret the narrative unit, Mark 7:1-30. Although my focus will be the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus pericope (Mark 7:24-30), this chapter will establish the reach and range of narrative criticism to further unpack and reveal what occurred between a compassionless Jesus and a desperate mother, whereby a healing from a distance is what came out of the *οἰκίαν* in the foreign territory of Tyre.

3.1 Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism attempts to critically analyse series of stories. A concise description by Elizabeth Malbon, equivalent to Mark Powell, is that narrative criticism is a new biblical approach derived from literary criticism.¹⁰⁰ The widely held assertion is that it is the most prominent method to study the Gospels and the Book of Acts.¹⁰¹ To understand this criticism is to know the difference between ‘the story’ and ‘the discourse.’ The story asks the ‘what’ and the discourse asks the ‘how’ question. Together, they are integrated to give the content of a narrative wherein the story becomes the discourse or ‘story as discourse.’¹⁰²

According to Malbon most scholars of the New Testament studies ask the ‘what’ question when reading a text. For example ‘what does the text mean?’ The ‘what’ deals with the historical-source, form and redaction-criticism.¹⁰³ These criticisms are mainly of historical reconstructions of stories and by-products of the historical aspects with ‘referential meaning’.¹⁰⁴ Narrative criticism provides a new approach that side-lines the ‘what’ question and creates a ‘paradigm shift in biblical studies’ by promoting the

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Struthers. Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 23-24.

¹⁰¹ Mark Allen Powell, "Narrative Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, M.I.: Paternoster Press, 1995), 239.

¹⁰² Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 27.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 24.

internal meanings of texts over its referential meaning.¹⁰⁵ The paradigm shift is a new way of asking ‘how does the story mean?’ The final form of the text is the key to interpretation, with fidelity to the text as the core of this criticism. It deals with the text itself and the way it communicates to us. This is what Malbon calls a narrative discourse or story-as-discourse.

Malbon asserts that discourse is *how the story is told*, focusing on the beginning and ending of the narrative.¹⁰⁶ Discourse contains the literary nature of the story useful for critique. It is the interaction of the implied author and the implied reader that makes it distinctive from its content.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Seymour Chatman describes the discourse as the ‘expression’ of the narrative.¹⁰⁸ Chatman adds that discourse also refers to narrative statement that expresses questions, commands or intentional declaration. Narrative criticism contains specific elements such as implied author/reader, character, setting, plot and rhetoric which will be further discussed below.¹⁰⁹

3.2 Elements of Narrative Criticism

The following elements of narrative criticism are derived from Malbon’s model of communication as a method of approaching texts.¹¹⁰

Implied Author and implied reader

The specificity of this element is that the implied author is omniscient. He or she knows all that goes on in the story world as well as the inner-most thoughts of others.¹¹¹ Whether this is Mark, God, or the narrator, it is the character who knows exactly what will unfold with this narrative. For instance, in Mark 7: 24-30 the implied author knows why Jesus chose to leave his disciples behind and enter the *οἰκία* in Tyre. Furthermore, he also knows the faith of the Syrophoenician woman to alter Jesus’ stance and give-in to her request. The implied reader, on the other hand, is the informed reader who endures and walks away from this story with the intended affect. Whether it was to

¹⁰⁵Ibid. I am not intending to disqualify the historicity of literature but to seek possibilities to alternative readings.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 27.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New York, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 19, 151.

¹⁰⁹Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 33.; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 7.

¹¹⁰Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 27.

¹¹¹Ibid., 29.

plant the seed of universalism, to show opposition to the tradition of the elders, or to demonstrate the disciples' further misunderstanding of who Jesus was, the implied reader is to respond in a reliable manner to the story. In this interaction, the points of view of the implied author and the implied reader are equal, suggesting that there is nothing more reliable than this. However, a closer reading of the text based on the gaps within creates a suspicion as to how truly reliable the implied author is, in conveying the story if reasonable reinterpretations of the narrative can be deduced. For instance, why did Jesus leave his disciples behind and enter the *οἰκίαν* with this foreign woman, arguing one point and amending that argument in the end? Furthermore, why was he concerned with further defilement or impurity from directly touching and healing the daughter and rather chose to heal from a distance? These are the questions that will be posed and examined in the exegetical section and hopefully more light can be shed using narrative criticism.

Character

Characters are those with names, nicknames and portrayals and are known within the narratives by their words and actions. They are also recipients of what others speak to or about them. They help to unfold the plot of a narrative. In characterization by Malbon, there is 'telling' and 'showing'. Clearly emphasised, 'telling' is by the author and 'showing' is a product of a reader. Characters are also described as 'flat' or 'round', 'minor' or 'major' and 'negative' or 'positive'.¹¹² Flatness is described by simplicity, consistency, mild appearance and predictable actions and words.¹¹³ Roundness refers to complexity and the dynamics of a character often changes over time. Major and minor characters can be clearly shown by the implied author. The negativity or positivity of a character is portrayed through the interaction of major and minor characters. Although these structures are set in place to help read and identify characters, they are limiting in that some characters cannot easily be identified as major or minor and round or flat. In the story of the Syrophoenician woman, she would be considered a minor and unnamed character that interacts with Jesus, the major and round character. However, the pericope is all about the Syrophoenician woman and how she moves the story-line in order to produce her intended result, healing for her

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³ Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, 132.

daughter. For such a minor character, she seems to dominate and direct the story with Jesus. This will also be analysed and reviewed later.

Malbon identifies, for example, Jesus as the major, round and positive character in Mark's narrative. The Jewish leaders are major, flat and negative; whereas the anointing woman is considered minor, flat and positive. The disciples are round, positive and negative. The interaction of these characteristics will allow me to expand and elaborate further on what happened and how the healing from a distance came about.

Setting

As Malbon indicates, setting refers to time and space. It is the question of when and where the event takes place. It determines the reaction of characters involved in the story. Some settings give a specific location; others are connotationally symbolic.¹¹⁴ Setting constitutes social, cultural and political worlds. These worlds can be identified by the reader. Rhoads and Powell share the same information about the spatial and temporal settings of a story.¹¹⁵ Spatial setting denotes the physical background of a story. The temporal setting designates the chronological order of events. The setting and the characters work together to create the plot.

Plot

The plot, as Malbon suggests, is a derivative of the interaction between the characters and setting. In relation to these two elements, things change in time and space as we normally know in the reality of things in the modern world. Consequently, the sequence of events, the order of incidents, their duration and frequency change as well. Since there is a play between characters, there is conflict and suspense. Conflict, in Malbon's mind, is the key to the plot unfolding.¹¹⁶ The episode of the Syrophenician woman appears to be a natural conflict between the Jews and Jesus and an unusual argument between Jesus and the woman.

¹¹⁴Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 31.; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 7.

¹¹⁵Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 31.; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 7.

¹¹⁶Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 33.

To reiterate, characters, setting and plot are all elements of a particular story. From the integration of these three principles evolves the fourth and most important constituent, emphasising *story-as-discourse*, called the rhetoric.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric ‘is the art of persuasion’ or simply an art of expression.¹¹⁷ In Mark, rhetoric is narrative-based.¹¹⁸ The integration of characters, settings and the plot offer persuasive ways to read this Marcan account. The idea according to Malbon, is for the author to persuade the reader, in order for the reader to ‘understand’, ‘share’ and ‘extend’ what the author implies.¹¹⁹ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie advance their meaning by changing the ‘what’ to ‘how’, as a way not only to persuade but to ‘transform the reader or the audience’.¹²⁰ The audience is labelled as the *ideal audience* that reads a story in any respective way. In addition, there are 7 rhetorical devices, intensively employed, by Malbon to analyse story-as-discourse. These are ‘repetition, intercalation, framing, foreshadowing and echoing, symbolism and irony’.¹²¹

The use of narrative criticism will allow for a close investigation of the text in order to establish an alternative reading that looks at how this critical interaction between Jesus and a Gentile supplicant can be viewed from the lens of seduction based on the discourse, plot, characters, and rhetoric of Mark. What was said and left unsaid? What did Jesus do or not do? How has the history of interpretation confined and disguised the events within the story? The next chapter is an exegetical examination of the Jesus and Syrophenician woman pericope to determine whether or not Jesus was seduced/coerced into a healing from a distance.

I would like to offer three questions that will guide my critical exegesis: What meaning(s) is being relayed by the pericope in its final form? Does this story serve a purpose within the narrative with the preceding and proceeding stories? What lesson is taught?

