

A "THEORETICALLY - FOUNDED" EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE SYMBOLIC AND
METAPHORIC LANGUAGE USAGE FOUND WITHIN THE KINGDOM PARABLES OF
THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

by

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For my mother, Muniamma and
for the memory of my father, Govindasamy 26:08:26 - 30:07:85

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION : A SURVEY OF THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHODS USED
IN STUDIES OF NEW TESTAMENT PARABLES

The parables of the synoptic gospels have been of special interest to students of the New Testament because of a belief, as J. Jeremias (1954:12) stated it, that "in reading the parables we are dealing with a particularly trustworthy tradition, and are brought into immediate relation with Jesus." Since the publication of Jeremias' work in Germany in 1947, this opinion has been widely held and only in recent years have questions been raised about Jeremias' approach to parable research.

In the first chapter of this study first, the history of parable research prior to the work of Jeremias is surveyed, with the purpose of indicating the historical-critical foundations upon which Jeremias built; second, the contributions of Jeremias himself are summarised; and third, those areas in which major developments have occurred since his work appeared are examined.

1.1 THE HISTORY OF PARABLE RESEARCH PRIOR TO THE WORK OF JEREMIAS

To begin with Jeremias as a point of departure secures proper appreciation for the contributions of form critics at perhaps their most significant stage. Any inadequacies that might be

uncovered at this stage may suggest that the exegete should look beyond the methods of form criticism for further solutions to problematic phenomena in the New Testament.

From New Testament times to the Reformation, allegory in one form or another supplied the chief key for the interpretation of the parables. In the New Testament itself allegory is not commonly employed. Some allegorical interpretations are found in the epistle to the Hebrews (especially 3:1-6 and 4:14ff.) and may have been the result of Alexandrian influences. There is also an allegorical use of the olive tree in the epistle to the church at Rome (11:17ff.). The first attempts to allegorise the parables occurs in the Interpretation added to the parable of the Sower (Mk.4:1-20par.), the parable of the Tares (Mt.13:36-43), and the parable of the Drag Net (Mt.13:47-50). Much later (c.185 - c.253) Origen justified his allegorising by appeal to these examples set by the evangelists. One may also detect the beginnings of allegorical interpretation in Matthew especially in his understanding of the "marriage feast" (Mt.22) where probably "the King" represents God, and "the King's son", Christ; or in the Ten Virgins which doubtless he understood as an allegory of the return of Christ, the heavenly bridegroom (Mt.25). These instances aside, the only real allegories in the New Testament are Paul's allegories of Sarah and Hagar (Gal.4) and of the Olive Tree (Rom.11) and our Lord's tale about the Wicked Vinedressers (Mk.12). It was only natural, therefore, that the Church Fathers

would seek to deduce the full riches of the divine incarnation by the same kind of allegorical exegesis of all the parables.

In subsequent centuries, the overwhelming majority of biblical exegetes continued to "discover" in the parables hidden meanings for christian doctrine, ecclesiology, ethics, and eschatology. Only at the end of the nineteenth century was there a recognition that a historical-critical method was required if the original and proper meaning of the parables was to be discovered. It was the German scholar, A.Jülicher who first outlined a method for the interpretation of the parables as an attempt to counter the excesses of allegorisation and determined the first principles upon which later research was compelled to consider.

Jülicher's fundamental presupposition was his strictly historical-critical approach to the sources of Jesus' parables. At the very outset of his first volume (1910) he criticised the parable research of S.Göbel for failing to equate exegesis with historical work and omitting to make a clear distinction between the parables of Jesus and the parables as they were presented to us by the evangelists. In view of the present interest in the creative activity of the evangelists, it is interesting that Jülicher (1910:195) affirmed that the "evangelists were not in fact helpless compilers. In spite of all their dependence on written sources they were strongly marked personalities." Jülicher (1910:24) nevertheless concluded that

"It cannot be contested that the synoptic parables contain an authentic kernel and belong to the most certain elements and best traditions which we possess of the words of Jesus." He further added (1910:24) that there was clear evidence that the evangelists had failed to understand their original purpose. Not only did the evangelists (and their sources) engage in supplementation but in Mk.4:10-13par. they had imposed a completely alien theory about the intention of the parable method:

the interpretation of the evangelists concerning this way of speaking is undependable. The parables are in no sense obscure sayings which constantly require special elucidation. If a few of them still remain unclear to us, then the incomplete, disconnected and fragmentary tradition must alone bear the blame. A correct and completely preserved parable requires no explanatory word... for everything in it is clear (1910:24).

This view arose when the commands of Jesus were related to the division between the Jewish nation and the christian community. Jülicher (1910:147) sees the only conclusion which the early church could draw was that Jesus "spoke in parables to the hardened, Messiah-hating and Messiah-murdering Jewish people! The view of the nature of parables and the view of the nature of the

people to whom they were presented - both brought the view of the purpose of the parables."

Although Jülicher (1910:146) doubted that Jesus ever expressed an opinion on the reason for his use of parabolic speech, it was nevertheless evident from its function as a rhetorical device that Jesus found it especially suitable for enhancing the distinctiveness and persuasive power of his teaching. In communicating with all enemies, the uncommitted, zealous devotees alike - he used this paedagogical device to illustrate the unknown by the commonly known, to lead gently from the easily understood to the abstract. Having deduced that at the basis of every parable was a simile (Vergleichung), Jülicher proceeded to "discover" this common element in all parables of the synoptic gospels. Within the general "form of word-picture" (Gattung von Bilderen) Jülicher (1910:117) distinguished three major classes:

1. The similitude (Gleichnis) which contained a commonly recognised occurrence from this sphere of daily life;
2. The parable (Parabel) and
3. The example-story (Beispiel Erzählung)

The last two categories were freely invented stories; the first two categories both referred the listener to an external reality whilst the last was an illustration of a moral truth. Thus, the parable of the Good Samaritan is an example-story because it

embodies within itself an actual illustration of the principle of loving the neighbour. The parable of the Sower, on the other hand, is a parable because it is an invention and requires the notation that it is about the Kingdom of God to make sense. Whereas the story of the children playing in the market-place (Mt.11:16ff. and Lk.7:31ff.) is a similitude because it is a common daily event but also requires an application to communicate its meaning. On the basis of Greek theory, Jülicher (1910:118) assumed for the synoptic parables a principle which was to dominate subsequent research: "just as every parable constitutes a homogeneous, closed whole, so each one requires only one theme,... this one thought was a rule of ethical conduct, a moral law of the Kingdom of God."

Jeremias (1954:19) judged this three-fold distinction to be a fatal error in the work of Jülicher, albeit a serious effort to safeguard against arbitrary allegorisation. Nevertheless, as a methodological principle Jülicher's "one-point" rule was a necessary and effective corrective to previous fanciful interpretations. The historical-critical contribution of Jülicher consisted in his clarification of what he himself called Das Bild, that is, the image or symbolic aspect of the parable. The Sache or the object of symbolism, however, was left for a subsequent generation of scholars to explicate. But Jülicher recognised the communicative purpose of the parables: that is, that their images were rooted in everyday life, that they were

produced in and for the public ministry of Jesus, and that they were intended to aid understanding. Although he seemed to have been one-sided in assuming that every parable originally was perfectly lucid, he nevertheless corrected the more dangerous tendency to discover "mystery" meanings in the parables which had no relation to the historical situation either of Jesus or of the tradition.

An analysis of Jülicher's contribution convinces one of the need for a more clearly defined methodological framework which would adequately explain the symbolic language of parables. Let us now briefly consider the value of Jesus' parabolic teaching in comparison with its Old Testament and Greek predecessors and rabbinic successors. It was Jülicher's opinion that Jesus so perfected the form of parabolic teaching and so compellingly invested it with his divine message that the rabbis were forced to imitate his superior example. It was to this particular issue that P.Fiebig(1912),the next major German scholar of New Testament parables, addressed himself. Fiebig sought to strike a balance between critics like Jülicher who omitted rabbinic material to confirm that the synoptic Christ-figure was a myth invented out of contemporary traditions. He accepted Jülicher's historical-critical methodology, his distinction between Jesus' original teaching and its subsequent transmission and especially his major service in clearing away the rubble created by the

allegorising method. Fiebig's major criticism (1912:128) was that his predecessors made Jesus into

a German professor, a philosopher or educated man of the nineteenth century who lived in Germany and who was instructed more in the learnings of the Greeks than in the teaching of his Jewish contemporaries.

Jülicher therefore, he maintained, had been far too rigid in seeking only pure parables as original to Jesus and thus excluding any possibility of allegorical motifs. From Fiebig's studies it was evident that rabbinic parables consisted of short metaphorical sayings, pure parables, allegories, and mixed forms (Mischformen). However, Fiebig did agree with his predecessor that the synoptic parables had all the marks of having originated with a single creative individual. They were by no means an imitation of contemporary materials. On the one hand, they possess an ethical seriousness which is lacking in Jewish apocalyptic; on the other hand, in contrast to Rabbinic parables they are marked by an eschatological interest but lack the "exegetical trifles" (Exegetische Kleinkram) of the rabbis. Thus Fiebig confirmed that the originality of Jesus' parables lay not in their form but in their content.

Jülicher's interest in the form-analysis of the parables, and Fiebig's appeal for a greater appreciation of the role played by oral transmission in their formation, bore fruit in the work of the form critics, particularly that of R.Bultmann (1968:166-205).

Bultmann (1968:2-3) made it clear that the object of form criticism is not categorisation for its own sake but to discover "what the original units of the synoptics were, both sayings and stories, to try to establish what their historical setting was, whether they belonged to a primary or secondary tradition or whether they were the product of editorial activity." Bultmann also agreed with Jülicher's basic distinctions between the different "forms" of the parables. He further acknowledged that these boundaries fluctuate and that there is no point in debating the exact category of parables. Bultmann's analysis of certain characteristics which are typical of the parable, was of special importance. Its narrative is characterised by conciseness - only persons necessary to the story appear; and by the law of single perspective - there is only one series of events taking place at any one time. The characters in the narrative are portrayed in terms of what they do or say, rather than in terms of some attribute; their feelings and motives are mentioned only if essential for the point of the parable; secondary participants are dealt with summarily. The parables are further characterised by such features as direct speech or soliloquy, repetition, end-stress, and the antithesis of two types of character.

Much more important, however, were Bultmann's observations about the types of editorial activity which had occurred in the transmission of the parables. Firstly, many of their applications are secondary and cannot be relied upon to demonstrate their original intention. Secondly, the parables have been introduced into artificially contrived contexts or have been joined together on purely formal grounds (for example, Mk.4; Mt.13; Lk.14). Thirdly, many parables have undergone secondary expansions and interpretations as well as allegorical intrusions. This is clearly indicated by comparison with the parallel versions and by the presence of obvious ecclesiastical interests. For these three reasons, "the original meaning of many similitudes has become irrecoverable in the cause of the tradition. In other instances the general meaning is clear enough, but not the special point, because the occasion which prompted the similitude is not known" (1968:199). Fourthly, Bultmann believed that the church had, in many instances, placed contemporary Jewish parables on the lips of Jesus. He (1968:205) therefore concluded that "we can only count on possessing a genuine similitude of Jesus where, on the one hand, expression is given to the contrast between Jewish morality and piety and the distinctive eschatological temper which characterised the teaching of Jesus; and where on the other hand we find no specifically christian features." Because Bultmann's work was an analysis of the synoptic parable material itself, his first three conclusions are basically sound, but his

fourth conclusion, although possible, tends to separate Jesus' preaching too radically both from his contemporaries and from the early church.

The form critics' clarification of the Sitz-im-Leben of the parables in the early church was a necessary step in the investigation of the synoptic parable. It revealed the extent to which the transmitters of the tradition were theologically rather than historically motivated. This theological motivation rather than the form-analysis of the parable, should be regarded as their main feature.

It was largely in response to the form critics' negative estimation of the possibility of recovering the original core and specific intention of Jesus' parables that ~~subsequent scholars~~ have devoted their attention to developing a methodology for determining the life situation of the parables in the ministry of Jesus himself. This endeavour culminated in the work of Jeremias. One of the first, however, to move in this direction was W.H. Robinson (1928) who in advance of A.T. Cadoux (1931) gave expression to the methodological principle which was to dominate subsequent research, namely that each parable must be treated in isolation, with the critic seeking to identify both the historical situation and the particular lesson of its first utterance by Jesus.

Robinson (1928:140-149) recognised that as "children of the moment, children of circumstances", the parables of Jesus were "weapons... arguments at the bar of the soul, inducements to accept high principles, assaults of love, attempts to reverse wrong decisions in the hearts of friends and foes, and to lead them to make new and higher ones." However, because Robinson ignored the form critics, he did not look behind the synoptic settings in his search for the parable's original situation. Furthermore, Jülicher's stranglehold on him, ensured that he also saw the original purpose of the parables lying on the bedrock of personal moral improvement.

The first to go behind the synoptic setting was A.T.Cadoux. Whilst agreeing essentially with Bultmann that the synoptic settings cannot be trusted to supply the parable's primary meaning, Cadoux attacked both the allegorisers and their chief opponent, Jülicher. He (1931:53) wrote,

Both generally ignore what would seem to be the simplest and surest conclusion of common sense, that in the point of the story as a story we may expect to find the point of its application. The allegorising interpreter misses it because he dissolves the unity of the story into a number of separate items: and his critics tend to miss it, because they look on the parable as intended to enforce one single moral

principle, instead of finding in it an answer to the problem of concrete circumstance.

Thus where one does not have the setting in life, or where the setting may be doubtful, one would do well first to seek the point of the story itself, and then only to posit an appropriate setting in Jesus' recorded experience. As the parables are likely to have been used where plain speech was ineffective, Cadoux (1931:56) expects to discover their application "in the concrete conditions of Jesus' work, in his endeavour to win acceptance for a conception of the kingdom of God that was new and likely to be distasteful to his people." Cadoux assigned individual parables to appropriate situations in the ministry of Jesus: conflict, vindication, crisis and opportunity, ethical and eschatological teaching. These insights prepare the ground for the two major investigations of C.H. Dodd (1936) and Jeremias (1954).