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 34.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 7-13.

¹²¹ Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 34. I only indicate these for better understanding but I will not use all of them in this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

Exegesis of Mark 7: 24-30

Introduction

This chapter encompasses two parts, Mark 7: 1-23 and 24-30 as the whole narrative unit. Mark 7:1-23 is Jesus' teachings on purity, while Mark 7:24-30, the focus of this paper, is a continuation of the earlier argument with the Jewish leaders and Jesus' interaction with a foreigner with an outcome that is contrary to what should have occurred according to the Jewish tradition. I will begin with an exposition of verses 1-23 to set up the interpretation of the episode of the Syrophenician woman (7:24-30), as an integral part of the complete narrative (vv1-30). Because we are dealing with purity issues, it is significant to begin with the tradition of the elders (vv. 1-23), for it sets the stage for what was meant by purity according to the elders and how the healing from a distance as a result in v.30 is to be understood. These two issues raise the concern of whether or not Jesus was seduced by the Syrophenician woman. It was presupposed earlier that the granting of healing by the Markan Jesus is considered to be a vehicle serving purity issues in the narrative. As this paper contends, Jesus' purity from within a house (*εἰς οἰκίαν*) to expel evil reflects a pure household or church. Additionally, Jesus is being seduced or coerced in the same house (*εἰς οἰκίαν*) to grant healing. Because very little has been done on the topic of seduction, most of the work is my own findings and conclusions, based on a narrative critical reading, with references to affirm my convictions.

4.1 Mark 7: 1-23

The traditional view of verses 1-23 is the difference in interpretation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders over the tradition of the elders, especially with regards to the purity laws.¹²² Therefore the question posed by this initial section is, how does this

¹²²Ibid., 42.; Rev Ezra P Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark Ltd, 1983), 124.; Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark*, 180.

argument/discussion between Jesus and the Jewish elders impact what happens next with the episode of the Syrophoenician woman?

It is my understanding that chapter 7 continues the idea of Jesus' rejection as seen in Nazareth in chapter 6. The setting (context), plot (event), and characters involved (the crowd, Jewish leaders, and the disciples) are now being juxtaposed at the end of chapter 7 with the Syrophoenician woman-a non-Jewish woman from Tyre, outside the boundaries of Israel.

Mark 7: 1-23 sets a dual context with an argument with the Pharisees outside the house and the conversation with the disciples within the house, upon which the issue of 'purity' and 'impurity/defilement' due to unwashed hands rests. Chapter 7 starts with *the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem*.¹²³ The geographical setting as carried over from chapter 6 is in Gennesaret, located on the south of Capernaum along the Sea of Galilee (Mark 6: 53-56). Likewise, the rejection of Jesus from that earlier episode continues here with the Pharisees.¹²⁴ The second location or setting upon which the story switches over to is in verse 17, when Jesus *entered the house* (εἰσῆλθεν εἰς οἶκον). Does Mark/implied author/narrator make a shift here as a comparison with the episode of the Syrophoenician woman which also takes place in *a house* (εἰς οἰκίαν) to demonstrate that it is not from the outside, but from the inside that defiles (Mark 7:15)? The comparison of the term shows that the outcome with the disciples is the same outcome with the Syrophoenician woman, which is the demonstration of what comes out of the house or from within causing defilement. For the disciples and Jesus, their interaction led to a list of vices (vv.21-22). For the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus, their interaction led to a 'healing from distance' (v.29), which is a positive outcome for the woman and her child and all of Christianity, although it is still a continuation of the impurity that comes from within a Jewish healer to a non-Jewish supplicant.

Furthermore, when discussing the movement into the house, Rhoads, Dewey and Michie identify what is called *public and private settings*. Public settings are for the crowd while private settings are for the disciples.¹²⁵ It is my presupposition that Jesus

¹²³Mark 7: 1 (...οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Ἱερουσολύμων.)

¹²⁴Note the question in verse 5.

¹²⁵Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 70-71.

starts to move into houses, not only for a private teaching, but to also retreat from oppositional forces. Particularly in this private setting (7: 17ff), the Gospel of Mark ‘reinforces solidarity and intimacy between Jesus and the disciples’.¹²⁶ However, this idea of intimacy must now also include the Syrophoenician woman, for as the narrative progresses into a Gentile setting, Jesus also finds himself alone in a house with this foreign woman. Is Mark trying to portray her in the light of a disciple or is he continuing to reaffirm the earlier presupposition of things coming out from within which defile? We will discuss this point further as we analyse the interaction of Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman in the next section.

As mentioned earlier, setting sets the state of an event or a plot. In Mark 7: 1-23, the matter of contention is defilement (*κοινωλῆς*). The text indicates that it is the tradition of the elders that hands shall first be washed before eating. However, the correction made by the Marcan Jesus in verse 15 demonstrates that the 1st century Jewish understanding is that defilement of the person is caused from impure things from the outside going into the body.

The controversy of what defiles occurs in the land of Gennesaret as a reminder to the Jews of their purity laws. Any matter concerning purity is connected to the issue of defilement in Mark 7: 1-23. For example, the feeding of the five thousand does not say anything about purity or defilement, yet, it is possible to assume that its’ practices reflect five thousand men eating with defiled hands. After the miraculous appearances of Jesus on the sea (Mark 6: 45-52), his recognition grows regardless of impurity norms (Mark 6: 53-56). Suddenly, the Jewish leaders *who had come from Jerusalem* attack Jesus’ disciples for the violation of their tradition due to unwashed hands. The text does not say why the Pharisees and some of the scribes came to Gennesaret. Mark 7: 2 only states that *they noticed*. It is possible then, the first feeding account qualifies their journey from Jerusalem. The growing popularity of Jesus and his disciples in feeding the great crowd causes them to travel all the way from Jerusalem to defend their tradition. What initiated their defence was that *they noticed*.¹²⁷ In 1983, Ezra Gould describes this as *a desire for scrupulous observance*.¹²⁸ It becomes evident that the

¹²⁶Ibid., 71.

¹²⁷Mark 7: 2

¹²⁸Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark*, 126.

Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem, during these events of feeding, *noticed*, and then intentionally presented themselves in Gennesaret to oppose the popularity of Jesus in the nearby regions. As the traditional view clarifies, verses 1-23 is the dispute between two types of characters. These characters are traditionally referred to as either major or minor characters or the protagonist and antagonist(s) as will be discussed below.

Characters are traditionally known as the actors of a plot or events. The dispute in verses 1-23 presents 5 characters. They are Jesus, his disciples, the Pharisees/scribes/Jewish elders, the crowd and the narrator whom is traditionally believed to be the author, Mark himself. Malbon identifies the Pharisees and some of the scribes as Jesus' chief antagonists.¹²⁹ Rhoads identifies Jesus as the protagonist.¹³⁰ The disciples and the crowd are minor characters in Malbon's analysis.¹³¹ The insertion of another minor character called the Syrophoenician woman changes the whole narrative. For although she is minor according to literary designation, she is a very major character, for she leads the whole plot. Without her presence, Jesus' actions cannot be understood. Why would Jesus then leave his disciples in their *οἶκον* in order to enter alone a foreign *οἰκίαν*? To reiterate, there is a significant shift in setting from the land of Gennesaret into the house in Tyre. Characters shift as well. Although the setting, plot and characters change or evolve, the issue of impurity or defilement still remains unresolved.

¹²⁹Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 42. In the Syrophoenician account there are no antagonists. ; Barbara Ann Kipfer, ed. *Roget's International Thesaurus*, vol. 7 (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2010), 452.1, 589.6, 704.10, 07.2, 616.9, 704.10, 07.6. These are the references to define antagonist and protagonist.

¹³⁰Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 99.

¹³¹ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, 2. the study of character has raised many issues regarding the significance afforded the 'many' versus the 'one'. The 'one' is the well-defined and constructed hero or main protagonist of the story better known as the major character. While the 'many' is constituted of the remaining minor characters who enter and exit benignly but who have traditionally functioned to help the reader understand the evolving hero of the story. These 'many' characters are significant in their performative acts as they move the story along. Their roles range from long and extended characterizations and interactions with the main protagonist to brief cameo appearances, and even inferred actions. Although categorized as minor in literature, the presence of these characters within the narrative is vital to understanding the wholeness of the story. Yet, most if not many of these minor characters have been overlooked or read past because of the lack of detail, information, or even attention afforded them.