Dodd (1936:147) held to the thesis that, "while Jesus employed the traditional symbolism of apocalypse to indicate the other-worldly or absolute character of the kingdom of God, he used the parables to enforce and illustrate the idea that the kingdom of God has come upon men there and then." Although this thesis has been questioned in its extreme form of "realised eschatology", Dodd's work was a demonstration of the eschatological setting of selected parables in the ministry of Jesus. In greater detail than Cadoux, Dodd indicated that Jesus' parables were concerned

with the consequences for the nation in the light of Jesus' assumption that his ministry was the culmination of God's dealing with Israel. Like Cadoux, he discovered that the parables of the kingdom were concerned with justifying and vindicating this conviction in response to the conflicts which it created. He supplemented the contributions of Bultmann by showing that the church interpreted in terms of the future parables which in Jesus' ministry had referred to the present; and that, in the transmission of the tradition, general applications had been given to parables, the original intent of which had been specific and concrete. Against Bultmann, however, Dodd was prepared to accept that many synoptic frameworks and applications reflected the original situation of certain parables. For those cases where the original setting was clearly lost, Dodd employed two principles for recovery: firstly, the motifs must be investigated for their most probable meaning for Jesus' hearers, that is, their Old Testament background must be explicated; and secondly, the parables themselves should make sense within the interpretation which Jesus gave to his own ministry - this being deduced from certain "explicit and unambiguous sayings" which were independent of the parabolic teaching.

1.2 A SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JEREMIAS

Although Jülicher had "cleared away the rubble" of centuries of allegorising the synoptic parables and had established that Jesus used this form of speech to elucidate not obscure, his message,

it was Jülicher's successors who demonstrated that the parables were largely oral creations uttered by Jesus in a context of eschatological crisis. Yet the problems of analysis remained. They were related to the difficulties of identifying the original kernel of individual parables, of specifying the precise concrete situation in which each was first uttered, and of ascertaining the exact nature of Jesus' eschatology as revealed in the parables. These three difficulties were linked with the degree of creativity that the early church had exercised during the period of the parables' transmission - a creativity in terms both of structure and emphases which they were made to serve. Jeremias attempted to clarify these problems.

In the foreword to the 1972 English translation of his The Parables of Jesus, Jeremias (1972:9) summarised his own contribution as "the attempt to arrive at the earliest attainable form of Jesus' parabolic teaching." He divided his work into two main parts: firstly, a thorough investigation of the kinds of alteration which occurred in the process of the parable's transmission; and secondly, a recovery of the main themes which the parables served in the ministry of Jesus. Jeremias began by addressing himself to the problem that the tradition had obscured the original intention of each parable by an allegorising tendency. This tendency was occasioned by the desire to seek deeper meaning in Jesus' simple teaching in the fashion of Hellenistic esoteric circles. Above all, the greatest impetus to

this tendency came from the "hardening" theory which regarded the parables as intended to conceal the mystery of the kingdom of God from outsiders. To Jülicher subsequent research owed the "final discarding of the allegorical method of interpretation" (1910:18). However, he had left the work half-done by regarding single moral principles as original to the parables, and thereby failed to discover their original historical settings. Jeremias (1954:21) expressed gratitude to Dodd for achieving a major breakthrough in this quest. Nevertheless Dodd's selection of the parables of the kingdom was too restrictive for him because the one-sided nature of his conception of the kingdom resulted in a contraction of eschatology. In order to incorporate both present and future aspects of Jesus' announcement of the kingdom, Jeremias preferred the German term Sich Realisierende Eschatologie which is translated as "eschatology - in - the - process - of - realisation." Jeremias rejected as wasted effort previous attempts at form - analysis of the synoptic parables. In earlier editions of his work he simply noted that the parables of Jesus were much superior to that of the rabbis. But, in the seventh German edition (1965) he asked "whether Jesus' example has not contributed decisively to the development of the literary genre of rabbinic parable?" (1972:12) As to the authenticity of the parables, Jeremias (1972:11-12) was in no doubt:

The parables are a fragment of the original rock of tradition."(They possess) "a definite personal style, a singular clarity and simplicity, a matchless mastery of construction. The conclusion is inevitable that we are dealing with particularly trustworthy tradition. We stand right before Jesus when reading his parables.

Jeremias (1954:21) agreed with W.H. Robinson, A.T. Cadoux and especially Dodd that the parables were primarily spontaneous responses in a situation of controversy. First uttered by Jesus at quite specific moments of his life, the parables are concerned with "justification, defence, attack and even challenge. For the most part, though not exclusively, they are weapons of controversy."

In the first part of his book (1954:23-114), Jeremias addressed himself to ten "principles of transformation" by which the primitive church adopted the parables "in relation to its own situation between the Cross and the Parousia" (1972:23). Jeremias also incorporated into his book the interpretations given to the parables in the gospel of Thomas. A brief presentation of these ten laws will now be given in the order that Jeremias (1954:25 ff.) analysed them.

1. The fact that the original parables of Jesus were translated from Aramaic into Greek involved innumerable alterations in their

meaning. Thus, to retranslate the parables into Jesus' mother-tongue is "perhaps the most important aid to the recovery of their original meaning."

2. The transference of the parables from a Palestinian to a Hellenistic environment involved appropriate representational changes. Although there are instances where Jesus may have used non-Palestinian illustrations because they were more appropriate to his point, the researcher should still prefer Palestinian descriptions as the more original.

3. Comparison of parables common to two or more gospels reveals a tendency towards embellishment of details. Although the simpler parable should be preferred, Jeremias advocated caution because exaggerations are characteristic of Oriental story-telling and frequently point to a parable's meaning. Furthermore, the frequency of exaggeration in the parables suggests that Jesus adopted this style intentionally.

4. Although Jesus himself employed Old Testament and folk-story themes, the tradition has been responsible for remodelling many parables along such lines. Thus the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen in Mk. 12 and Mt. 21 reflects details from Is. 5 which are absent from the versions in Lk. 20 and the gospel of Thomas, logion 65.

5. An examination of numerous parables led Jeremias to the conclusion that at an early stage and in all layers of the tradition a change of audience occurred. Parables originally addressed to the crowd or Jesus' opponents were later addressed to the disciples. The gospel of Thomas, in which the entire collection of parables is addressed to true gnostics, represents the final stage in this process.

6. Understanding itself as standing between the Cross and the reappearance of Christ, the early church was forced to find a hortatory use for those parables in which Jesus originally warned the multitude about the gravity of the eschatological crisis. Such parables were now used to direct the conduct of the christian community.

7. In a similar way, the influence of the church's situation between the Cross and the Parousia determined that parables originally directed to the crowds or the leaders of Israel about the gravity of the moment became admonitions and exhortations to the christian community to prepare for the coming of Christ. Because of this shift of interest, metaphors such as "bridegroom" and "doorkeeper" assumed christological significance, which others such as "servant" and "shepherd" took on ecclesiastical meaning. Under the same influence, a parable like the Great Supper, originally addressed to Jesus' critics, was later interpreted in the light of the church's missionary enterprise-

not only publicans and sinners are invited, but also Gentiles (Lk. 14.22 ff.).

8. A thorough investigation of allegorisation led Jeremias (1954:88) to the following conclusion:

We arrive thus at a strange result: the discourse - material in Matthew and Luke, the Markan material, the special Matthaean material, the gospel as we have it in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all contain allegorical interpretations, but the Lukan special material and the gospel of Thomas have none. From the fact that the allegorical interpretations can be recognised as almost entirely secondary, it would seem to follow that the whole parabolic material was originally as free from allegorising interpretations as were the special Lukan material and the Gospel of Thomas.

Jesus confined himself to employing familiar Old Testament metaphors such as "father"; "King"; or "judge " for God, "children"; "servants"; or "debtors" for men in relation to God and so on.

9. In the course of transmission there has been a tendency towards collection and conflation of parables, some being transmitted in pairs, some in larger groups, or (as in the Great Supper in Mt. 22:1-14) by a fusion of two parables. Although we

should not be guided by such secondary associations, it is probable that on occasions Jesus could have illustrated his message by means of the reduplication of similes.

10. As the form critics had demonstrated with regard to the framework of the gospel narrative, the present setting of the parables too is largely secondary. Jeremias (1954:96) noted that "the parabolic element has been transmitted with greater fidelity than the introduction, interpretation and context." The appearance of stylistic peculiarities of the evangelists and particular introductory formulas suggest that these are also largely secondary. The most common tendency of the tradition was to conclude parables with generalising logia, that is, eschatological promises, threats, and warnings. However ~~because some parables lack any application at all,~~ Jeremias asserted that it was more usual for Jesus to leave his hearers to draw their own conclusions.

These ten laws of transformation, Jeremias (1954:114) affirmed, "are ten aids to the recovery of the original meaning of the parables of Jesus. They will help to lift in some measure here and there the veil, sometimes thin, sometimes almost impenetrable, which has fallen upon the parables of Jesus. Our task is to return to the actual living voice of Jesus."

In the second part of his work, (1954:115-230) Jeremias analysed in a more thorough manner than previous investigators the major concerns of this "living voice of Jesus." Essentially, Jesus' message, according to Jeremias, was that the Day of Salvation was at hand, that God was merciful to sinners, that in the coming eschatological catastrophe the penitent would be saved and the opponents of Jesus would be condemned. Now was the time to act before it was too late. Although Jeremias did not discover an explicit Messianic claim by Jesus in his parabolic teaching he discerned what has come to be called an "implicit Christology."

Jeremias' contributions have been greatest in the areas of the transition of the parables from Jesus to our present gospels and of the content of Jesus' original eschatological preaching. Because his investigation of the ways in which the parables have been altered was based on a thorough analysis of the text, Jeremias' ten "principles of transformation" have not been seriously questioned. However, at two points, he has been challenged by James C. Little (1976:42). Firstly, Jeremias' claim (1954:25) that translation of the parables into Aramaic provides us with the "most important aid to the recovery of their original meaning", is open to question. Can we be so certain about the original language of Jesus? Research by R.H. Grundy (1983:404-408) in particular, indicates that Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek were all used by first-century Jews in Palestine. Therefore Little (1976:42) concludes that "it would seem that

such retranslation is at best hypothetical, at worst extremely misleading, in view of the uncertainty amongst specialists concerning the language or languages used by Jesus." Secondly, Little questions Jeremias' willingness to look at versions of the parables in the gospel of Thomas as a means of identifying their most original form. This makes sense only if Thomas represents an independent tradition from that found in the synoptic gospels.

The opinion which Jeremias shared with Dodd that the parables originated in a conflict situation as Jesus vindicated his mission to outcasts, has been regarded as substantially correct. Norman Perrin (1967:102-108) goes a step further in suggesting that a possible context for many of the parables was in the course of heated table-talk in homes to which Jesus had been invited as he defended his table-fellowship with outcasts.

Finally, the majority of scholars would probably agree with Jeremias that any christological interest served by the parables in Jesus' situation was implicit only. What Jeremias (1954:132) wrote regarding the Prodigal Son is most expressive of his position.

The parable, without making any kind of christological statement, reveals itself as a veiled assertion of authority: Jesus makes the claim for himself that he is acting in God's stead, that he is God's representative.

Jeremias (1954:122) noted further with reference to Jesus' use of certain traditional symbols for the "deliverer" (such as shepherd, physician, teacher) that in such metaphors "the meaning is self-evident only for believers, while for the outsiders they keep the secret of the hidden Son of man still unrevealed." Of the achievement of Jeremias, N. Pérrin (1967:340) has written: "They can be no going back from this work of Jeremias. It is perhaps the greatest single contribution to the historical understanding of the parables."

1.3 MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE WORK OF JEREMIAS

Attention will now be given to three areas in which there have been considerable development since the work of Jeremias.

1.3.1. ALLEGORISATION IN THE PARABLES

Four distinguishable strands have emerged in this discussion. At the outset it should be noted that none of those who have suggested that Jesus used allegory wish to return to the extravagant allegorising of earlier interpreters. Instead, there has developed an attitude which is best expressed in the words of M. Black (1960:275-276) : " On purely a priori grounds there does not seem to be any reason why there should not be allegory in the teaching of Jesus.....The Old Testament does not know of any distinction between allegory and parable, for the one can easily

pass into the other or more than one detail comes to assume symbolic significance."

(1) Jeremias (1954:88-89) identified a number of metaphors in Jesus' original parables, but basically agreed with Bultmann against Fiebig that an accumulation of metaphors did not constitute allegorising. Jeremias accepted that the "vineyard" in the earliest form of the Wicked Husbandmen is "a potential allegorical element" through which Jesus implied that the tenants represented Israel's leaders. However, only the later versions in Mark and Matthew were pure allegory in which the owner of the vineyard is God, the messengers are the prophets, the son is Christ, the punishment of the husbandmen symbolises the ruin of Israel, the other people (Mt.21:43) are the Gentile Church (1972:70-77). M. Black (1960:280-283) was among the first to challenge Jeremias on this analysis. If we assume that Luke preserves the most original form, we have a parable in which three servants and then the son of the owner are successively rejected. If the parable portrays "the crescendo of rebelliousness and wickedness of the rulers of Israel now reached, after a long history of similar crimes, in the ministry of Jesus, then it is unnatural and illogical to deny that the "servants" symbolise Israel's repeatedly rejected prophets, and that the "son" is Jesus (Black 1960:282). Black is correct in allowing for the probability of Jesus having employed images which, in the light of their traditional meaning within Jewish history and

expectation, provided a clue to the intention of a parable or to Jesus' own understanding of his mission.

(2) One of the main reasons why Jeremias (1954:88-89) denied that the gospel "interpretations" of certain parables could have originated with Jesus, was his observation that they treat their referents as allegories. R.E. Brown (1962: 36-45), among others, has argued that the Interpretation of the Sower could stem from Jesus. While conceding that the parable's main point is the ultimate eschatological success of the kingdom, Brown (1962:45) suggests that "its failure to succeed completely among certain groups gives background for the final overwhelming victory." The three groups who fail to heed the Good News are contrasted with the true disciples who leave all things for the sake of the kingdom and whose reward will be great."

(3) Jeremias was prepared to conclude that Jesus' parables were originally as free from allegorical elements as the versions now found in Special-Luke and the gospel of Thomas (1972:86-88). With the aid of a mathematical formula, M.D. Goulder (1968:51-69) has confirmed that Matthew is the most addicted to allegorising, Luke the least, and Mark has a tendency to allegorise though not as much as Matthew. Goulder's main challenge to Jeremias lies in his conclusion that Luke is a conscious de-allegoriser of Markan and Matthaean versions of the parables. He is also no allegoriser in parables peculiar to his gospels. Furthermore,

Goulder's argument is a suggestive correction to the hypothesis that the simplest form of a parable is always the most original, or that the most original is always the simplest.

(4) In the three preceding strands of the discussion it was assumed that the essential criterion of an allegory is that its image part has more than one point of relationship with its object. Recent scholars of the parables, particularly D.O. Via Jr., (1967) and J.D. Crossan (1973), have sought to clarify the terms involved. Their contributions make it clear that because the allegory has the interrelationships of its images determined by the reality (or old story) to which the allegory points, its narrative can often appear to be illogical or impossible. In the allegory of the eagles in Ezek. 17:3-10, in which the narrative is determined by the historical relations between the Kings of Judah and Babylon, it is incomprehensible that "the vine bends its roots towards the eagle" (Ezek. 17:7) except as this mirrors the pro-Babylonian policy of Zedekiah. Thus, the allegory is didactic in purpose and requires that the hearer be initiated into the reality to which it refers, otherwise the narrative will be weird or even nonsensical. The essential criterion, by which the parable is distinguished from the allegory is not, at least, primarily, that the parable has one central point, but that its many elements "relate first of all to each other within the parable" (Via 1967:25). This is because the structure of the inter-connections is determined, not

by external events or ideas, but by the "author's creative composition" (Via 1967:25). Thus, although a parable may contain images which refer to the historical situation or religious tradition in which it is formulated, it need not be regarded as an allegory or cease to function as a parable. In the case of the Wicked Husbandmen, Via (1967:134) argues that "the pattern of connections is still primarily within the story and runs only subsidiarily to the outside." According to Via (1967:132-137) its point is contained within the internal dynamics of the parable's narrative: a "downward moving plot" in which the wicked tenant's experience give formal shape to a story about the ultimate self-destruction for those who lack faith "in the benevolence of the universe."

The preceding analysis is not purely semantic. On the assumption that Jesus formulated his parables primarily to clarify his interpretation of God's will to those who were unable or unwilling to grasp it, these recent researchers have shown why the parable was more suitable than the allegory to Jesus' purpose. Basically, the parable seeks to reconcile opposition by inviting the listeners to participate indirectly in a new insight of the situation and to agree with the narrator's point of view. But, the pressure on a parable to become an allegory increases the more the images and their interconnections are determined by the external events which prompted the formulation of the story. It is for this reason, as Via admits, that the Wicked Husbandmen "is

more nearly allegorical than most of Jesus' other narrative parables" (1967:134). For the very same reason, the early church's developing theology became a new external reality which exercised a determinative influence on the reformulation of the parables in an allegorising direction. If Goulder is correct, then Luke and Thomas have countered this tendency, the former out of his concern for historicising the tradition, the latter because those having knowledge would perceive the true meaning of the parables without the intrusion of gnostic interpretations.

1.3.2. THE NEW HERMENEUTIC AND THE PARABLES

In the late sixties and early seventies, a number of scholars took Dodd and Jeremias to task for restricting the full meaning of the parables by a one-sided attention to their original setting and purpose in Jesus' ministry. Therefore, G.V. Jones (1964) sought to identify the truth of Jesus' parables in terms of their timeless artistry. The synoptic parable, as an instrument of the creative imagination of Jesus, "has imparted the quality of time-and-place transcendence to its characters which is typical of all great narrative creations" (1964:125). Whilst other scholars, such as, R.W. Funk, D.O. Via Jr., and J.D. Crossan share and develop Jones's appreciation of the aesthetic quality of Jesus' parables, they have also been deeply influenced by the so-called New Hermeneutic. Representatives of the new hermeneutic, such as G. Ebeling and E. Fuchs, had criticised Bultmann because, by his demythologising, he implied that

biblical language is a barrier to understanding, in that it tends to objectify rather than to communicate its existential meaning. Thus, in Bultmann's reading, "the eschatological becomes an external history of last things rather than a crisis and movement in the historical existence of the individual" (Via 1967:33). The new hermeneutic, on the other hand, affirms that biblical language is uniquely revelatory of God's intention and is understandable to the faithful listener. Concerning the parables, the new hermeneutic asserts that, because Jesus embodied the word of God in his actions as well as in his words, his language was and is now pregnant with the divine message, that is, the call to decision in response to the divine judgement and grace. The parables are especially appropriate to the divine message because its function is to engage the hearer's participation and compel a response. Thus, we may conclude, the form to Jesus' parabolic language is uniquely appropriate to the content of Jesus' message (Fuchs 1964:213-228).

Funk (1966:12) took issue with the "sin" of Jeremias, namely, that he understood the parables as originally "argumentative." The result was a repetition of Jülicher's one-point principle, with Jesus' parables now addressed to only one situation in his ministry. In contrast, Funk emphasised the diversity of the parables setting. They invited all hearers - hostile, indifferent, friendly, doubtful - to participate in the parable's viewpoint and to make their own individual response. Jesus'

parables were intended to interpret the hearer rather than to be interpreted by him. They confront the hearer with the responsibility of understanding himself vis-à-vis Jesus' message of God's judgement and grace. Thus, in his exposition of the parables of the Great Supper and the Good Samaritan, Funk analyses them historically by identifying what they must have meant to their varied audience in the ministry of Jesus and Funk leaves the reader to interpret his own existence in that light. Via and Crossan whilst equally concerned to employ the insights of historical criticism in identifying the original form of each parable, direct their attention towards the function of the parable in terms of its specific theological meaning for man as man. Thus, Via (1967:49) divides Jesus' parable into two major groups according to their emphases: the tragic parables where one sees realistic imagery and ordinary people in dramatic encounters and conflicts moving downward toward catastrophe (for example, the Wicked Husbandmen); and the comic parables which present us with realistic imagery and ordinary people in dramatic, face-to-face confrontations moving upward toward well-being (for example, the workers in the Vineyard). Whereas, Crossan (1973:26) regards Jesus as an "oral poet" who employs the parables to proclaim what Crossan calls a "permanent eschatology," that is, "the permanent presence of God as the one who challenges the world and shatters its complacency repeatedly."

According to Via (1967:22) this new approach has two chief merits. Firstly, it provides a check to purely historical-critical analysis which threatened "to leave the parables in the past with nothing to say to the present." Secondly, it has shown that the aesthetic form of the parable is uniquely suited to its function of inviting participation in Jesus' understanding of existence under God.

1.3.3. REDACTION CRITICISM AND THE PARABLES

All the afore-mentioned scholars focussed their attention on one or more of three main concerns : the meaning of the parables in the ministry of Jesus; their interpretation in the oral stage of the tradition; their significance for man today. Jeremias and his predecessor spoke only incidentally about the emphases which the parables were made to serve by the individual evangelists, that is, the redaction-critical analysis of the parables. Like the form critics, Jeremias based his analysis of the ten laws of transformation on a close comparison of the gospels but he generalised the principles and regarded them as characteristic of the tradition before it was committed to writing (1954:23). He mentioned, in passing, that some law of transformation was more typical of one evangelist than another. He cites examples like Matthew's addiction to allegory (1954:89), or Luke's high proportion of representational changes to suit the Hellenistic environment (1954:26-27). In keeping with contemporary interest in the evangelists as authors in their own right, increasing

attention is being given to the function of the parables in the presentation of the evangelists. From the considerable amount of studies with this approach two contributions have been selected as illustrative of the insights which has been obtained regarding this stage in the development of the parabolic tradition.

The first is the aforementioned article by M.D. Goulder. He considers the parabolic material in the synoptic gospels according to five separate aspects. Firstly, regarding their content, Mark is found to follow the Old Testament pattern of including mainly nature parables, while Matthew (both where he adopts his Markan source and where he introduces new parables) is concerned with people : nobles and slaves, farmers and workmen, fathers and sons. Luke, on the other hand, prefers people of the towns: builders, robbers, beggars. Secondly, regarding scale, Mark's world is the village, perhaps Galilean while Matthew's is that of the grandiose; Luke brings matters back to reality. Thirdly, with regard to elements of contrast, all thirteen of Matthew's long parables are contrast-parables, for example, two builders, a man and his enemy. Also, people are stylized: either good or bad. Luke, while also fond of contrast-parables, is more realistic: his characters are of all shades of opinion. Fourthly, with regard to allegory, we have already noted Goulder's sliding-scale where Mark has allegorised to some extent, Matthew to a considerable extent, and Luke has de-allegorised. Fifthly, in terms of response, Mark's and Matthew's

parables place God and his kingdom before men, while Luke's summon to ethical concerns, that is, faithful endurance, care for the poor, prayer and such like. Goulder concluded that Jeremias' thesis that there was a homogeneous pool of original, simple parables stemming from Jesus, had been undermined. Goulder (1968:67) considered it improbable that Jesus used all the types of parables represented by the evangelists with each selecting according to his inclinations. More probable is the hypothesis that: "Jesus taught the Markan parables with their village milieu and their eschatological message, and also their highish allegory content." As for Matthew and Luke, Goulder (1968:69) affirmed: "These men were not editors but midrashists. The parables of Matthew and Luke at least are by St. Matthew and St. Luke, no less than the Johannine parables are by St. John."

Goulder's research is a very important contribution to parable research based as it is on a thorough investigation and symstematisation of features typical of each evangelist. However, it is difficult to see why Mark should be regarded as reflecting Jesus' original use of the parables. Too little account is taken of Mark's special interests, a point which Goulder himself admits (1968:67).

The second contribution is that of J.D. Kingsbury (1969). He (1969:131) argued that the author of Matthew has employed the parables in chapter thirteen at a turning point in the gospel

when Jesus turns away from the Jews and moves towards the disciples. This turning-point is emphasised by the unifying theme of the chapter. All the parables, except the Sower "..... are explicitly designated as parables about the kingdom of heaven; and the closing pericope of the parable chapter (13:51 ff.) tells us, first, that through Jesus' speech in parables the disciples have been instructed about the kingdom of heaven (13:52, cf. 13:35), second, that this instruction has met with (God-given) understanding on the part of the disciples (13:52, cf. 13:11), and third, that such understanding has for its object the doing of God's will (13:52, cf. 13:23)..... Therefore knowing and doing God's will is the unifying thought behind chapter 13." Kingsbury (1969:135) also noted that while Matthew has incorporated the Markan theory that the parables are riddles he has introduced another theory whereby the disciples or the church, but not the obdurate Jews, are able to understand these revelatory riddles. "The result is that Matthew is able to depict the disciples, or the church, as the true people of God, but the Jews as hardened and standing under God's judgement (13:1-3, 16 ff.)."

Kingsbury's research is a very important study in the area of redaction criticism. It forms a continuum with the historical-critical interest in the parables and confirms much that has already been deduced about Matthew and his community. It has

also deepened our understanding of the different influences in the literary productions of primitive church.

A major challenge to the work of Jeremias' historical-critical analysis of the parables has come in the area of redaction criticism. This is a study of the evangelist as a creative author and theologian, and an attempt to identify the character of the communities for which he wrote and in which his material had been preserved.

Despite the implications of redaction criticism for the research of parables, no frame of reference has been advanced to explain symbolic and metaphoric language usage. Whilst it took the likes of Jülicher et al. to counter the excesses of allegorisation, no methodological framework emerged to serve as a control and facilitator in the interpretation of parables. This study will propose a "theoretically - founded" exegetical framework that will both offer safeguards to fanciful interpretations of symbols and metaphors present in parables and also expedite a convincing interpretation of a text that is compatible with the meaning of the text as a whole. An analysis of the kingdom parables of the fourth chapter of the gospel according to Saint Mark will be made to illustrate and evaluate this "theoretically - founded" method. Chapter three, the thrust of this study, will entail an application of all the relevant aspects of Linguistic and Literary theory to the text. What are these aspects of

Linguistic and Literary theory? The next chapter, chapter two has been set aside for this explicit purpose. Here a detailed account of the working method will be presented.

CHAPTER TWO

AIM AND WORKING METHOD: AN EXPLICATION OF "THEORETICALLY-FOUNDED" EXEGESIS

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a detailed exposition of a working methodology for studying parables. The methodology that is utilised in this study derives from the work of Maartens (1977; 1980; 1985 and 1987). We have, however, been selective in including only those aspects that are salient to the focus of our study. In chapter one we alluded to the term "theoretically-founded" exegesis which in the words of Maartens (1980:iii) is

{ "an explication of the language structure of a given text against its socio-cultural and historical background in order to give the reader a better understanding of the text."

The word exegesis is of Greek origin and is used as a technical term for interpretation. According to Deist (1980:1) exegesis is the scientific term for the "process by which one understands a text and by which one is able to tell what one has understood." It now remains to be explained what is meant by the qualifying adjectives "theoretically-founded." This is the designation given to a definite theoretical framework within which the process of interpretation of the text is controlled. It also provides a framework within which the interpretation given to the text may be motivated. Exegeting in this way will result, it will be shown, in an interpretation given to the text substantiated by arguments based on evidence in the text. The

results of "theoretically-founded" exegesis are consequently testable within the framework supplied by the theory. Should the results be incompatible with evidence produced from the text, the theory may itself be proven to be inadequate or may be revised. Thus the purpose of "theoretically-founded" exegesis is to provide a framework for exegesis in which substantiating evidence can be produced for a convincing interpretation of a text. It goes without saying that to be convincing the results of exegesis must be compatible with the meaning of the text as a whole.

Exegesis involves the method followed by the reader in which he explains what he has read. The meaning of much of what one reads in the New Testament is quite clear. Exegesis does not want to explain that which is obvious from the reading of the New Testament. Exegesis is more concerned with the problems we encounter while reading the New Testament text. Such problems are not in themselves a matter of scientific research. Scientific research looks behind the problematic phenomenon for possible causes of the problem.

The object of exegesis is a study of the underlying causes of the problematic phenomena encountered in the reading of a text. There are a variety of such problems. It might be an expression such as "lead us not into temptation" (Mt. 6:13). Are we saying that God deliberately leads us astray? Problematic phenomena may include references such as the "kingdom of God," it might be a

christological title such as "Son of man" or a metaphor such as "no one pours new wine into old skins" or perhaps a less simple parable. Whatever the problem, it is the underlying causes which interests scientific enquiry into the text.

In the New Testament exegesis the underlying causes for problematic phenomena are associated with the "language and structure" of the text. The "language and structure" here concerns peculiarities of Greek Koiné as written language in the time of Jesus and the disciples. The "underlying structure" of the language is a possible cause for many problematic phenomena encountered on the observable level of the New Testament text. This means that for the purposes of the methodology of this study both the structure of the language as well as the structure of the text has to be analysed in order to explain the problems encountered in the reading of the gospels. Numerous such hypotheses are involved in this examination of language and structure.

In a narrower sense the underlying structure of the Koiné language requires our making use of linguistic hypotheses to explain the possible causes of the above-mentioned problematic phenomena. In a wider sense several literary hypotheses of structuring devices and techniques are used to explain possible causes of these problematic phenomena. The sum total of these hypotheses is a linguistic and literary-theoretical

interpretation of the possible causes of problematic phenomena in the text of the gospels. It is this correlation of the results of linguistic and literary analyses that have accrued the designation "theoretically-founded" exegesis.

The results of "theoretically-founded" exegesis is further subject to the condition that it must be compatible with the interpretation of the text as a whole. In short, text and context has to be correlated. Analyses of the micro-structure of the text has to be correlated with the analyses of the macro-structure of the New Testament. The exegete's explanation of the text must conform to the extra-contextual meaning of the text. To be convincing the exegete's explanation of the underlying causes of problematic phenomena must conform to our encyclopaedical knowledge of the text. The encyclopaedical knowledge of the text should embrace a knowledge of the text as a whole and the socio-cultural and historical background of the text.