The Issue of Impurity/defilement

The heated debate between the Marcan Jesus and the Jewish authorities' concerns 'purity' (verses 1-13). This issue, according to the narrator of Mark, occurs between the protagonist Jesus and his antagonists *the Pharisees and the scribes from Jerusalem*. Although the unwashed hands of the disciples are targeted by the Jewish authorities are not the focus of the debate but are part and parcel of the Pharisees attempts to discredit and ruin Jesus' reputation as *they noticed*. The narrator leaves the disciples until their private reappearance in verse 17. The setting is remains in the land of Gennesaret, which is Jewish soil. The plot starts with the Pharisees argument of ritual purity upholding their tradition known as the tradition of the elders, when *they noticed* outward defilement through eating with unwashed hands. Here in verse 14 the word 'crowd' (*ὄχλον*) appears for the first time since the end of chapter six. At this occasion, it can be presupposed that the Pharisees are still present when Jesus corrects the issue, suggesting that Jesus wants everyone (The Pharisees/scribes/Jewish elders, the disciples and the crowd) to understand the true purity law as he understood it to be.

The issue of contention for the Marcan Jesus is moral or spiritual defilement rather than outward or ritual. In a study by Jonathan Klawans, impurity and sin are two different issues.¹³² According to Klawans, impurity is not the same as sin, for sin emerges from moral defilement.¹³³ One can be impure, but not a sinner, unless that impurity leads to a sinful act. There are two factors that support Jesus' perspective. Klawans states, 'certain sins are from morally defiling forces' (*list of vices*, Mark 7:21-22) and this is 'separate from ritual impurity' (*unwashed hands*, Mark 7:1-7)¹³⁴. Thus demonstrating the traditional understanding, Jesus does not manipulate or change the purity laws; in fact, he sharpens them.

The impurity/defilement contention is placed in a form of a parable (*παραβολήν*, v17, referring to verses 11-13). As Jesus contends in verse 14, it is obvious through the Greek term 'understand' (*σύνετε*) that the issue of purity and/or defilement is a theoretical concept needing a practical explanation for further illumination, thus the

¹³²Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2000).I thank Rev Alesana Eteuati for bringing this book into my attention. A very helpful study indeed.

¹³³Ibid., 21-30.

¹³⁴Ibid., 150.

parable about mother and father regarding Corban (vv.11-16). Moreover, this illumination moves into the *οἶκον* for a private clarification (for the disciples) (verses 17-23). In the *οἶκον*, the narrator discards the antagonists and the crowds, while setting a private location only with the disciples. The narrator does not elaborate on why Jesus needed to clarify the issue within a private setting, unless the traditional view of ‘lack of understanding’ by the disciples is being further reinforced by the narrator and Jesus, so as not to make public their disgraceful disbelief. Furthermore, in this private setting we find it clear three components of Jesus’ theory. These are the human body organs, (the heart (*καρδίαν*) and the stomach (*κοιλίαν*)), the declaration of all foods clean and the list of vices that summarises true defilement. My personal observation suggests that the narrator makes the narrative sensibly understandable in the way that the list of vices qualify the importance of the heart, so as the foods qualify the work of the stomach. The parable used by Jesus demonstrates how the internal (organs-*καρδιάί, κοιλίαν*) makes use of the external (food) as being ordinary and everyday acts. However, it is what stems from the internal (*καρδίαν*) and expressed externally through actions which produces the list of vices mentioned in verses 21-23. The point of interest here is that Jesus focuses on vices and not virtues. Therefore, when we continue the practical explanation (Mark 7: 24-30) of this theoretical act, it is best to understand that what also proceeds out of the *οἶκίαν* must also be viewed as a vice and not a virtue.

If this is the case, how are we to understand the ‘healing from a distance’ that comes out of the *οἶκίαν*? Does this plant the seed of possibility that Jesus was coerced or seduced into an unorthodox method of healing? To begin the work of answering these and other questions, the focus of the remainder of this chapter will be on my text of interest, Mark 7: 24-30. In doing so I will start in the order of elements proposed in chapter 3, the methodology.

4.2 Mark 7: 24-30

Characters

Jesus

In the episode of the Syrophoenician woman’s faith, the narrator of Mark presents two types of characters: Jesus the protagonist or the major character, and the Syrophoenician woman, who is a minor character, traditionally called the supplicant.

There are several indicators within the Greek language to characterize our protagonist, Jesus. His actions and words, what the narrator says about him and what is left unsaid, which is understood by the reader. For example: Jesus *set out and went away* (ἀναστὰς ἀπῆλθεν, v24), *he entered* (εἰσελθὼν, v24f), *he did not want anyone to know* (οὐδένα ἤθελε γνωστῶναι), *he was there* (ἦθελεν, v24f), *he could not escape* (ἡδυνήθη, v24ff), *heard about him* (περὶ αὐτοῦ, v25), *at his feet* (τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, v25f), *him to cast* (ἐκβάλλη, v26f), *he said* (ἔλεγεν, v27), *she answered him* (ἀπεκρίθη καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, v28), *Sir* (κύριε, v28f), *he said* (εἶπεν, v29)¹³⁵

Mark does not definitively identify Jesus by name. However, it can be noted that Jesus is carried throughout the narrative (from previous occasions such as the account of the Tradition of the elders) in the form of a pronoun ‘he’ or in the third person singular conjugation of the verb. His departing activities, his intentions in the dialogue with the woman and his healing from a distance describe who and what he is within the narrative: The protagonist made minor as he is forced to act and react according to the lead now afforded the minor, yet major Syrophoenician woman who leads and guides the interaction.

When this pericope begins, ‘*He set out and went away to the region of Tyre from there.*’ Here Malbon asks ‘from where?’¹³⁶ In addition, I assert why and how? In verse 24 Jesus set out and went away (ἀναστὰς ἀπῆλθεν).¹³⁷ It is clear from chapter 6 that Jesus has left the wilderness of Gennesaret and departed from there to the region of Tyre. Why? The traditional views suggest that he went there for a retreat from oppositions, for rest or leisurely activities.¹³⁸ However there is no depiction of such a view in the text.

¹³⁵ Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). The English translation is derived from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹³⁶ Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 44.

¹³⁷ The Greek verb *he set out* (ἀναστὰς) is participle aorist active masculine singular that could be translated also as *being arise*, as many other English translation connote. The words *he set out* or *arise* can only be read as the protrusion of Jesus’ divine nature; otherwise his departure was hidden. The other verb *went away* (ἀπῆλθεν) is indicative aorist 3rd person. This determines a real action in the past that can also describe the humanity of Jesus. These verbs are connected to the preposition *eis* with accusative *ta*. The Greek rule works in the way that the preposition *eis* with a dative determines a purpose. However in this verse, the preposition is connected to an accusative meaning that there was no purpose for Jesus to go there. However I can see an element of resurrection in relation to healing in this pericope. I suppose the resurrection activity converted the woman.

¹³⁸ Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes.*, 259. Jesus’ search for privacy and necessity for rest. Archibald Thomas. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark.* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), 325. ‘his purpose in going into Phoenicia was to grave a little privacy and rest’

We can deduce that what the traditional views assert describes the humanity of Jesus. Hence, Jesus gets to the Gentile region is quite obscure literally. According to the text, the distance is quite small; however, geographically, the distance is very great. From the northern parts of the Sea of Galilee to the Coast of the Mediterranean Sea, crossing Galilee and Phoenicia seems very extreme for one person to do alone, unless there was an urgent need.

After Jesus' departing activities *he entered a house* (εἰσελθὼν εἰς οἰκίαν). The verb *he entered* is also a participle aorist active verb that also describes the human side of Jesus. This can be qualified by the next set of words *and did not want anyone to know he was there* which suggests his intention. The traditional view talks about the extension of God's rule over the nation as expressed in this episode and its healing activity from the distance.¹³⁹ Why did Jesus not want anyone to know he was there, leading into his dialogue with the Gentile woman? This verse, *he arose, went away, entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there*, can be seen as additional hidden activities of Jesus.¹⁴⁰ Although it explores Jesus' humanity, it contradicts Mark's attempt to keep Jesus' divinity a secret. Thus Mark follows up with the statement, *yet he could not escape notice*.¹⁴¹ The underlying fact is that Jesus cannot hide his mission, which is to save the 'household of God,' which in this case includes the *children* and the *dogs*.