It must be appreciated that the socio-cultural history of contemporary society differs greatly from that of the Jewish nation under Roman administration during the first century A.D. Hence for example, the Jewish terrorist, the so-called Zealot (cf. Acts 5:34-37 and 28:38) is not a figure identical to that of terrorists/freedom-fighters of the Third World. Although certain resemblances between the two are evident, differences have to be

recognised also. Thus any such exemplary interpretation is contradicted by the shades of difference in the socio-cultural history of New Testament times when compared to our present society.

The task of New Testament interpretation begins by recognising the political, religious, cultural, economic and geographical situation in which the text as a literary work of art had been encoded. A further recognition of the difference in the political, religious, cultural, economic and geographical situation of contemporary society in which the text is being decoded is also required. The task of the exegete is to take necessary measures to ensure that the message decoded conforms to the intentions of the author at the time the text had been encoded or written.

Therefore, it stands to reason that the most important factor in exegesis is the exegete's knowledge of the "language and structure" of the text he/she is dealing with. The exegete's depth of knowledge of the "language and structure" of the text will determine the depth of the interpretation drawn from the text. In order to set about this task of analysing the "language and structure" we shall begin with a description of linguistic analysis before proceeding to an analysis of literary theory.

In our discussion of linguistic analysis reference will be made to linguistic theory in order to specify the sentences and facilitate discussion of the semantic aspects of the sentences relevant to their interpretation. The resulting syntactic and semantic analyses (also called the output) will be used as the basis for the literary analysis where reference will be made to literary theory in order to establish the relevance of linguistic devices such as the metaphorical use of language and extra-patterning for the interpretation of the text.

2.1 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

A linguistic analysis consists of a syntactic specification of the sentences and a semantic representation of these sentences.

2.1.1 SYNTACTIC SPECIFICATION OF SENTENCES

The first stage of "theoretically-founded" exegesis begins with a syntactic specification of the sentences of the text. The sentence in the "Aspects" model of linguistic theory is defined as a syntactic unit consisting of a noun phrase and a verb phrase (S --> NP VP). As a syntactic unit the sentence has linear structure (the linear sequence of constituents) as well as hierarchical structure (the hierarchical relationship of constituents of a sentence). We shall use the fourth chapter of the gospel of Saint Mark to illustrate a syntactic specification of sentences. When reported speech is encountered in the text, embedded sentences such as those under ²ἐλεγε in Mk.

4:2,11,21,26 and 30 and those under λeyet in Mk. 4:13 are numbered by the decimal point in the margin. Consequently the first division of Mark chapter four will begin with sentence 129.and the text will extend to embedded sentences 133.17. The sentences of the text are specified as follows:¹

Pericope A' : The Parable of the Sower's Harvest

129. Καὶ πάλιν ἤρξατο διδάσκειν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν.
 130. καὶ συνάγεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλος πλεῖστος, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς πλοῖον ἐμβάντα
 καθῆσθαι ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ,
 131. καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἦσαν.
 132. ² καὶ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς πολλά,
 133. καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ.
 133.1 ³ Ἄκουετε.
 133.2 ἰδοὺ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπεῖρων σπεῖραι.
 133.3 ⁴ καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ σπεῖρειν ὃ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν,
 133.4 καὶ ἦλθεν τὰ πετεινὰ
 133.5 καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτό.
 133.6 ⁵ καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ πετρῶδες ὅπου οὐκ εἶχεν γῆν πολλήν,
 133.7 καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς·
 133.8 ⁶ καὶ ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος ἐκαυματίσθη,
 133.9 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη.
 133.10 ⁷ καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας,
 133.11 καὶ ἀνέβησαν αἱ ἀκάνθαι
 133.12 καὶ συνέπνιξαν αὐτό,
 133.13 καὶ καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκεν.
 133.14 ⁸ καὶ ἄλλα ἔπεσεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν,
 133.15 καὶ ἐδόξου καρπὸν ἀναβαίνοντα καὶ αὐξανόμενα,
 133.16 καὶ ἔφερεν ἕν τριάκοντα καὶ ἕν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἕν ἑκατόν.
 133.17 ⁹ καὶ εἶπεν, Ὅς ἔχει ὧτα ἀκοῦειν ἀκουέτω.

Pericope B : The Purpose of the Parables

134. ¹⁰ καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ ὁδὸν, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς
 παραβολάς.
 135. ¹¹ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς,
 135.1 Ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ·
 135.2 ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται,
 135.2.1 ¹² ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν,
 135.2.2 καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν,
 135.2.3 μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς.

Pericope A² : The Parable of the Sower's Harvest Explained

- 136 13 Καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς,
 136.1 οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην,
 136.2 καὶ πῶς πάσας τὰς παραβολὰς γινώσκεισθε;
 136.3 14 ὁ σπείρων τὸν λόγον σπείρει.
 136.4 15 οὗτοι δὲ εἰσιν οἱ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὅπου σπείρεται ὁ λόγος,
 136.5 καὶ ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν εὐθὺς ἔρχεται ὁ Σατανᾶς
 136.6 καὶ αἶρει τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐσπαρμένον εἰς αὐτούς.
 136.7 16 καὶ οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἐπὶ τὰ πετρῶδη σπειρόμενοι,
 136.8 οἱ ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνουσιν αὐτόν,
 136.9 17 καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ῥίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
 136.10 ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν·
 136.11 εἴτα γενομένης θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζονται.
 136.12 18 καὶ ἄλλοι εἰσὶν οἱ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας σπειρόμενοι·
 136.13 οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ τὸν λόγον ἀκούσαντες,
 136.14 19 καὶ αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἡ ἀπάτη τοῦ πλοῦτου καὶ αἱ περὶ τὰ
 136.15 λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμίαι εἰσπορευόμεναι συμπνίγουσιν τὸν λόγον,
 136.16 καὶ ἄκαρπος γίνεται.
 136.17 20 καὶ ἐκεῖνοι εἰσιν οἱ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν σπαρέντες,
 136.18 οἵτινες ἀκούουσιν τὸν λόγον
 καὶ παραδέχονται
 καὶ καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν τριάκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑκατόν.

Pericope C : The Parable of the Lamp

137. 21 Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς,
 137.1 μήτι ἔρχεται ὁ λύχνος ἵνα ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον τεθῇ ἢ ὑπὸ τὴν κλίνην;
 137.2 οὐχ ἵνα ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν τεθῇ;
 137.3 22 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν κρυπτὸν ἐὰν μὴ ἵνα φανερωθῇ,
 137.4 οὐδὲ ἐγένετο ἀπόκρυφον ἀλλ' ἵνα ἔλθῃ εἰς φανερόν.
 137.5 23 εἴ τις ἔχει ὧτα ἀκοῦειν ἀκουέτω,

Pericope D : The Call of Obedience

138. 24 Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς,
 138.1 βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε.
 138.2 ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν
 138.3 καὶ προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.
 138.4 25 ὅς γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ.
 138.5 καὶ ὅς οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

Pericope C' : The Parable of the Growing Seed

139. 26 Καὶ ἔλεγεν,
 139.1 οὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ
 ὡς ἄνθρωπος βάλη τὸν σπῆρον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
 139.2 27 καὶ καθεὸδῃ καὶ ἐγερσῆται νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν,
 139.3 καὶ ὁ σπῆρος βλαστᾷ καὶ μηκύνεται ὡς οὐκ οἶδεν αὐτός.
 139.4 28 αὐτομάτῃ ἡ γῆ καρποφορεῖ, πρῶτον χόρτον, εἶτεν στάχυν, εἶτεν πλήρη[ς]
 σίτον ἐν τῷ στάχυϊ
 139.5 29 ὅταν δὲ παραδοῖ ὁ καρπός,
 εὐθὺς ἀποστέλλει τὸ δρέπανον, ὅτι παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός.

Pericope A³ : The Parable of the Mustard Seed

140. 30 Καὶ ἔλεγεν,
 140.1 πῶς ὁμοιωσώμεν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ,
 140.2 ἢ ἐν τίνι αὐτὴν παραβολῇ θῶμεν;
 140.3 31 ὡς κόκκῳ σινάπεως, ὅς ὅταν σπαρῇ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
 μικρότερον ὂν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
 140.4 32 καὶ ὅταν σπαρῇ, ἀναβαίνει καὶ γίνεται μεῖζον πάντων τῶν λαχάνων
 140.5 καὶ ποιεῖ κλάδους μεγάλους, ὥστε δύνασθαι ὑπὸ τὴν σκιάν αὐτοῦ τὰ
 πετεῖνὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηναῖν.

Pericope B' : The Use of Parables

141. 33 Καὶ τριαύταις παραβολαῖς πολλαῖς ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον, καθὼς ἠδύναντο
 ἀκούειν.
 142. 34 χωρὶς δὲ παραβολῆς οὐκ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς,
 143. κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς ἰδοῖσι μαθηταῖς ἐπέλυεν πάντα.

It would have been noticed that in the text sentences 129. - 133.17 cluster together to constitute a pericope. The same situation exists for 134.-135.2.3; 136.-136.17; 137.-137.5; 138.-138.5; 139.-139.5; 140.-140.5; 141.-143. and 144.-156.1. The term pericope refers to a comprehensive semantic unit of coherently-related sentences. (Each sentence in the text will hereafter be referred to by the number in the margin.)

2.1.2 SEMANTIC REPRESENTATION OF SENTENCES

The second consideration of a linguistic analysis of a text is the semantic representation.

2.1.2.1 PRESUPPOSITION²

The semantic aspect of each one of the sentences within a pericope can be divided into the presuppositions and the statements or questions. The statement or question is the content of each sentence. The presupposition of each sentence is the information which the reader can deduce from the content of each sentence.

2.1.2.2 FOCUS

Stated differently, the semantic aspect of a sentence could also be divided into "the given information " and "the new information. " The given information in a sentence is the information which is known to the reader. The new information in a sentence is the focus of that sentence. The focus comprises

that information in the sentence which is not anticipated by the reader of the text. This use of the term "focus" must be distinguished from the use of the term "focus" in the analysis of the metaphor in literary theory which will be discussed later.

2.1.2.3 TRANSFORMATIONS³

There are certain other syntactic features which are determined on the basis of linguistic theory but which are of relevance only to literary analysis. One of these features is the relevant transformations that have applied in the derivation of each sentence. These transformations are briefly discussed here.

2.1.2.3.1 TOPICALISATION

Topicalisation is a transformation which moves a constituent in a sentence to the sentence-initial position. (Chomsky 1964:221; Verma 1976 : 26). The fronted constituent is the topic of the sentence.

2.1.2.3.2 NP SHIFT AND ADJECTIVE SHIFT

NP Shift is a transformation which moves a noun in a sentence into sentence-final position. The function of the movement is stylistic. Adjective Shift, as the name implies, is a transformation which moves an adjective in a sentence to the sentence-final position.

2.1.2.3.3 DELETION⁴

Deletion is a transformational operation by which a constituent in the deep structure of a sentence is omitted in the derivation of the surface structure. The function of this deletion, too, is stylistic.

The results produced by the syntactic analysis and semantic representation of the sentences in a pericope forms the basis for the literary analysis of the same pericope.

2.2 LITERARY ANALYSIS

In this second stage of "theoretically-founded" exegesis we shall use procedures developed in literary theory. What now concerns the exegete is the stylistic phenomena contributing to the cohesion of the text. Leech (1965:120 et. seq.) defines cohesion as:

the way in which independent choices in different points of a text correspond with or presuppose one another, forming a network of sequential relations.....In studying cohesion, we pick out patterns of meaning running through the text we also notice how tightly organised the relationships are ... cohesions is the dimension whereby the foregrounded features identified in isolation are related to one another and to the text in its entirety.

Therefore in a literary analysis, we need to investigate how sentence constituents in a text are highlighted (i.e. foregrounded) and related to one another. The semantic implications of the highlighting sentence constituents must first be determined in order to be interpreted. The parables of the fourth chapter of the gospel of Saint Mark, on which study is based, will also require a consideration of the following stylistic phenomena namely the metaphor and foregrounding as extra patterning.

2.2.1 METAPHOR

Research into the metaphorical use of language is too vast to be fully dealt with in this study. Therefore we shall single out those aspects of the metaphorical use of language relevant to the analysis of Mark chapter four. These aspects will be introduced under the following headings and order: 2.2.1.1 the relationship between Black's Focus and Frame; 2.2. 1.2 the interplay between Black's Principle Subject and the Subsidiary Subject; 2.2.1.3. the recognition of Richard's Tenor and Vehicle; 2.2.1.4 the characteristics of Miller's Surface Metaphor; 2.2.1.5 the characteristics of Miller's Suspended and Submerged Metaphor and finally 2.2.1.6 Brooke - Roses's Genitive Link Metaphor.

2.2.1.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BLACK'S FOCUS AND FRAME

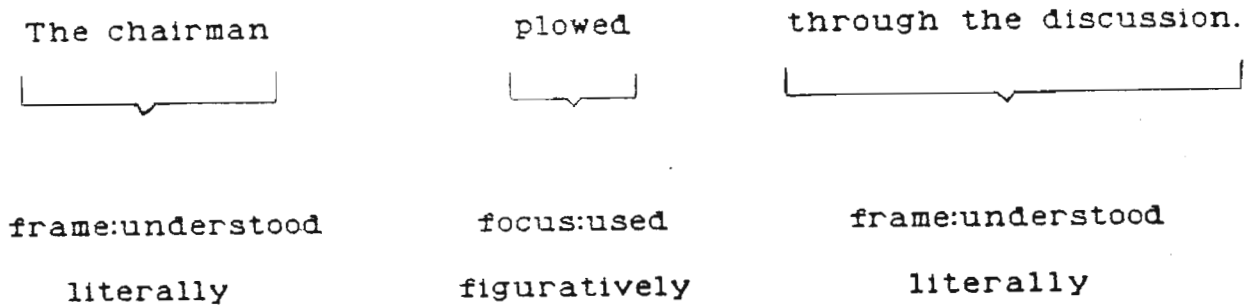
The relatively simple metaphor is recognised by the contrast of sentence constituents used figuratively with the remaining

constituents that are used literally. The word used figuratively is the metaphorised word/focus while the remainder/frame of words are used non-metaphorically. Black (1962: 26 and 30) illustrated this distinction with the following sentence:

Sentence 1

The chairman plowed through the discussion.