Children and dogs are intentional sayings of Jesus that illumines his other characteristics. In verse 27, Jesus is widely criticised as a result of his insulting and harsh language, especially his usage of the word *dogs* (κυναρίους). Yet, according to Malbon's characterisation, Jesus is the major, round and positive character in Mark's gospel. But as mentioned earlier, he is made minor and aside due to the narrative space asserted him within the text. How can we better understand this usage of *κυναρίους*? Traditionally, it is understood that Jesus is testing the woman.¹⁴² However, narratively,

¹³⁹Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, xiii. The title: The Importance of the cosmic Dimensions of Mark's story, says that 'Mark depicts the rule of God moving toward a universal realm encompassing all of creation'.

¹⁴⁰Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, 390. Bruce indicates that 'this almost goes without a saying'. He adds Jesus failed within Jewish territory, and intended to seek for privacy and rest. This is a picture of Jesus' human nature.

¹⁴¹Other translations took 'He could not be hid'.

¹⁴²Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark*, 136.; Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles on the New Testament*, 600.; Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 386.; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 218.; Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D Moore,

how does this fit within the unit? The discussion centres on the idea of defilement. If we take the Greek word for defilement (*κοινός*) in its feminine plural usage from Mark 7:2 ‘unwashed hands’ (*κοινᾶς χειρῶν*), then there appears to be a play on words as a rhetorical device to recall and remember how defilement and dogs are associated with impurity.

Continuing with Jesus harsh criticism of the woman, there are two coordinating conjunctions working in particular position. These are *for not* (*οὐγάρ*) and *and* (*καί*). The coordinating purpose is to reveal a strong emphasis.¹⁴³ The emphasis is placed on the fact that Jesus is providing a ‘sharp rebuke’ for a counter attack purpose. The first strong emphasis is *to take* (*λαβεῖν*), which suits the *children*, and *to throw* (*βαλεῖν*), which fits the *dogs*. A further play on words highlights the differences. *To throw* is not in line with *dogs under the table that eat the children’s crumbs*. I believe, traditionally, that crumbs only fall and cannot be thrown; otherwise it can fall and thrown in the trash. Jesus won’t take the food away, so she asks for crumbs. At this particular connotation, I presuppose that the divine nature of Jesus, which no one knows in the scope of his mission, is intended to attack from a different direction. In this rebuke, Jesus is not manipulating the Jewish purity system from his debate with the Pharisees. *To take* or *to receive the children’s food* connotes the normal Jewish practice of purity and *to throw* qualifies Jesus’ contention in verses 6-23. *To throw* connotes separation where one cannot touch the other. This implies purity. Jesus’ words serve two things: first it is his sharp rebuke and second is his clarification of the purity law. Thus Jesus demonstrates purity through his counter attack of the Syrophoenician woman.¹⁴⁴ However, as we continue to fill out and reveal the character of the Syrophoenician woman, she was not

"Introduction: The Lives of Mark," in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 190.; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes.*, 262. Many interpreters suggest that it is Jesus’ ‘sharp rebuke’, ‘flat refusal’, a ‘pejorative expression’, ‘wrestling scope of his mission’, ‘harshness and insensitivity reluctant act’, ‘ironical conformity’

¹⁴³Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 107.

¹⁴⁴Poling Sun, "Naming the Dog: Another Asian Reading of Mark 7: 24-30," *Review and Expositor*, no. 107 (2010): 389. The article is a feminist defense. Sun indicates that naming the dog does not refer to the Syrophoenician woman as such but the power and domination she embodies. No wonder Jesus makes a sharp rebuke. Another way to look at is the granting of healing as the revelation of Jesus’ power to overcome the Syrophoenician social, political and religious power. Yet we can see some forces of seduction according to Sun.

going to leave without the appropriate response of 'healing' for her daughter. She will do whatever it takes to ensure the well-being of her daughter.

Syrophoenician woman

The Syrophoenician woman is characterised as the minor character of the episode, yet she drives and moves the story forward based on her actions, her response and her refusal to leave without the healing from Jesus. She is characterised as *A woman who has a demonised daughter, who heard about him, came and bowed down at his feet, a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin, begged him, answered him and went home found her daughter cured.*

According to her description, she is a Gentile or non-Jew from Tyre. Her identity reveals that she is a pagan. Her demonised daughter adds further support of her paganism, describing her as impure and pictures her marginalisation.¹⁴⁵ However, it cannot take away the fact that Jews also have demons as found in the Gospels. According to Robertson she is identified as a 'Greek in religion, a Syrian in tongue, a Phoenician in race'.¹⁴⁶ This identification is supported by Mark's opening remarks: Tyre (*Τύρου*) in verse 24, then follows with *unclean spirit* (*πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον*) in verse 25. This means that Tyre is unclean or possessing unclean spirits. Immediately in telling the story, the word *now* (*δὲ*) emphasises what is to come next. Verse 26, provides a clear profile of the woman, illustrating the social, political and religious influences on this woman. Tyre is understood to be a pagan or promiscuous city: socially, politically and religiously.¹⁴⁷

The woman's actions exemplify her realities as mentioned above. *She came and bowed down at his feet* (*ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ*). The word *she came* is participle aorist active. It can be translated as *she appeared*, in the sense that this verb cannot work alone unless she has another work intended to fulfil why she appeared to Jesus. It is interesting to note how the narrator puts *ἀλλ' εὐθὺς* to begin

¹⁴⁵Stuart L Love, *Jesus and Marginal Women: The Gospel of Matthew in Social-Scientific Perspective* (Oregon, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009).

¹⁴⁶Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark.*, 326.

¹⁴⁷Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus.*, 203.; Goodfriend, "Prostitution," 509. Tyre is described in Isaiah 23: 15-18 as a great commercial emporium, likened to a whore and her profits called 'a harlot's hire'. The motive behind this is its commercial trading where prostitution is such a commercial act. It is likely that the Syrophoenician woman at this respect appears to be a prostitution; otherwise she presents prostitutional acts to gain profits.

verse 25, so that actions belonging to this verse are strongly done in an immediate fashion.¹⁴⁸ In one way or another, *she immediately came* and *she immediately bowed down at his feet*. The woman is the one to initiate contact with Jesus. This reaffirms the centrality of this minor pagan character to guide and lead the interaction with Jesus. Furthermore, she was going to do everything and anything that she knows of in order to find healing for her demonised daughter. There is no indication that Jesus touched the woman. But the point to be made is not to uphold Jesus' purity or continue the theological argument of Jesus being undefiled. Rather, the point here is to maintain the theoretical argument that Jesus made earlier. It is not what goes in that defiles. Jesus is the Jewish healer, the Messiah. His entrance into the house did not defile the house. Therefore, the point here is the maintenance of his earlier argument, with the conclusion being it is what comes out of the house that defiles. This is the point of contention, where what comes out is a vice and that vice is what I believe to be coercion, deceit or seduction that leads to the 'healing from a distance.'¹⁴⁹

In addition, the woman begs for help. Either she evades or entreats Jesus in order to gain her profits (her demonised daughter).¹⁵⁰ The fact that the woman acts before she replies to Jesus' sharp rebuke gives an idea that she tries in a very subtle way to persuade/deceive Jesus. This possibly explains Jesus' harsh criticism and treatment of the Syrophoenician woman as a way to prevent her from succeeding. However, the woman's masterful response to Jesus' criticism by turning the dog metaphor back onto him, demonstrates the balance of power between Jesus' status and that of this foreign woman.¹⁵¹ How is this to be understood in the progression of the story? In their dialogue, she wins the 'verbal sparring match'. She is clever to consent her actions (v25) in her reply. The reply begins with paying obeisance using *sir* (κύριε) vocatively,

¹⁴⁸Despite this Markan device (kai euthus).

¹⁴⁹W. E. Vine, "Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words," in *Vine's complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament*, ed. Merrill F. Unger and Jr William White (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1996). On page 151 see different meanings of 'deceit'. See also on 'deceiver' where it is defined as 'seducing'. Consider also page 556 for the meaning of 'seducing' in relation to 'deceit'. On page 285, the word 'guile' has relative meaning with 'craft, deceit, subtlety'. The 'craft' and 'craftiness' will also help to define more about deceit. The word 'subtle' as used in my exegesis is also found here, which I believe is another form of seduction as I contend.