Black explains that "plowed" has been used metaphorically. Black (1962:28) terms the metaphorised word in the sentence the focus of the metaphor and the remainder of the sentence the frame of the metaphor. The use of the term "focus" by Black must be distinguished from the utilisation of the term "focus" in linguistics. To facilitate the explanation of this metaphor Black's example may be presented as follows:

Diagram 1: The relationship between focus and frame in sentence.

Concerning the focus it will be noticed that "plowed" which strictly speaking means something else, has been chosen from an alien context to be introduced in the sentence. Black therefore maintains that the focus of a metaphor is used figuratively. Since "plowed" has been identified as the metaphorical word this sentence of Black is a good example of a verb metaphor. The remainder of the sentence which is the frame of the metaphor is used literally. Black (1962:30) further explains the imagery of the metaphor in the following way:

Instead of saying, plainly or directly, that the chairman dealt summarily with objections, or ruthlessly suppressed irrelevance, or something of the sort, the speaker chose to use a word "plowed" which, strictly speaking, means something else. But an intelligent hearer can easily guess what the speaker had in mind.

2.2.1.2 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN BLACK'S PRINCIPAL SUBJECT AND
SUBSIDIARY SUBJECT.

Black (1962:3a)³⁹ further explained the interplay between focus and frame by the following copula sentence where two nouns are joined in a relationship of identification:

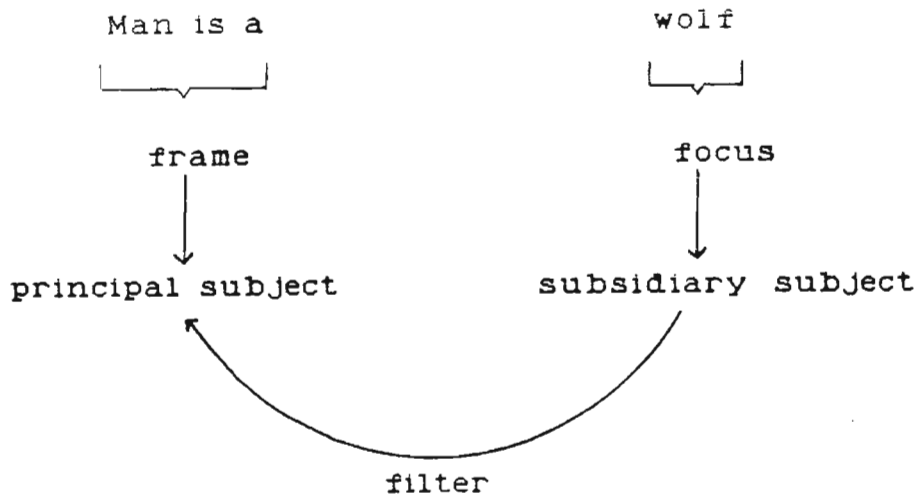
Sentence 2.

Man is a wolf.

Again, to facilitate an explanation of the relationship between focus and frame sentence 2 may be represented in the following diagram:

Diagram 2: The relationship between focus and frame in sentence

2.



Black refers to sentence 2 to demonstrate the type of analysis which is being called the interaction view of the metaphor. The copula verb "is" in sentence 2 relates "man", the principal subject, to "wolf", the subsidiary subject. Since "wolf" has been identified as the metaphorical word this sentence of Black is a fine example of a noun metaphor. In Black's view (1962:44) these subjects must be regarded as "system of things" rather than "things". The reader must know the literal senses which Black (1962:41) calls the system of associated commonplaces of the subjects man and wolf respectively, in order to understand the meaning of the metaphor. The effect of the metaphor is to evoke what Black terms the "Wolf-system of related commonplaces." This wolf-system of associated commonplaces will suggest the following characteristics for man: "He preys upon other animals, is

fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle, a scavenger... that he too is hateful and alarming " (1962: 41 and 42). Black (1962:39,42 and 44) further thinks of a metaphor as a filter which:

selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organises features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject.

A fluent English speaker hearing the metaphor will be led by the wolf-system of related commonplaces to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject man. The pattern of the corresponding system of implications must be determined by the pattern of related commonplaces associated with the literal uses of the word "wolf."

Black states it as follows:

Any human traits that can without undue strain be talked about in "wolf-language" will be rendered prominent, and any that cannot will be pushed into the background. The wolf metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others in short, organizes our view of man.

Black's article (1962) has gained wide recognition. Recent attempts have been made to further explicate Black's theory by making use of devices from Transformational Generative Grammar.

The studies of Matthews (1971:413-425) and Abraham (1975:5-51) deserve some mention here.

Matthews (1971:422) explains that the features which the metaphor in sentence 2 suppresses, in Black's terms, are "(+hairy), (+tail), (+quadrupedal), etc." These features are most closely connected with the selectional restriction violation (+human)/(-human). "The Wolf system feature" which are not closely involved in the violation, for example, (+vicious), (+predatory), (+nocturnal) are more relevant to the understanding of the metaphor. Though Matthew's work does contribute to the understanding of sentence 2, his study has been subject to serious criticism.⁵

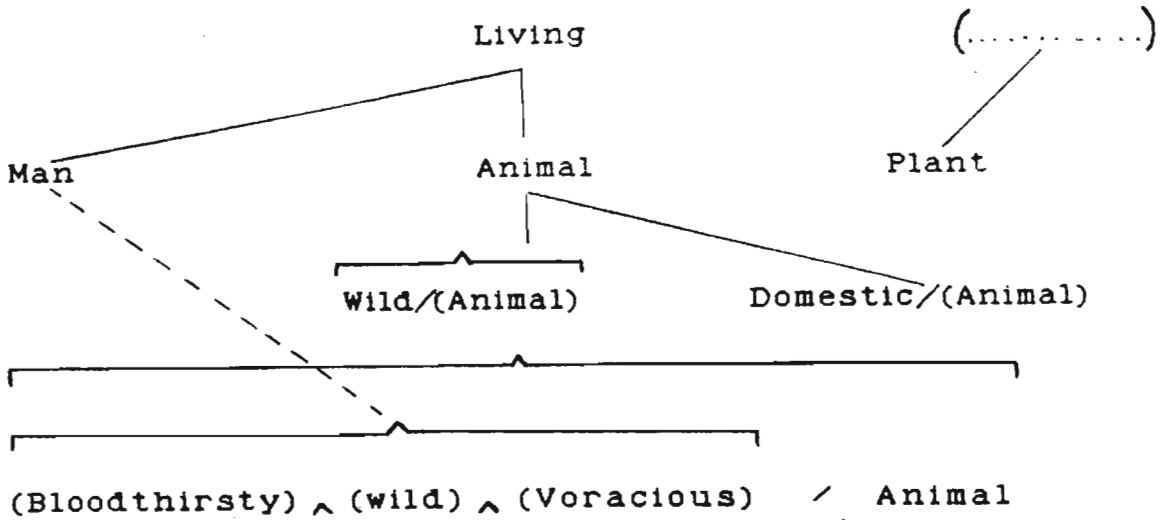
Abraham (1975:7) explains that metaphors like "man is a wolf" do not have their origin in the violation of selection restrictions (Chomsky 1965:149) but in a violation of the compatibility of lexemes in a syntactic structure (1975:17). In metaphorical expressions lexemes with incompatible and compatible semantic features are combined. Within such metaphorical expressions only compatible semantic features will be transferred from the "part" of the metaphor to the "remainder". Abraham's (1975:22) "part" and "remainder" resembles Black's focus and frame. Those semantic features which would be suppressed in Black's explanation of the above-mentioned metaphor are what Abraham terms the incompatible features; those features designated as

"associated commonplaces" by Black (1962:40) that would be transferred from focus to frame correspond to the "compatible features" of Abraham. The compatibility of some features is supported by our encyclopaedical knowledge of the lexemes combined in the metaphor. With reference to "man is a wolf" Abraham shows that the compatible features in the metaphorical expression of "wolf" are re-topicalised and transferred to "man". Abraham (1975:27) explains re-topicalisation as follows:

Applied to the interpretation of a metaphor this is a process which must depart from the normal ordering of (complex) features of a lexical meaning: features with low priority in the normal meaning of a lexeme (which contribute only marginally to the meaning of a lexeme or which do not contribute to the "normal" meaning at all) have to be given higher priority (have to be "re-topicalised") in a semantic analysis that remains unchanged otherwise.

Abraham indicates in the following diagram how the compatible semantic features (definientes) are transferred to man (definiendum) after having been re-topicalised:

Diagram 3: Abraham's re-topicalisation of semantic features.



According to Abraham the unbroken lines represent the "semantically implicative" ("normally" associative) relations, while the broken line represents the encyclopaedical relations. It goes without saying that Matthew's (+vicious/ +predatory/ +nocturnal) closely resemble Abraham's (Bloodthirsty) (wild) (Voracious). Abraham's study is a very plausible attempt to explicate Black's analysis in transformational generative terms.

The interaction between the principal subject "man" and the subsidiary subject "wolf" may also be explained as an interaction between tenor: man and vehicle: wolf. Explication of metaphorical usage as a process of interaction between different components was first investigated in detail by I.A. Richards.

2.2.1.3. THE RECOGNITION OF RICHARD'S TENOR AND VEHICLE

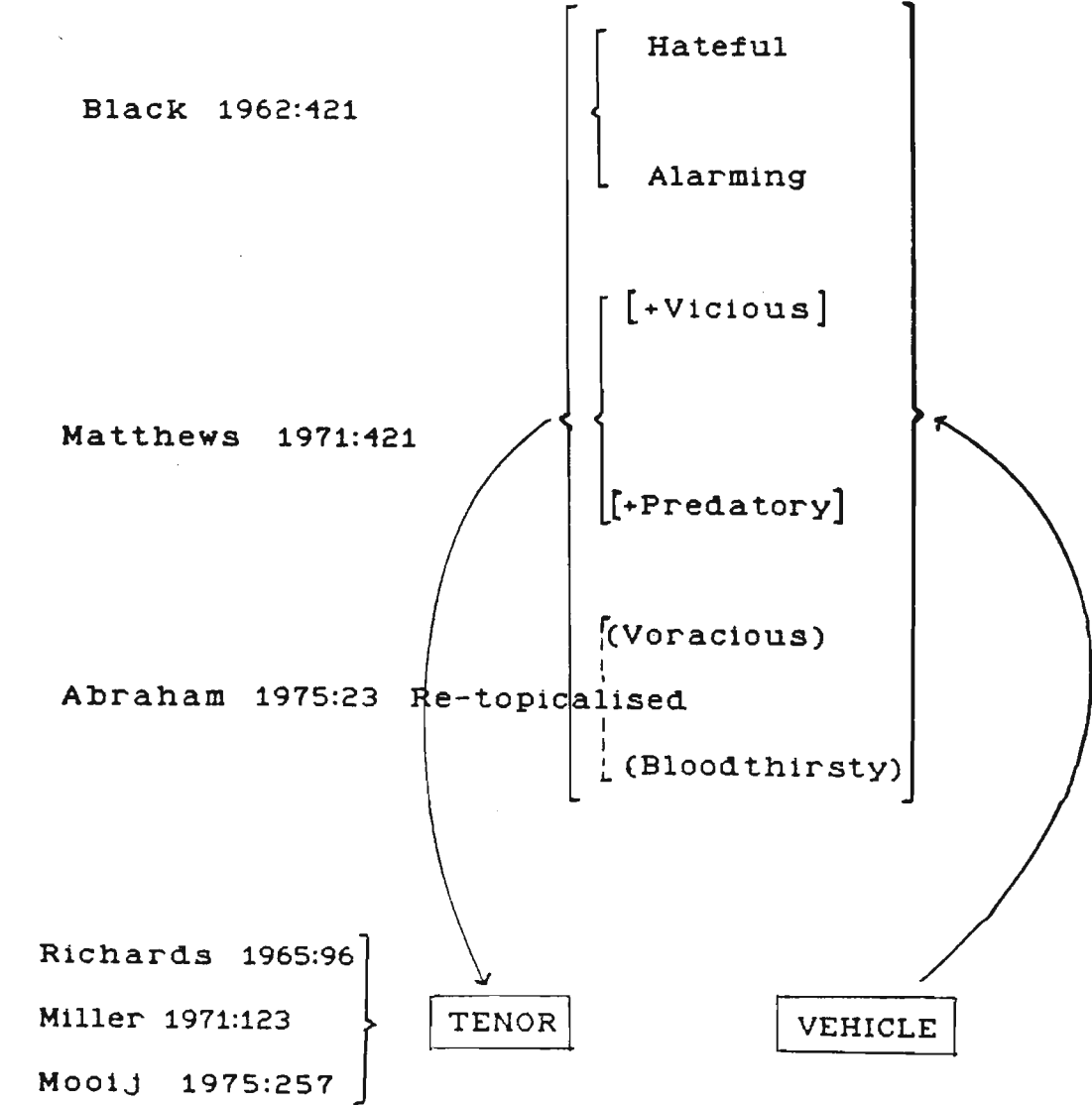
Richards (1936:93) indicated that the meaning of the metaphor depends on the interrelation between the different components of the sentence:

In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is resultant of their interaction.

The relationship between tenor and vehicle can be represented in the following diagram:

Diagram 4: A schematic representation of tenor and vehicle within a metaphorical expression.

Contributing Exponents Interaction View: Interplay
Filter :Transfers Definientes



Sentence 2 : MAN is a WOLF

Black 1962:28

FRAME

FOCUS

Abraham 1975:22

(Remainder) (Part)

Black 1962:41

Suppresses some Features:

Matthews 1971:421	}	[+quadrupedal]
		[+tail]
		[+hairy]

Abraham 1975:23 (Animal)

Miller (1971:128) designates metaphors of the type which we encounter in sentence 2 as surface metaphors. Although Miller gives a pre-transformational generative analysis of the metaphor, it is very appropriate to redefine surface metaphor in generative terms. By "surface metaphor" as distinguished from "suspended metaphor" we may provisionally understand it as a metaphor with both tenor and vehicle present in the surface structure of the sentence.

2.2.1.4 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MILLER'S SURFACE METAPHOR

2.2.1.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The characteristic feature of Miller's surface metaphor, defined in generative terms as stated above, is the fact that both tenor and vehicle are simultaneously present in the surface structure of the sentence.

2.2.1.4.2 THE TENOR OF THE SURFACE METAPHOR

The tenor has been designated by a variety of terms : Brooke-Rose (1958:9) calls the tenor the prosper term; Ingendahl (in Maartens 1980:15) calls the tenor the Nennwort. The tenor is the principal subject in the sentence and is used literally (diagram 2 above). It constitutes the frame (Black 1962:28) or remainder (Abraham 1975: 22) of the metaphor. The frame in Weinrich's terms (1967:6) is the counter-determining context of the metaphor. Weinrich defines the metaphor as a word in a counter-determining context. For Weinrich this means that the metaphorised word (Richard's vehicle) together with the context will constitute the metaphor.

2.2.1.4.3 THE VEHICLE OF THE SURFACE METAPHOR

In contrast to the tenor, the vehicle is used figuratively in a metaphorical expression.

2.2.1.4.4 THE TERTIUM COMPARATIONIS

The interaction between tenor and vehicle or the focus and frame is characterised by the differences between the two distinct subjects being suppressed and by the analogies between the distinct subjects being emphasised (Black 1962:40 and 44). The analogies between the tenor and vehicle is the tertium comparationis. Von Wilpert (in Maartens 1980:16) defines the tertium comparationis as "der Punkt in dem zwei verglichene Gegenstände, etwa - Metapher und Gemeintes, übereinstimmen."

2.2.1.4.5 THE TENOR / VEHICLE RELATIONSHIP OF A NOUN METAPHOR

When the vehicle happens to be a noun the interaction which results between tenor and vehicle can be designated as a relation of identification, as Brooke-Rose (1958:105) terms it: A is called B.

2.2.1.5 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MILLER'S SUSPENDED AND SUBMERGED METAPHOR

2.2.1.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Miller's (1971:128-134) suspended and submerged metaphors are related. The difference between them is a difference of degree.

2.2.1.5.2 THE SUSPENDED METAPHOR

The suspended metaphor is characterised by the tenor not mentioned in the micro-context of the pericope though present in

the macro-context of the gospel narrative. The tenor of the suspended metaphor is only temporarily suspended.

2.2.1.5.2.1 SUSPENDED METAPHORS WITH A RESUMPTIVE FUNCTION

Some suspended metaphors (cf. 2.2.1.5.2) may allude to a tenor temporarily suspended from the context. Such a tenor may exist in the interiorities or exteriorities of the context and be recoverable for interpretation. Thus it seems appropriate for exegesis to qualify such metaphors as suspended metaphors with a resumptive function. The analysis of metaphoric use of language in the New Testament should further be extremely sensitive to the relevant eschatological frame of reference in the New Testament.

2.2.1.5.2.2 SUSPENDED METAPHORS WITH A PROLEPTIC FUNCTION

Suspended metaphors with a proleptic function are eschatological metaphors. The vehicle of such metaphors alludes to the post-existent exteriorities referred to in the text. The anticipatory character of the metaphor may further be strengthened by a shift in the context to the future tense in the main verb. Thus the metaphor exhibits a proleptic character determined by the eschatological frame of reference of the New Testament. The growing tension between the eschatological expectations of the kingdom and the world and the times of Jesus and his apostles designates the "actual referent" of the metaphor as counter-determining context of the metaphor. The vehicle brings the

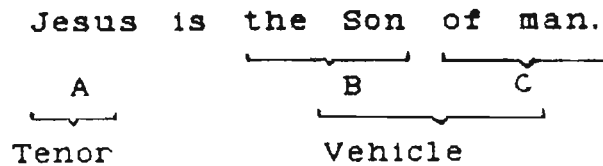
eschatological significance of the tenor in a counter-determining relation to the context of the gospel.

2.2.1.5.3 THE SUBMERGED METAPHOR

The submerged metaphor is characterised by the fact that the tenor is never mentioned in the micro-context nor the macro-context of the text. The tenor of the submerged metaphor is thus totally suspended from the text. Ingendahl (in Maartens 1980:15) accounts for the submerged metaphor by explaining that the vehicle of the submerged metaphor has become self-reliant in the text.

2.2.1.6 BROOKE-ROSE'S GENITIVE LINK METAPHOR

In the gospel of Saint Mark the messianic metaphor "the Son of man" is frequently used. From the counter-determining context of the macro-structure of St. Mark's gospel it is obvious that the vehicle "the Son of man" exclusively leads to the proper term "Jesus" as tenor of the metaphor. The logical formula underlying this metaphor may be presented as follows:

Sentence 3.

The "genitive link" , as Brooke - Rose (1958:40) terms this type of metaphor, occurs in surface -, suspended and submerged metaphors. The vehicle of the genitive link consists of a metaphoric term B qualified by a "third term C". This addition of the third term C to the vehicle characterises the genitive link in Brooke -Rose's terms (1958:108) as a double metaphor. This characteristic requires an analysis of the metaphor in stages. The genitive link may be divided into two types of metaphors.

Brooke - Rose (1958:40) distinguishes one type of genitive link metaphor by a third term C which expresses "some sort of belonging or provenance relationship " and may be designated as a genitive of possession. To this category belong such metaphors as "gospel of the kingdom", "the kingdom of heaven" and the like. Brooke-Rose represents this category of genitive link metaphors with her formula $A = B \text{ of } C$.

The second type of genitive link which Brooke-Rose (1958:148) distinguishes is characterised by the third term C expressing

attribution "which is a split of one idea into two, a thing or person or personification, and an object attributed to it: the eyes of the heart, the hand of God....." Brook-Rose represents this category of genitive link metaphors with her formula $A=B$ is C . To this category belong such metaphors as "the Son of man" and "abomination of desolation".

This concludes our discussion of the recognition of the metaphoric use of language. Next we turn to the foregrounding being used as a structuring device.

2.3.1 FOREGROUNDING AS EXTRA-PATTERNING

In the school of Prague structuralism the striking unconventional use of language has been regarded as a basic feature of metaphoric language. In Prague structuralism extensive study has been devoted to formulating a descriptive literary theory which analyses such language usage that highlights sentence constituents. Havránek (in Garvin 1964:10) called this device of highlighting sentence constituents foregrounding. Havránek recognised foregrounding by a "deautomised" (unconventional) use of language. Havránek (in Garvin 1964:10) defines foregrounding as follows:

by foregrounding..... we mean the use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as

deprived of automatization, as deautomatised, such as a live poetic metaphor (as opposed to a lexical one), which is automatised.

Another Prague structuralist, Mukarůvsky, qualified the phenomenon of foregrounding as "an esthetically intentional distortion of the norm of the standard, "(in Garvin 1964:18) Mukarůvsky's "esthetically intentional distortion " is further characterised by Leech (1966:141) as a "unique deviation " from the norm of the standard language usage. Leech (1966:145) reserves the metaphoric use of "deviant language" for paradigmatic foregrounding.⁶

Of further interest and, in fact, of relevance to our present pursuit is Leech's syntagmatic foregrounding.

2.3.2 THE CHIASTIC PARALLELISM AS SYNTAGMATIC FOREGROUNDING

Leech (1966:146) understood extra-patterning as a deliberate limitation of the grammatical possibilities for selection of lexical items and literary works. This leads to a figure which " can be imagined as a pattern superimposed on the background of ordinary linguistic patterning...." Under extra-patterning Jakobson (1966:399-429) distinguishes parallelism (1960:358) whereas Levin (1969:4-41) on the other hand, specifies coupling.

Both parallelisms and couplings are of primary importance for our study.

Jakobson (1960:358) is known for his proposal on the nature of the use of poetic language in parallelism.

The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.

Jakobson's proposal can be explained in the following way: the creation of parallelism comprises two processes, viz. one of selection and another of combination. These processes will become clear when illustrated by means of the following sentence taken from Psalm 100:5

Sentence 4.

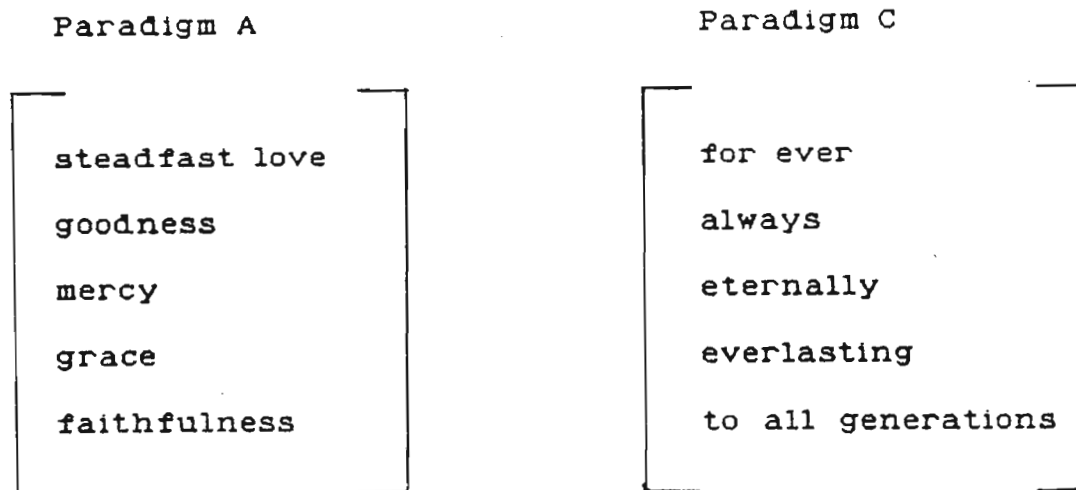
" (For the Lord is good):

his steadfast love (noun = A) endures (Verb = B) for ever (adv. phrase = C)."

Sentence 4 may be regarded as the first stanza of the parallelism. To create a second parallel to sentence 4 (in which the verb is deleted cf. 100:5) the Psalmist first selects semantically - equivalent words. For the purpose of this

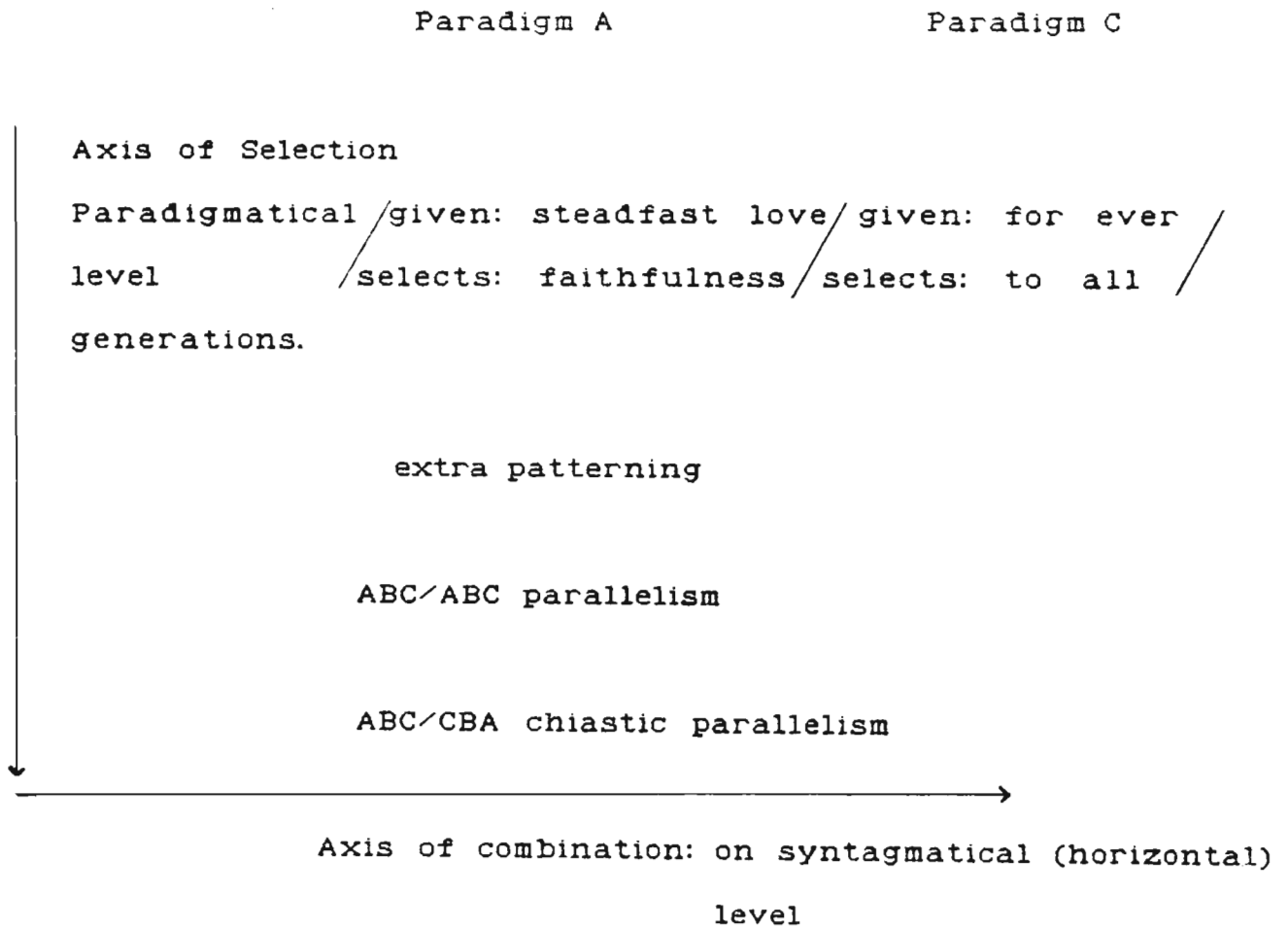
explanation we assume that the Psalmist had been familiar with paradigms of semantically - related words. Taking (A) and (C) as examples it is possible to imagine that the Psalmist knew the following paradigms:

Diagram 5: PARADIGMS OF EQUIVALENT CLASSES OF WORDS FOR (A) AND (C)



Secondly, to create a second stanza parallel to sentence 4 the Psalmist combines the selected words in a similar way to a parallel sentence. These words are combined in a horizontal sequence on the syntagmatical level. The result is a synonymous parallelism. This process of combination can be represented by the following diagram:

Diagram 6: A DIAGRAMMATICAL REPRESENTATION OF JAKOBSON'S
PROPOSAL OF COMBINATION IN PARALLELISM



In the case of sentence 4 the Psalmist had chosen to select synonyms from paradigm A and C. As the result of his choice the following synonymous parallelism follows: Psalm 100:5

Sentence 4

"His steadfast love (A) endures (B) forever (C)

Sentence 5

and his faithfulness (A) (B is deleted) to all generations (C)."