¹⁵⁰Barbara Ann Kipfer, ed. *Roget's International Thesaurus* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010), 368.7, 440.11. The definition of 'evade' is to 'lead one a chase or merry chase' or 'lead one a dance or pretty dance'. This is parallel to 'seduction' where one leads another astray.

¹⁵¹Jennifer A Glancy, "Jesus, the Syrophoenician Woman, and Other First Century Bodies," *Biblical Interpretation*, no. 18 (2010): 361.; Surekha Nelavala, "Smart Syrohoenician Woman: A Dalist Feminist Reading of Mark 7: 24-31," *The Expository Times* 118, no. 2 (2006): 68.

then naming the dog again as the affirmation of her power. Thus, the reply, to me, typifies her openness, determination, personal standing, political control and competence to *eat the children's crumbs under the table*. While the dialogue illumines the interaction of two characters, my next step is to identify when and where the interaction takes place.

Setting

The setting of this episode follows immediately after the discussion of defilement in verses 1-23. However, it is obscure in the way that there is no specified point of leaving because in verse 17, Jesus *entered a house* (εἰσῆλθεν εἰς οἶκον), and the episode of the Syrophoenician woman opens with *from there* (Ἐκεῖθεν) (v24). Jesus also sets out suggesting that he is leaving. I will look on three types of setting to overcome this obscurity. These are *spatial*, *temporal* and *social setting*.

The spatial setting identifies the physical environment of a story that interacts with characters. Based on the narrative there are two physical settings. In verse 17, Jesus is in an οἶκον with his disciples in Gennaseret, while in verse 24, he is in an οἰκίαν with the Syrophoenician woman. The point of interest are the terms for house. In Israel, he is in a masculine home, but outside of Israel, in Tyre, he is in a feminine home. I suggest that the woman is the head of the household. Furthermore, while in Israel, he is surrounded by his disciples, but outside of Israel, in Tyre, he is alone with a foreign woman. Thus the juxtaposition of settings feed into the narrative that something peculiar/unusual is about to occur.

In terms of temporal setting, the event in its chronological order is only identified by the word *immediately* (εὐθύς) in verse 25. However, if he were to consider the geographical distance between this short narrative movements of Jesus, the temporal setting can be assume few days, weeks or even month on foot, because Jesus moved from the Northern Sea of Galilee in Gennaseret to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Tyre. Although the narrative glosses over this important issue, it is noteworthy to demonstrate that the chronological time of Jesus' travel alone speak volumes of the importance of getting to Tyre, as proof of his theoretical argument of 'in and out.' It is not what comes in that defiles; rather, it is what comes out. This temporal setting could be addressed on many levels based on the text of issue, however, the point to be made

here is that the compacted time is to illustrate the distance between ‘understanding and mis-understanding’ Jesus’ teaching.

Apart from spatial and temporal setting, social setting can be indicative of the way Jesus and the woman interact especially the actions and words that preferably characterize her. Social settings include ‘cultural patterns’.¹⁵² According to Malina, these patterns are known by the social interactions of different individuals not of the same identity. The interaction can be best known in terms of conflicts.

As described earlier, the underlying attitude of Mark 7: 1-23 is the conflict between Jesus and his antagonists uplifting their tradition of unwashed hands. The conflict is clear in the way the narrator narrates his story. Perhaps the conflict is set in and on Jewish soil. However, in the episode of the Syrophoenician woman, the narrator of Mark puts Jesus in a house in the Gentile region, where conflict works both ways: the matter of conflict moves beyond Jewish boundaries and yet the conflict is resolved therein. Within this house, as I generally suppose, the woman, who is the minor character in Mark’s narrative, *came and bowed down at his feet*- (ἐλθοῦσα προσ έπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, verse 25b) and *begged* (ἡρώτα, verse 26b). Her actions and words are taken by Malina as part of her social situation that describes what are called ‘The patronage system in Roman Palestine’ and ‘Honor and shame culture’ in the first century Mediterranean world.¹⁵³

The patronage system, according to Malina and Rohrbaugh, is part of the 1st century Mediterranean world where ‘recourse for favors’ between a ‘low-status’ person called ‘client’ and a ‘well situated’ person called ‘patron’ is met. The patron grants favor according to the need of the client, under the condition the client has to pay in return for the patron.¹⁵⁴ The particularities, therefore, are God the patron, Jesus the

¹⁵²Bruce J Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Kentucky, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), Revised and Expanded, 27.

¹⁵³Bruce J Malina and Richard L Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 235-37.; Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 27.; Glancy, "Jesus, the Syrophoenician Woman, and Other First Century Bodies," 352.

¹⁵⁴I strongly urge to consider the intricate explanation of this system by Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992. The system evolved during Roman invasion of the Palestinian world. It was spread rapidly in the many reaches of the Roman world and into Syria. It became an institution of obligations that runs the Palestinian living. I believe the Syrophoenician woman learned how 'she came and bowed down to his feet and begged' Jesus for favor.

broker and woman the client.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the system of 'recourse for favors' can be seen in the episode of the Syrophoenician woman.

As noted, Jesus entered a Gentile house alone, and immediately a woman approached him for a favor. It seems likely that the woman's actions spoke of her background as someone knowledgeable, educated, and aware of socio-cultural interactions, such as the patronage system. When considering Jesus and his crossing of the Jewish purity boundary by entering an *οἰκίαν* in a pagan region, his sharp rebuke in verse 27 and his granting of 'healing from a distance' in verse 29, I deduce that he is fulfilling the patron's (God's) need, which is the universality of God's divine ruling and authority. The Syrophoenician woman uses the patronage approach in verses 25 (her actions), 28 (her faith) and 30 (her assurance) as a way to pay Jesus back. Consequently, as the question of this thesis beckons, it is conceivable that the woman took her understanding of this patronage system to deceive/coerce/seduce Jesus, in order to grant healing for her demonized daughter. She did Jesus a favor¹⁵⁶ which was rewarded by the healing from a distance, thus fulfilling the requirements of this traditional system of the 1st century. The

Plot

The plot asks the what and why questions: what happens and why?¹⁵⁷ These are the two leading questions to determine the plot of the narrative unit that was selected, Mark 7: 1-30, with a focus on the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus in Mark 7: 24-30.

The overall plot of 7: 1-30 regards the question of what defiles. Jesus provides his response and uses two parables to explain his reasoning. The first is the Corban issue (7: 9-13) with the parents and the second is the Syrophoenician woman (7: 24-30). In the end, the story concludes with a healing from a distance. However, this healing must be understood within the context of the narrative unit. If it is considered as a whole, what Jesus did for this foreign woman and her daughter must be understood as a

¹⁵⁵Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 236. "Patrons were powerful individuals who controlled resources and were expected to use their positions to hand out favors to inferiors based on friendship, personal knowledge, and favoritism. Brokers are mediated between patrons above and clients below. Access to patrons is controlled by Brokers who mediated the goods and service a patron had to offer. Jesus acts as a broker. Clients were those dependent on the largesse of patrons or brokers to survive well in the system"

¹⁵⁶Bowing, hospitality and most important was her sayings (logos). the determination of faith.

¹⁵⁷Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 32.

vice and a cause of what defiles. To further understand this point, let us now look at the text of interest, 7: 24-30.

What happens in the Syrophoenician episode? Jesus left the *οἶκον* in Gennesaret and entered an *οἰκίαν* in a pagan region to dialogue with a pagan woman. The woman begs Jesus to heal her daughter and was granted this healing. The cleverness and wit of the woman leads to the granting of her request of healing for her daughter from a distance. The woman goes home and finds her child cured.

In verse 24 it says, *from there* (ἐκεῖθεν). From where? The setting clarifies that it is from within a house situated in Jewish ground (Gennesaret). His intention is to reach the region of Tyre (εἰς τὰ ὄρια Τύρου). When he arrived *he entered a house* and thought that no one had noticed; however, in the latter part of verse 24, Mark states, “*Yet he could not escape notice.*” The pronoun *he* depicts that he is alone. However he cannot be hid.¹⁵⁸ The narrator then connects verse 24 and 25 by a *coordinating conjunction* ‘but’ followed by ‘immediately’ (ἀλλ’ ἐὺθὺς) as a way to hurry the story to the next point of interest and not to dwell on the question of why he was alone and in a foreign woman’s house in foreign territory. This implies that the actions made by Jesus in his departure are coordinated with the actions of a pagan woman in the proceeding verses.¹⁵⁹ Thus aiding in the view that the coordination played in the favor of the woman to ensure she would receive what she is searching for. For Jesus is in foreign territory in a foreign woman’s house now playing for her rules.