In sentence 5 the Psalmist combined the selected words horizontally in the same sequence. The parallelism may consequently be represented in the following symbols ABC/ABC. In the case where the author chooses to select synonyms, the second conjunctive parallel sentence may realise a synonymous parallelism. In the case, however, where the author chooses to select antonyms the second conjunctive parallel sentence may result in an antithetical parallelism; compare for example sentence 7 in the following example from Romans 6:23

Sentence 6

For the wages (A) of sin (B) is death (C)

Sentence 7

but the gift (A) of God (B) is eternal life(C)

In the case of sentences 4/5 as well as in the case of 6/7, the order of the words in syntagmatical sequence can be presented in the following symbols ABC/ABC. In the case of chiasmic parallelism the second conjunctive sentence will have an inverted word order: ABC/CBA or alternatively ABC/BCA. In chiasmic parallelism Jakobson's proposition remains unchanged. Applying Jakobson's definition to the chiasmic parallelism as extra-patterning in syntagmatic foregrounding Maartens (1980:21) defines the phenomenon as follows: "Chiasmic parallelism realises when paradigmatic equivalent forms are being selected and combined diagonally across in inverted positions."

Levin (1969:33 ff.) based his characterisation of coupling on the above-mentioned proposition of Jakobson. Syntagmatic coupling groups semantically equivalent forms in syntagmatically equivalent positions. The difference between parallelism and coupling is only a difference of degree. Levin's coupling requires a stricter correspondence in syntagmatic position of the semantically equivalent forms: in the coupled parts, for example, the sequence- Article, Noun, Adjective, Verb and Adverb- must be repeated verbatim. Levin's coupling is therefore actually a stricter and thereby also possibly a more marked parallelism.

Words converging in the intersection of chiasm are placed in relief. The chiasm as syntagmatic mechanism foregrounds those words placed in relief. Both parallelisms and chiasmic

parallelisms contribute towards the cohesive unity of sentences and pericopes.

2.3.3 THE STRUCTURING PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

Another important structuring device is what may in Lämmert's terms (1970:52 ff.) be classified as " korrelative Formen der Verknüpfung" (correlative devices of composition). The following characteristics illustrate correlative and consecutive structuring principles: reflection, contrasting events, allegorising of main events, prospection and retrospection (cf. 3.1.3).

This concludes our discussion of linguistic and literary analyse. We shall now proceed with a "theoretically-founded" exegetical interpretation of the parables that are found in the fourth chapter of the gospel according to Saint Mark.

CHAPTER THREE

A "THEORETICALLY - FOUNDED" EXEGETICAL INTERPRETATION OF MARK 4:
1-34.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 PREAMBLE

A literary analysis of the parables of Mark chapter four discloses the highly structured nature of the text. As Maartens has indicated in his articles (cf. 1977: 51 ff. and esp. 1982: 22) all the gospels exhibit a very complex structure. On the one hand the gospels display a clearly recognisable narrative structure. On the other hand they also reveal an indisputable poetic structure. Consequently an analysis of the structure of the gospels requires not only an explanation of the devices of narrative structure, but also of the devices of poetic language usage.

The poetic structure of Mark 4: 1-34 requires the use of principles from the theory of poetic language usage, more specifically, the principles of syntagmatic foregrounding and paradigmatic foregrounding.

A comprehensive analysis of extra-patterning and deviation as devices of syntagmatic foregrounding may be found in Maarten's analysis, of Mt.6 (1977: 53 ff.). Extra-patterning includes Jakobson's parallelism as well as Levin's coupling. All forms of parallelisms are of (the) primary importance to the analysis of Mark chapter four. Deviation includes Fairley's distinction of elaboration, dislocation and fragmentation. Some deviations in the text may be explicated as the effect of several movement transformations and deletions applied in the derivation of the surface structure of sentences in the text. Next we shall turn to the phenomena of the metaphor as paradigmatic foregrounding.

The high frequency utilisation of metaphors is characteristic of Mark chapter four. The metaphor is a figure of speech frequently used in prophetic and apocalyptic literature. The parables of Mark chapter four, as well as other parables, are narrated metaphors. The theory of the metaphor is the only adequate framework within which a "theoretically-founded" interpretation of the parable can be given. The following metaphors are encountered in Mark chapter four: surface metaphors, suspended metaphors, submerged metaphors and compound metaphors.

Structuring principles such as the additive, correlative, consecutive, reflective, contrastive and anticipatory devices of composition are of the utmost importance in the analysis of the structure of the gospel of Mark. These structuring devices unite

and relate multiple lines of action in the text. An analysis of the mutual relationship and interaction of these themes is also indispensable for the interpretation of the text. The use of structuring principles are governed by the requirements of what Sklovskij (1966 : 28) terms the sjuzet of the narrative. The sjuzet is the theme or central point of view developing in the framework of the narrative. Sklovskij distinguishes the sjuzet from the fabula which in turn is the logical chronological sequence of events related by the narrative. A trace of the fabula may be founded in sentence 129, depicting Jesus beginning to teach once more beside the sea. Because the crowd had grown very large Jesus was forced to use the boat as a platform. From there he could effectively project his voice to the crowd on the shore. At this point sentence 132, the sjuzet interrupts the course of the narrative. The fabula constitutes the frame within which the sjuzet develops.

Exegesis of biblical texts, as stated from the outset of the study, requires an analysis of the language structure of the text. Furthermore exegesis enquires into the relevance of both the micro-structure and the macro-structure of the text for its interpretation. In chapter two we have been introduced to the theory that will help us recognise these devices in Mark chapter four.

3.1.2 The Structure of Mark 4: 1-34

Mark 4: 1-34 could be subdivided into eight pericopes (cf. Maartens: 1987):

Pericope A¹: The Parable of the Sower's Harvest (4: 1-9)
sentences 129. - 133.17

Pericope B: The Purpose of the Parables (4: 10-12) sentences
134. - 135 2.3

Pericope A²: The Parable of the Sower's Harvest Explained (4:
13-20) sentences 136.- 136.18

Pericope C: The Parable of the Lamp (4: 21 - 23) sentences
137. - 137.5

Pericope D: The Call of Obedience (4: 24 -25) sentences 138.-
138.5

Pericope C¹: The Parable of the Growing Seed (4: 26- 29)
sentences 139.-139.5

Pericope A³: The Parable of the Mustard Seed (4: 30 - 32)
sentences 140. - 140.5

Pericope B¹: The use of Parables (4: 33 - 34) sentences 141. -
143.

These eight pericopes of our text form a coherent unit and realise a structure which is chiasitic in nature. The common theme is the growth of the kingdom of God. The most likely cause which led to this block of parabolic teaching (as redacted by Mark) is

the disappointing results of Jesus's ministry. This body of teaching also provides an indisputable commentary on the teaching authority of Jesus. His authority goes beyond that of the Jewish scribes and priests in having a universal appeal.

In the above-mentioned list of the pericopes, we have isolated five parables which we have designated as A¹; A²; C; C¹ and A³ respectively. Two other pericopes, dealing with the purpose of parables and the use of parables were given the notation B and B¹ whilst the remaining pericope which we have captioned as "The Call to Obedience" will be referred to as D. This labelling of the pericopes will greatly facilitate our reference to these units.

The symbols that are affixed to the different pericopes indicate some basic conclusions on our part. We note a chiastic formation in Mark 4: 1 - 34 with D functioning as an apex. This pericope unifies the multiple lines of action in chapter four. It interprets the other parables and is also interpreted by them. By labelling the parables A¹, A² and A³ we convey some idea of the interrelationship between them. Likewise a relationship is presumed to exist between the purpose of the parables and the use of the parables, hence we symbolise them by B and B¹, respectively. Stated more specifically, in the extended chiastic structure of the unit 4: 1 - 34, the A layer (A¹, A² and A³) illustrates the incompatibility of the grace of God. More

specifically, A¹ and A² highlight incomparable grace whilst A³ deals with the universal dimension of grace. The B layer highlights the purpose and use of the parables to those who are willing to hear them. Contingent to the manner of hearing, it could either serve as a stepping stone or a stumbling block.

3.1.3 THE STRUCTURING PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION IN MARK 4: 1-34.

The most important structuring devices similar to those found in Mark 4: 1 - 34 are what in Lämmerts' terms (1970: 52 ff.) may be classified as "Korrelative formen der Verknüpfung," (correlative devices of composition). The following four characteristics illustrate both the correlative and consecutive principles in Mark 4: 1 - 34.

3.1.3.1 REFLECTING THE TEACHING AUTHORITY OF JESUS

All the parables in Mark 4: 1 - 34 contribute by a common interest to the teaching authority of Jesus as the main line of action. The authority ἐξουσία of Jesus also extends to the manner in which he administers the divine prerogative to heal the sick and forgive sins. This subject of the authority pertains directly to his teachings (cf. 1:21, 22 and 27; 2:13; 4:6; 6:1; 6:34; 11:18; 12:35 and 14:49). The crowd responds to the authoritative power of Jesus by expressing their amazement (1:22,27;2:12; 5:20 and 12:17. This teaching authority invested in Jesus differs from that of the scribes who derived their

authority from the law and the prophets. Jesus teaches with divine authority. The teaching authority becomes evident in the manner in which the parables inter-relate with and clarify one another (cf. Lämmert 1970 : 53).

Also relevant to the teaching authority of Jesus is the manner in which Jesus remains aloof from Jewish bigotry. In fact, Jewish provincialism is foreign to the company of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus radicalise Jewish exclusivism into a thorough-going universalism. This radical character of the teachings of Jesus amount to a rejection of Jewish sectarianism.

3.1.3.2 CONTRASTING EVENTS

Mark 4: 24 - 25 joins various lines of action in the unit 4: 1-34. The rhetorical question (sentence 137.1) about the lamp accentuates the indiscriminating nature of the gospel. In A¹ the "wasted seeds" (those falling along the path, upon the rocky ground and among the thorns) provide a contrast to the "good seeds" (those falling on the good soil) that produce fruit. Pericope C, the parable of the lamp, also presents some contrasts in the categories of "hid" versus "manifest" and "secret" versus "light." Yet another contrast surfaces in A³, the parable of the Mustard Seed. Here the small seed forms a stark contrast to the resultant huge shrub.

3.1.3.3 ALLEGORISING OF MAIN EVENTS

Another characteristic of the correlative devices of composition is what Lämmert (1970:52 ff.) terms "die allegorische Verkleidung des Hauptvorgangs in einer Seitenerzählung von eigener Geschehensfügung." Mark (or perhaps a pre-Markan redactor) follows this method in interpreting the parable of the Sower. The metaphorised sower identifies the ministry of Jesus and also anticipates the future result of his ministry. This structuring device is further marked by terms like "the birds"; "a lamp"; "a grain of mustard seed"; etc.

3.1.3.4 THE ANTICIPATION OF THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

In Mark 4: 1 - 34, the author anticipates the growth of the kingdom. The individual parables become vehicles to develop and convey this idea. In the parable of the Sower, the seed falling on the good soil does produce fruit. This feature of the parable highlights the fact that growth of the kingdom is certain. The parables of the Growing seed and the Mustard seed also disclose a sense of anticipation. We can point to certain metaphorised verbs that have an anticipatory ring about them. They include $\tau\epsilon\theta\eta$ (137.1); $\varphi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\omega\theta\eta$ (137.3); $\epsilon\lambda\theta\eta$ (137.3); $\mu\epsilon\tau\rho\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ (138.2); $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\tau\epsilon\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ (138.4); $\delta\omicron\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ (138.4); $\alpha\rho\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ (138.5); etc. The structuring devices in Mark's gospel not only inter-relate Mk. 4: 24 - 25 within the wider context of Mk. 4: 1 - 34 but also

collaborate with the chiasmic structure to the cohesion of the unit as a whole.

Now we turn to an interpretation of the different pericopes within Mk. 4: 1 - 34. The results of linguistic and literary analysis will be correlated in an exegetical exposition of the text.

3.2.1 Pericope A¹ : The Parable of the Sower's Harvest (4: 1-9).

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 129. | | καὶ πάλιν ἤρξατο διδάσκειν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν. |
| 130. | | καὶ συνάγεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλος πλεῖστος, ὥστε αὐτοῦ εἰς πλοῖου ἐμβάντα καθῆσθαι ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, |
| 131. | | καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἦσαν. |
| 132. | 2 | καὶ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς πολλάς, |
| 133. | | καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ, |
| 133.1 | 3 | Ἄκουετε. |
| 133.2 | | ἰδοὺ ἐξηλθεν ὁ σπεῖρων σπεῖραι. |
| 133.3 | 4 | καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ σπεῖρειν ὃ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, |
| 133.4 | | καὶ ἦλθεν τὰ πετεινὰ |
| 133.5 | | καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτό. |
| 133.6 | 5 | καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰ πετρῶδες ὅπου οὐκ εἶχεν γῆν πολλήν, |
| 133.7 | | καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς· |
| 133.8 | 6 | καὶ ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος ἐκαυματίσθη, |
| 133.9 | | καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη. |
| 133.10 | 7 | καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας, |
| 133.11 | | καὶ ἀνέβησαν αἱ ἄκανθαι |
| 133.12 | | καὶ συνέπνιξαν αὐτό, |
| 133.13 | | καὶ καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκεν. |
| 133.14 | 8 | καὶ ἄλλα ἔπεσεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν καλήν, |
| 133.15 | | καὶ ἐδίδου καρπὸν ἀναβαῖνοντα καὶ αὐξανόμενα, |
| 133.16 | | καὶ ἔφερεν ἐν τριάκοντα καὶ ἐν ἐξήκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑκατόν. |
| 133.17 | 9 | καὶ εἰλεγεν, Ὃς ἔχει ὣτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω, |

The pericope Mark 4: 1 - 9 which concerns the first of the parables of Mark chapter four can be further divided into two subunits:

Sentences 129.- 132. The setting of the parable of the Sower's Harvest.

Sentences 133.- 133.17. The parable of the Sower's Harvest
To facilitate our study we shall use these divisions, commencing with sentences 129.- 132.

3.2.1.1 Sentences 129.- 132. The setting of the Parable of the Sower's Harvest (4: 1-2)

The new information that is furnished includes references to $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$, $\delta\ \ \acute{\omicron}\chi\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, $\pi\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma$ and $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\alpha\iota\varsigma$. These constitute the focus. Whilst Jesus seems to have taught beside the sea before, $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$ emphasises that this is by no means the first instance. The superlative $\pi\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma$ gives us some insight as to the impact of Jesus' ministry on the $\acute{\omicron}\chi\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. Great or huge crowds gathered around him. Many things ($\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\alpha$) were taught through the parabolic form ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\alpha\iota\varsigma$). This reflects the important role that symbolism played in the teaching of Jesus.

A NP (noun phrase) shift is observed in two instances where $\theta\alpha\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha$ is moved into a sentence-final position. This stylistic feature accentuates the locale of Jesus' teaching.