In *a house* (εἰς οἰκίαν) the woman acted first (v25b and 26b) and was sharply rebuked by Jesus.¹⁶⁰ Note how the narrator inserts the woman’s identity before *she begged* (ἠρώτα) Jesus for a favor. But the word *begged* is used in Mark twice,¹⁶¹ which I believe is in the context of a patron-client system. In that sense, it is presupposed that

¹⁵⁸As I mentioned in the character's part, it is presupposed that the last part of verse 24 (Yet he could not escape notice) could be Mark's additional work, because Jesus cannot be hid if his mission is to extend God's rule. It is noteworthy to suggest that this redaction is definitely a wise intention. Without a doubt, it serves as a transitional point made possible as an ingredient of the discourse between Jesus and the woman.

¹⁵⁹Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics* (London: SMC Press 2007), 145. Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach - Freudian: the text conveys the suppressed desires of the author as much as the intended subject matter. Marxist: the text is understood to be primarily about the economic and social circumstances of the time and place of its writing. Nietzschean: the text would tell of the author's will to power, or its suppression by the powerless.

¹⁶⁰"Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

¹⁶¹This account and in Mark 8: 5.

the word also elicits a seductive connotation, for she is alone and begs at Jesus' feet with the thought of not moving or leaving until her request is granted.¹⁶²

As she begged, Jesus made a twofold attack in verse 27. The traditional view suggests that the attack serves the advantage of the Israelites and then the Gentiles in the near future. However, the attack is an insult, as most commentators say.¹⁶³ Factors associating with this insult are *and* (καὶ), the omission of the *bread* (ἄρτον) in relation to *the children* and the word *dog* (κυνάρειος). The conjunction *and* makes the verb (ἐλεγεῖν) next to it intense. That means Jesus is not just saying but instructively said. This intensive vocalization is supported by the imperative use of *Let* (ἄφεες) in the first part of Jesus' rebuke; he not only commands but is counterattacking the words of the Syrophoenician woman through a sharp rebuke, reproach, rebuff, and the like.¹⁶⁴

In addition, the word *bread* (ἄρτον) is replaced by *food* in the NRS version; but plays an important part in the context of Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman in Tyre. I find it here in this clause that a subordinate saying of Jesus fits the subordinate place *he entered* as explained in the setting. Simply put, the word play may suggest that the work of *for* (γάρ) in accordance to *bread* insinuates that the *bread* is a possession of the Israelites. Therefore, it is not fair for it to be taken to subordinate places, like Tyre. The only possible advantage to the Gentiles and their worth in the *bread* is the occasion of the word *first* (πρῶτον). The greater assertion of Jesus' comment implies the Gentile hope with regards to the *bread* that must first fill the Israelites. Yet, it is still in suspense whether the word *bread* connotes a discriminatory act of Jesus' rebuke.

Moreover, the woman's answer in verse 28 climaxes the plot when she found the answer to Jesus' reproach. The opening remark *Sir* (κύριε), which is also translated as *Lord or master*, deserves attention. I would like to consider this as a way to describe the influence of the patronage-system in the woman. It is a method of approaching a patron because the woman only *heard about him* (verse 25) but did not experience any other interactions with the Marcan Jesus. This could be another possibility to suggest

¹⁶²Consider Footnote 147 where I define 'beg' using Roget's International Thesaurus.

¹⁶³Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles on the New Testament*, 610.; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes.*, 262.; Matthew L Skinner, "'She Departed to Her House': Another Dimension of the Syrophoenician Mother's Faith in Mark 7: 24-30," *Word & World* 26, no. 1 (2006): 16.

¹⁶⁴Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark*, 136.; Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark*, 190.; Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 386.

that the woman uses these subtle ways of approaching Jesus in order to seduce him into granting healing. Additionally, another subtle way is the repetition of Jesus' rebuke as a way to consent her wit. This verse omits *from* (ἀπὸ) in the English version and should be read as "*Sir, even the dogs under the table eat **from** the children's crumb.*" This preposition identifies seductive intention, through a seduction of words. What I mean is that the preposition refers to location. The woman does not equate herself with the children, for the children eat from the table. Rather, she accepts Jesus compassionless words and admits that she is subservient to the children, as Jesus stated with the use of the word *πρωτον*. Her seductive words brings Jesus to a halt. Did a foreign woman just best the Jewish healer and Messiah that has given the Pharisees, scribes, and elders of Israel fits with his twisting of their words?

The plot then moves to its end when Jesus grants healing under the *logos* (διὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον) situation. The preceding verse 28 concludes on a high note. Here in verse 29 that expectation is strengthened and reaffirmed. The word *logos* describes the 'all knowing' Jesus and alludes to the spoken words that brought light and life to the dark void now known as earth. The woman does not know that her sayings are a *logos* to Jesus; in fact, Jesus is the *logos*.¹⁶⁵

Verse 30 is the point of exit. The plot concludes with assurance of God's salvation to the Gentiles. It is interesting to note that the NRSV divides this last verse into three commas - *So she went home* (καὶ ἀπελθοῦσα εἰς τὸν οἶκον), *found the child lying on the bed* (εὗρεν τὸ παιδίον βεβλημένον ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην), *and the demon gone* (καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐξεληλυθός.). The first comma qualifies Jesus and this woman in a house and the satisfactory completion of her mission. The second comma confirms Jesus' *logos* physically through the healed child. The final comma can be interpreted in many ways such as the divine nature of Jesus to heal, the successful battle with demons, and/or one less obstacle to Jesus' ministry. However, I am reasserting here that Jesus concludes his parable with what defiles. As he concluded the Corban parable with a reiteration of what defiles (7:14-16), the Syrophoenician story concludes with the demon leaving or having come out of the child as that which defiles. By hurrying the mother home to bear witness to Jesus' healing miracles of her child, Mark hurries the story along to its conclusion as a way to move the discussion from Jesus' act of healing.

¹⁶⁵NRSV - The Gospel According to John 1: 1-1

But, rather focusing the attention on a demon that left this child as a religious commentary on the spiritual battles that supersedes any contextual issue regarding Jewish/Gentile relationships. This is further supported in Jesus' stay in foreign territory in 7:31-37 to heal a deaf man as well as the feeding of the 4000 in 8:1-10.

To summarize the plot, I began with the matter of contention – the purity and/or defilement issue in verse 1-23. This conflict served the theoretical purpose of the Pharisees and the disciple's misunderstanding about what really defiled. The list of vices in verses 21 and 22 answer Jesus' rebuff in verse 15. However the list is left unexplained in specificity, leaving me with more questions. Therefore, I presupposed that the narrator of Mark plotted the Syrophoenician woman integrally, as a demonstration of these vices, one in particular was deceit, which could also be understood as coercion and/or seduction. Simultaneously, not a coincidence, the theme of the extension of God's rule is thus revealed. Therefore, to demonstrate how the two need to be understood or even be compatible, the next section will look at the rhetoric employed by Mark.

Rhetorical Analysis

As mentioned in the methodology, rhetoric is narrative-based, according to Malbon. This will answer the *how does the text mean?* In other words, it is here where story is discourse, where the story provides an authorial commentary regarding an issue or perspective of importance to the reader. Elements used in rhetorical analysis focus on the literary tools to enhance meaning: repetition, intercalation, framing, foreshadowing and echoing, symbolism and irony.¹⁶⁶ Few similar approaches like *synonymous and antithetic parallelism, two step progressions, chiasm, and suspense* are worthy analytical elements of rhetoric.¹⁶⁷ I have adapted the concentric chiastic idea of rhetorical analysis from Meynet and Rhoads to create my own chiastic structure below:

¹⁶⁶Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," 34.

¹⁶⁷Roland Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis* (England: Sheffield Accademic Press, 1998), 46-49. Synonymous Parallelism is when the same sentiment is repeated in different, but equivalent terms. Antithetic Parallelism is when a thing is illustrated by its contrary being opposed to it. ; David Rhoads, "Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative Critical Study," *Journal of the American Academy of religion* 2, no. 62 (1994): 352.

- A From there he set out and **went away** to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice
- B But **a woman** whose **little daughter** had an **unclean spirit** immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet.
- C Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin.
- D She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.
- E He said to her, “Let **the children** be fed first,
- F: for it is not fair to take the children’s (bread) and throw it to the dogs.”**
- E’ But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat (from) the children’s crumbs.”
- Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go
- D’ **the demon** has left your daughter.”
- C’ So she went home,
- B’ found the **child** lying on the bed,
- A’ and the **demon** gone.

From the compartments I have made above, parallelism and antithetical parallelism is apparent in the English translation and even the original language. A, B, C, D, D’, C’ B’ and A’ are alternate sentences that surround the dialogue in E and E’, wherein F represents the thematic center of this chiastic structure.

This exercise will now focus specifically on the phrases or words underlined from the chiastic structure to support the idea that the theme of importance was not so much the faithful response of the woman and Jesus’ healing powers that save. Rather, it regarded the issue of extending Jewish salvation beyond the people of Israel and what came out of the house is what defiles in support of the Jewish idea of purity, which this narrative unit discusses and reinforces with the Syrophenician woman’s story.

A and A’ are contrasting statements, yet they speak of the idea of defilement. A - Jesus *entered a house* (εἰσελθὼν εἰς οἰκίαν) whereas A’ - *the demon gone* (καὶ τὸ δαίμόνιον ἐξεληλυθός.) refers to the exit of the demon. The fact is, Jesus demonstrates that it was not so much his entering a Gentile house which defiles, but it is what came out, a demon, which defiled the house, or in this case, the child. The entering of an οἰκίαν makes Jesus defile, due to the notions that οἰκίαν is a Gentile and a feminine house. However, the release of the δαίμόνιον from within is what matters to Jesus. I presuppose that this is what the woman is expected from the table or from εἰς οἰκίαν; the healing. The participle perfect of *gone out* conveys the completion of an action; it is

all good and done. Does this indicate to us that Jesus' mission to the Gentiles is fulfilled? I believe so.

B and B' are antithetically parallel in the way that *the little daughter had an unclean spirit* on the first occasion, while at last it was *a child lying on the bed*. Literally, it is apparent that the narrator of Mark changes the *little daughter* (θυγάτριον) into a *child* (παιδίον). The *little daughter* indicates a 'parent-daughter relationship'; whereas a *child* is in a diminutive form.¹⁶⁸ I claim that the narrator of Mark makes a distinction to illustrate how the issue of defilement progresses and is cured in this episode. According to Danker, the *little daughter* is rendered 'as an endearing term, *my little girl*'.¹⁶⁹ This is a gentle touch by the narrator specifying that the woman cares for her little daughter. The *child* is neuter denoting any child whether a male or a female. My observation is that the woman and the *little daughter* characterize a marginalized context, whereas a *child* serves as an anecdote to that marginalization. To some extent, it seems appropriate to suggest that the *unclean spirit* (πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον) qualifies the issue of contention in Mark 7: 1-13 and Jesus' moral uncleanness in verses 14-23.¹⁷⁰

In C, the narrator identifies the woman as *a Gentile* (Ἑλληνίς), of *Syrophoenician origin* (Συροφονικίσσα τῇ γένει). C' qualifies that her home is as such without renaming her home. As in the earlier case of making the character more endearing to the reader (use of θυγάτριον vs παιδίον), in the end she just returns back to that home, wherever it may have been. Actually she is not *a Hebrew, a non Israelite or a pagan, from the infamous pagan region of Syrian Phoenician*, a redundant phrase to ensure that she is a non-Israelite.¹⁷¹ Thus she is a defiled person (κοινός) or in this case a dog (κυναρίους) a beautiful play on words so as to not forget her status.¹⁷²

At the occasion of begging, D is *to cast the demon out* (τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐκβάλλη) and D' is *the demon has left* (ἐξεήλθεν ἐκ...τὸ δαιμόνιον). This part of the structure

¹⁶⁸Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 171, 263.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 171.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 12.

¹⁷¹John. Phillips, *Exploring Proverbs: An Expository Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 167.; Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Mark*, 190.; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 218.; Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 385.; Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, 390.

¹⁷²Shayne J. D Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 27-59.; Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 134.

looks at the status of the demon that was within and is now gone. The word, *to cast out* (ἐκβάλλη) is a compound verb of two words – ἐκ βαλλώ, *out* and *to throw*. There are two connotations: one connotes a degree of force and the other connotes the idea of what comes out is what defiles, due to the fact that the demon is inside.¹⁷³ This verb is subjunctive aorist, meaning the woman is begging (*to cast the demon out*) with doubt, to see if Jesus grants her favor. This idea of doubt, I believe, leads to her continual begging in order to coerce and seduce a response from Jesus, who has no other alternative but to grant the wish of this suppliant. Why can't he say no? The word *has left* (ἔξελέλυθεν) is indicative perfect verb, which indicates complete cleanness. The underlying fact here is 'healing' was a product of ἐκβάλλη. I suppose D and D' represent the struggle, whether moral, ethical, or traditional, faced by Jesus the Jewish healer at a cross roads in his salvific mission for the Jews that has now come into contact with a Gentile in need. The healing of the daughter from the demon reflects what has to come out of the *little daughter*, who exacerbates the issue of defilement (7: 1-19) and the list of vices (20-23).

The E and E' is obviously the dialogue. In this dialogue the antithesis appears to be *the children* (τὰ τέκνα) versus *the dogs* (τοῖς κυνάρσις). The *children* refer to the Jews/Israel and the Gentiles are labeled as *dogs* and they are scavengers in the minds of the Jews.¹⁷⁴ Rhoads adds that *dogs* are not in the list of clean animals.¹⁷⁵ This assertion is supported by the text on the one hand, the word *first/foremost* (πρῶτον) which marks the temporal setting, serves the advantage of the *dogs* after the *children*. On the other hand, the *dogs under the table* (ἄκυνάρια ὑπο κάτω τῆς τραπέζης) marks their spatial position, where the preposition *under* (ὑποκάτω) qualifies the location of such positions ('above' versus 'below', πρῶτον vs ὑπο κάτω).

The thematic idea of the chiasmic structure in F supports the argument being made about what defiles. It also appears to reflect a much larger communal issue at hand. For as the Marcan community expanded there must have also been a growing number of Gentiles as part of this community for such an issue to be raised. This

¹⁷³ Consider the list of vices in verses 21-23 that the Marcan Jesus is contending.

¹⁷⁴Guelich, "Mark 1-8: 26," 386.; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 219.; Rhoads, "Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative Critical Study," 352, 56. Rhoads expresses that the posture of the woman before Jesus is like what dogs do. At that expression, it shows how defiled the woman is.

¹⁷⁵"Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative Critical Study," 356.

expanding population brought into question the salvific mission of the Jewish healer/messiah that has to recognize the growing number of Gentiles. Was this thematic center a way to begin a discussion of this important communal issue by ensuring that the Jews must take precedence? Therefore, what immediately came out as a 'healing from a distance' is what defiled for the time being. But eventually, as in the rest of this healing pericope, once the children have been satisfied, then the defiled (*κοινός*) or the dogs (*κυνάρῳ*) will eventually receive their just reward.

The chiasmic structure aids in the Marcan rhetorical argument of what defiles. Jesus' use of this practical example of the Syrophoenician woman was intended to provide social commentary on the issue regarding the Gentiles place within the church/Mark's community. According to the narrative unit, Jesus' confrontation began with the discussion with the Pharisees, scribes, and Jewish leaders regarding the tradition of the elders and the concluding with the list of vices (7:1-23). From there, Jesus tells this parable of the Syrophoenician woman (7:24-30) to reaffirm his earlier theoretical argument. Based on Mark's rhetoric, the central issue with the pericope was the idea of giving the children's bread to the dogs/defiled. In other words, Jesus' healing mission was and is only for the Jews. Would that mean that the healing from a distance is a vice and should not have occurred?¹⁷⁶ This is the argument of the paper, that the intended use of this pericope within the narrative unit was a discussion of defilement. If the parable follows the argument, the healing from a distance was part of that defilement, which stemmed from Jesus' internal struggles in the *οἰκίαν* with this foreign woman who deceived/coerced/seduced him into a healing act that has been harmonized by the history of interpretation to demonstrate that salvation is now available to all.

¹⁷⁶ The context of 'healing' in its pure form is in and for the Jews alone. The traditional understanding of the Jews, as discussed earlier, is that contacts with Gentiles make a Jew defiled. Thus, for 'healing', that could be the same way. I read 'healing' as a vice according to its context in foreign land.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

In revisiting the idea of defilement and healing as found in the narrative unit of Mark 7:1-30, the main question of this paper revolved around the idea of whether an alternative reading of this text could demonstrate that Jesus was seduced/coerced/deceived into a performative act of ‘healing from a distance’ by a foreign Gentile Syrophoenician woman? Upon completion of the exegetical chapter, such a re-reading is very possible based on the textual evidences of this narrative unit. Thus, I have demonstrated that the seduction/coercion of Jesus could be one way to alternatively read this Markan episode (Mark 7: 24-30). Accordingly this chapter discusses the narrative critical work that verifies my alternative interpretation. Jesus was seduced/coerced by a pagan woman, in order to grant healing for her demonised daughter.

The narrative critical analysis began the plot with the practice of unwashed hands analogous to defilement (*κοιναῖς*). A point of interest to note here is how similar the term for defilement is to the term for dogs (*κυναρίδις*) used to describe the Syrophoenician woman. This rhetorical device of assonance or similar sounding words for recollection supports the idea that the two stories are related to one another as a narrative unit. Furthermore, Mark began the narrative unit with the issue of defilement, with the teaching of Jesus leading to a list of vices. These vices do not have the word seduction, but use a synonym, deception, with the following pericope (The Syrophoenician woman and Jesus (Mark 7:24-30)) providing the practical or concrete example of what defiles. Although the Markan Jesus used the *Corban* practice to resolve the Pharisaic practice of interpreting the law to suit their purposes, Jesus concludes his teaching with a list of vices to demonstrate what really lies at the heart of the ‘tradition of the elders.’ It is this tradition that provides a springboard to question all other tradition of the elders that re-interpret the law to suit the needs of the Jewish leaders and the Jewish nation. For example, could Jesus’ parable speak about an issue within the Marcan community that deals with Jewish and Gentile relationships, in which Mark is still in favour of Israel first (*πρῶτον*) and then the Gentiles after/below (*ὕποκάτω*)? It does not resolve the issue, but it puts into context Jesus’ words that must be understood as the beginning of the conversation on this important topic.

As the elements of the analytical process discovered, it is evident that Jesus went north without his disciples. There was no direct indication that he went for healing purposes. Jesus went from his native, masculine-dominated Jewish *οἶκός*, to a foreign, pagan, feminine *οἰκίαν*. He was no longer pure but defiled according to Jewish purity traditions. When *he went* alone in the *οἰκίαν*, he intended not to be *known* by anyone.¹⁷⁷ In the *οἰκίαν* the pagan woman acted first but Jesus initiated the dialogue in a form of a rebuff. However, the dialogue was dominated by the pagan woman. According to my analysis of the dialogue, the word *first* (*πρῶτον*) indicates that Jesus knew what was needed to be done. The follow-up question, why did Jesus not heal immediately? Jesus is a Jew and Mark's decision to create this conflict of action/inaction speaks volumes concerning an issue regarding the internal affairs of his new 'Christian' community-the faith whereby the *bread* had to be received by all those who belonged to it, according to Jesus' missionary purpose. However the *bread* was changed into a *crumb from the table* by the wit, craft and cleverness of the pagan woman. This demonstrated her awareness of the situation and not to make too much of a fuss about it, but relegated herself to secondary position with respect to her Jewish brothers and sisters *πρῶτον*. Although her cleverness was quite equivalent to the first century patron-client/honour-shame practice, it was actually a practice of seduction or coercion relative to deceit as perceived by the list of vices. As Jesus contended, it is not what goes in that defiles but what comes out is the key to defilement. Yet I do not know what the reality of the interaction was within the *οἰκίαν* in the actual ministry and life of Jesus. What is important is my presupposition of what enters and what exits the *οἰκίαν*, that qualify Jesus' true defilement. I presuppose that Jesus was ritually defiled when he entered the *οἰκίαν*; however he was not spiritually or morally defiled when healing exited the *οἰκίαν*. Although the healing took place, the matter was still in suspense because this is the only episode where the process of healing did not take place in person, but rather from a distance. Could this be an attempt by Mark to demonstrate the divine intervention that supersedes human traditions in favour of God's institution of his Kingdom on Earth? Perhaps this further solidifies the view of seduction by this Syrophoenician woman, for

¹⁷⁷Considering Mark 6: 7ff, Jesus sent out his disciples in pair of two. I am wondering why Jesus went alone and entered this pagan feminine singular house.

Jesus was deceived into a healing, however, to lessen the defilement, healed from a distance as a divine healer.

In conclusion, narrative criticism provides a viable option to explore Mark 7: 1-30. I conclude that the seduction and/or coercion of Jesus by the Syrophoenician woman to grant healing provides one of many ways to better understand this very controversial and critical view of the Jewish healer and Messiah from the lens of a Christian reader and believer. However, this is not an attempt to smear or defile the traditional interpretation already in place but to broaden the scope and understanding how these stories were sayings that the writers of the Gospels put together to craft a story which we have in the final form. Based on this final form, what can be deduced as a possible interpretation based on the sequential ordering and appearance of the stories from the beginning, middle, and end?

Based on my findings, I believe that the Bible continues to speak to us today regarding the current events affecting our churches and faith communities. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper with the problems facing the EFKS church: all the negative publicity of clerical leaders-pastors (*fai-feau*) being stripped of their ordinations as pastors; pastors suing the EFKS church; a pastor accused of sexual misconduct; as well as a pastor publicly disparaging the church leaders for their final decisions on his case. All this in sum speaks about the current condition of the EFKS household and its perception from the outside. It was this issue that drew me to the Syrophoenician woman and Jesus interaction to see how it can help to explain my current situation.

I truly believe that the church needs to emphasize healing and rehabilitation, rather than penalizing and excommunicating/exiling. Yet in the story of the Syrophoenician woman, Jesus was seduced into healing, so how could this help in my situation? To me, this is the beauty of the story. Although the Marcan community was not yet ready to universalize God's salvation/love with the world, Jesus still did the right thing and that was to heal as opposed to pushing away or ostracize. Yes, the Jews first and then others, but salvation still occurred. Rather, Jesus was right to heal. The same can be said with the EFKS household. Yes, there are rules and bylaws which govern conduct and behaviour, but as Jesus so vividly stated in the Gospel of Matthew (5:17), "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil." What is missing in the law is love. Not the love to turn a

blind eye to wrongs being committed, but the love to recognize that God's grace and mercy befall all. We are Christians not because we are perfect, but because we are redeemed by Christ to get up when we fall and to continue to promote and profess the love that has led us to this calling. Whether Jesus was seduced/coerced/deceived, he went against the grain of what tradition was telling him and stood firm and unwavering in doing the least popular thing. My hope and prayer is that our leaders to take a stand and do what is right for the betterment of our EFKS church today and tomorrow. To God be the Glory. Amen.

Appendix

Justice at last for Rev Afereti Uili, by Ilia L. Likou, 18 Jan 2017. “...last year, Rev Afereti was stripped of all his roles in the church over an allegation of a sexual nature made by a woman identified as Angeline Lesa....The decision was made (last week) to sack former Secretary of the church....the church has reinstated as a Pastor of the church..”

Toa speaks: Why I have converted to Catholicism, by Pai Mulitalo Ale, 05 Oct 2016. “...the Elders of the church are trying to stop us...and my father was instructed to distant himself from what’s going on...could not wait for the leadership of C.C.C.S to make up their minds...”

Sex allegations mediation outcome confidential, by Lanuola Tusani Tupufia, 12 Aug 2016. “...the decision they’ve (Elders) is based on their opinion that I have sinned. But I strongly reject the allegation. Not only do I reject the allegation, as far as i’m concerned, nothing has been proven...Although I have been removed from the church, it does not mean I hate the church. No, it belongs to Jesus Christ where God works through to reach people...”

Court dismisses lawsuit against Elders of church, by Lanuola Tusani Tupufia, 20 May 2016. “...Elders committee had stripped Rev Kerita of senior positions in the church...Rev Senara – I pray that the decision will help us drive the church forward towards better things...”

Church Secretary stripped of key roles over sex allegations, by Ilia L Likou, 13 May 2016. “...decision is premature. The decision is baseless...It has a huge impact on me and my family...”

Church elders defer decision, by Ilia L Likou, 20 Feb 2017. “...Rev Opapo Soana’i had been stripped of his pastoral role by the elders committee...they are giving me conflicting reasons...”

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