Sentences 129.-132. are framework material, that is to say, they have been shaped by Mark himself. A comparison with Mt. 13: 1-3a and Lk. 8: 4 shows the Markan redaction touch or redaction on his sources. Two words that confirm this Markan touch are θαλασσα (mentioned thrice) and δίδασκω, and its cognates (mentioned thrice). Both θαλασσα and δίδασκω are foregrounded by their high frequency utilisation. Sentences 132. and 133. realise a synonymous parallelism. Παραβολαῖς and διδάχη are in syntagmatically equivalent positions. Therefore they could be regarded as semantically equal. This highlights the point that one of Jesus' main methods of teaching was indeed through the parabolic form.

Matthew's text only refers once to the sea whereas Luke presents an entirely different setting, that is, Jesus en-route to the cities and villages of Galilee. When we turn to Mt.13: 2-3a we notice that Matthew adheres to Mark more closely. The major changes, except for matters of word order, are Matthew's remark that the people "were standing on the shore" (cf. sentence 131., "and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land") and the substitution of ἐλάλησεν (verse 3a) for ἐδίδασκεν (sentence 132.).

The manner in which Mark has edited sentences 129.- 132. raises certain points that deserve some scrutiny. They include the setting, which centres on the scene depicting Jesus sitting in

the boat with the whole crowd beside the sea on the land; Mark's characterisation of the actors, Jesus and the crowd; and the relevance of sentences 129.-132. with reference to the subject at hand, namely, Jesus' parabolic speech. The setting comprises of Jesus in the boat and the crowds beside the sea. Sentence 129. "and again he began to teach beside the sea" is a terse statement with which Mark begins chapter four. His brevity of language corresponds to the purpose of the statement, which is to place Jesus out in the open where he could meet the people. Once Jesus is in the open, Mark, in similar vein to Matthew, creates the great crowd scene which is introduced in sentence 130. and which constitutes the principal setting for the parables of Mark chapter four: " and a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea."

The significance of this setting turns on the verb *καθισθαί* (to "sit"). The twin verbs *καθῆμαι* - *καθίσω* often possess a connotation that marks the person who is "seated" as worthy of special honour or reverence. This explains why the Old Testament frequently pictures God as sitting upon a throne, an image with which Mark, too, is familiar. Thus *καθισθαί* becomes the vehicle of a verb metaphor, which finds its tenor in the religious milieu of Judaism. By describing Jesus as sitting when he assumes the role of the teacher Mark attributes honour to him and underlines, not merely a Rabbinic, but a divine dignity.

Because of the vast crowds Jesus gets into a boat. The most immediate context (129. - 132.) is what is normative for determining the significance of the boat in 130. The function of the boat is to provide Jesus with a place where he may be seated, which is a sign of honour, and to set him apart from the crowd, thereby emphasising that he is the focal point of attention.

3.2.1.1.1 THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES : JESUS AND THE CROWDS

We have just seen that one purpose for which Mark employs sentences 129.-132. is to create a setting that will in itself ascribe to Jesus honour and divine dignity. A further intention of the verse is to introduce us to the main characters in chapter four.

The protagonist, of course is Jesus. In calling attention to his royal status, Mark is conceivably alluding to him as the Messiah and most certainly as the exalted Christ, or Lord. It is noteworthy that Mark makes no mention whatsoever of the disciples in 129.-132. They do not appear in chapter four until 134. Though Mark informs us that Jesus often spoke confidentially to them (cf. 143). One of the principal parties, namely, the crowds, is foregrounded by its high frequency utilisation. Unlike Matthew's use of the pronoun αὐτοῖς ("them") which refers to the crowds exclusive of the disciples, Mark has no clear-cut distinction. This blurring picture surfaces in 134. in the Markan statement: "those who were about him with the twelve."

The latter group appears to match the very people who had earlier "sat about him" in the house, the true family of God (3.34). It is to the Twelve and these closest followers that Jesus then utters the solemn statement, "to you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God" (135.1). With this extraordinary word the Twelve and a group of followers have received a new and privileged status. They bolster the support that Jesus enjoyed from the twelve disciples who were his Helpers or Adjuvant vis-à-vis the Jews who largely constituted his opponents. Thus three groups emerge, that is, the crowds, the disciples, and an intermediate one consisting of the disciples and "those who were about him with the twelve."

Nevertheless, the crowds (ὄχλος, ὄχλοι) remain central for our understanding of the setting. Linguistically, ὄχλος is one of the terms used by the evangelists to refer to the Jewish masses. Yet some scholars like Jeremias, McNiele, Lohmeyer and Davies believe that ὄχλος is elastic in meaning and can signify mixed members of Jews and Gentiles or even Gentiles exclusively.

A point to note regarding Mark's portrait of the crowd is that he differentiates sharply between them and their leaders. In a number of instances the two groups adopt contradictory attitudes towards Jesus. The scribes accuse Jesus of casting out demons (3:22); the crowds, on the contrary, marvel at his exorcisms

(1:27). The chief priests and the Pharisees attempt to arrest Jesus (3:6); they refrain out of fear, however because the multitudes were astonished at his teaching (11:18). The scribes say that Jesus blasphemes (2:7); the crowds glorify God, saying "we never saw anything like this"(2:12). The Pharisees and some of the Herodians attempt to confound Jesus (12:13-17); the crowds are astonished at his response (12:17). Sometimes Mark places the crowds on a similar footing with the disciples as Jesus denounces the scribes (12:38-40).

This differentiation is present also in the Passion Story. Mark identifies the Jewish authorities as the agents responsible for plotting the death of Jesus and seeing to it that it is carried out. It is, however, Matthew who sharpens Mark's indictment by exonerating the Romans of responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus (27:24 ff.). Thus the role of the crowd is largely that of a mob.

Another striking feature in Mark's description of the crowds is closely related to the first and has to do with the diversified role Mark assigns them. It is noteworthy that outside the Passion story the crowd assumes a negative attitude towards Jesus only once (5:40). Otherwise the crowds: follow after Jesus; witness many of his miracles and confirm them; observe his clashes with the Jewish leaders; and even testify positively of him, particularly when they acclaim him as a prophet; glorify the

"God of Israel" on his behalf or acknowledge him messianically as the "Son of David". All this demonstrates that the crowd in general form the background of the ministry of Jesus (the chorus of ancient Greek drama), but also that Mark is fundamentally well disposed towards them.

The third principal factor in Mark's picture of the crowds is that they share directly in the ministry of Jesus. Mark tells us that Jesus teaches the crowds (6:34; 10:1; 14:49; etc.) and heals their infirmities (1:34; 6:56; 7:57; etc.). The crowds are the specific object of concerted missionary activity (6.34).

3.2.1.1.2 "... AND HE TAUGHT THEM MANY THINGS IN PARABLES..."

Now that we have explored the setting and the actors, we want to discover what 129.- 132. have to tell us about the nature of the language in parables in 4: 1-34. To accomplish this, we shall focus on the pivotal words διδάσκω and παραβολή.

3.2.1.1.2.1 ΔΙΔΑΣΚΩ (Teach)

There is compelling evidence that Mark saw in Jesus' activity as teacher the central thrust of his mission as the one who announced the dawning of God's rule. Repeatedly, in the summaries he has composed, he identifies Jesus as teacher, or names his activity "teaching." Again and again Mark has Jesus addressed as "teacher", frequently in contexts so strange that the two evangelists who later incorporated much of his material

into their own narratives either changed or omitted such an address.

The range of material Mark presents under the rubric "teaching" is varied in content, audience, and method. While he gives examples of what the content of that teaching was, he also simply designates Jesus' activities as "teaching" and let's it go at that. Far more often Mark tells us that Jesus functioned as teacher rather than preacher. However, we may want to account for that fact, the evidence is there, and it is persuasive. The changes Matthew and Luke make in the Markan picture of Jesus do not place such an emphasis on Jesus as teacher but rather lessen it. They may have drawn from their other sources more examples of the sayings of Jesus, but it would be quite wrong to say that the main point on which they wished to correct Mark was to identify Jesus as teacher (as against, for example, a miracle-worker). It would be difficult to put more emphasis on Jesus as teacher as Mark does. It is most instructive for our understanding of Mark's interpretation of the Jesus' tradition to examine the way in which he presents Jesus as teacher.

While it is easy to be misled by word-use statistics, in this case they do give an accurate picture of the relationship between Mark on the one hand and Luke and Matthew on the other hand so far as their views of Jesus as teacher are concerned. All three employ the words for this activity ("teacher," "teaching" as noun

and verb) in about the same quantity, which of course means that since Mark has only about three-fifths of the volume of Matthew or Luke, he uses this vocabulary with considerably more frequency: the verb διδάσκειν is found 15 times; the noun used of Jesus as διδάσκαλος occurs 12 times; Rabbi, an equivalent term used for Jewish teachers, is found 3 times and the general word διδάχη is used 3 times. The significance of this word-count is drawn out by C.F. Evans (1968:47) in his observation that the verb διδάσκειν is found more often in Mark's gospel than in any other New Testament book. In Mark it is used as an inclusive term for Jesus' activity in the synagogue or temple court (1:21; 6:2; 11:17; 12:35; 14:49), for his instruction of the crowds (2:13; 4:1 ff.; 6:34; 10:1) as well as of the disciples (8:31; 9:31). Just occasionally the verb is employed of the disciple's instruction of others (6:30) in obedience to his commission.

Even more interesting is the fact that of the 30 instances where Mark uses one of the cognates of διδάσκειν, there are only five of those which both Matthew and Luke decided to reproduce. In twenty of these cases, neither Matthew nor Luke chose to reproduce it. Either they drop the material, or substitute other vocabulary. Whatever else they may mean, it tends to indicate that Mark used this kind of language in a way that, in a majority of cases, neither Matthew nor Luke felt was particularly appropriate. A detailed consideration of each of these instances

would require more space than this study will allow, yet its undertaking, simple enough with the concordance, will yield significant results for one's understanding of the theological stance of each of the synoptic authors.

Let us now ascertain how Mark arranged what small amount of didactic material he had at his disposal. Following C.F. Evans (1968: 49 ff.) we shall divide the sections of the teachings into five groups:

- A. 2:1-3:6 Controversy stories and five conflicts/
controversies with the Jewish leaders.
- B. 4:1-34 A long section on parables, beginning with a
proverb on parables, and ending on a note which
ensures the reader that Jesus interpreted his
parables to the disciples.
- C. 7:1-23 Another conflict section, in which matters of
Jewish custom are the subject of debate between
Jesus and the Jewish authorities.
- D. 9:33-10:31 Aspects of discipleship are brought together here,
and arranged into a pattern by link-terms or catch
phrases, which suggest a catechetical arrangement.
Additionally, themes such as divorce, true
greatness and true wealth are assembled into a
block of teaching.

E.11:27-12:44 Set in Jerusalem these narratives contain five conflicts which tell how Jesus confronted his enemies and responded to their charges and questions. Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, or a single scribe are introduced as interlocuters, after which it is Jesus himself who poses the question of Davidic messiahship based on Psalm 110:1. The five conflicts creates an inclusio with the five conflicts in chapters 2-3:6.

From this cursory survey it is reasonably clear that Mark is not interested in reproducing anything like the corpus of Jesus' teaching in Mt. 5-7. There is no attempt at systematisation or orderly sequence. Instead, Mark's design is to offer a succession of single authoritative sentences, each bringing to an end a dispute over some issue raised by opponents with hostile intent. Mark's record of Jesus' teaching is similar to the form of the pronouncement-story where the drama is told for the sake of the climactic punch-line. And it is interesting that what impressed the hearers, according to 1:22,27, was not the artistic detail or stylistic features but the note of compelling authority which characterised his teaching. That authority resounds in the anecdotal sections of Mark and the aphoristic sayings which his record of the Lord's teaching contains. This feature of immediacy and directness marked Jesus' teaching off from the rabbinic pedagogy in which precedents and legal judgements hedged about

their opinion and produced an indecisiveness that was frustrating. The scribes taught with the "authorities"- previous rabbis and their rulings were cited, qualified and debated. Jesus taught with authority, which went straight to the heart of the issue. Thus we observe that the rabbis and scribes taught with derived authority whereas Jesus displayed full authority. Furthermore these Jewish teachers received their sanction and ordination from their tutors. Jesus required no such human approval, his teaching authority derived directly from God.

What then can we say of Mark's understanding of Jesus as teacher? Clearly, Mark thought of it as a characteristic activity of Jesus. Time and again, Mark includes in his narrative stories Jesus functioning as a teacher of the law, or a rabbi. A man asks him: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (10:17), and Jesus answers out of the law. Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, bent on trapping him by what he says, address him as "teacher", and engage him in the kind of discussions about the Jewish law they found quite normal (12:14,19). A scribe, hearing his answer about the most important command in that law, acknowledges him as "teacher" (12:32).

Jesus' disciples also use the designation in addressing him, and use it in situations that have nothing to do with such activity on his part (9:38; 10:35; 13:1). Mark reports that Jesus taught in synagogues (1:21; 6:2), the normal place for such activity,

but also, in summary statements that Mark himself composed, he reports that Jesus taught beside the sea, where crowds assembled and they pressed around him (2:13; 4:1-2; 10:1). In fact, Mark assures us that wherever such crowds gathered, it was Jesus' custom to teach them (10:1). Finally Jesus himself identifies his daily activity in the temple during the days prior to his arrest as "teaching" (14:49) and designates "teacher" as the title by which he wants his disciples to identify him to a man in a village (14:14).

In both his use of tradition and redaction, therefore Mark intends to convey to his readers the fact that Jesus functioned as teacher during his earthly career. Mark also identifies Jesus as teacher where one would not have expected it. For example, Mark regularly uses the title, or the verb, in connection with the miracles of Jesus (1: 21-22; 4:38; 5:35; 6:34; 9:17; 9:38; 11:21). In a number of such instances, modern translators find the title as inappropriate in such circumstances as did Matthew and Luke, and so they change it. When the disciples fear for their lives on the stormy sea and plead with Jesus to save them, they address him as "teacher". Matthew and Luke changed that address, as did the RSV, to "master". The RSV follows the same practice where Mark used the Hebrew-Aramaic designation for teacher, namely "rabbi." In each case, it is translated as "master", a permissible translation which nonetheless obscures the force of the original (9:5; 10:51; 11:21; 14:45). Again,

Jesus in the wilderness with his disciples, seeing the masses milling about, had compassion on them, and Mark tells us his compassion found expression in teaching them. Neither Matthew nor Luke found this an adequate formulation, and both changed it omitting the specific reference to teaching. Yet again, when the disciple John wants to complain about a free-lance exorcist who, though not a follower of Jesus, nevertheless is using Jesus' name to achieve results, he addresses Jesus as "teacher," something Luke changed and Matthew omitted altogether (Mk. 9:38). We will need to return to the investigation of the relationship Mark saw between Jesus as teacher and as miracle-worker.

There are other ways in which Mark's preoccupation with Jesus as teacher finds expression in the manner in which he shapes his narratives. For example, when the disciples return from their mission on which Jesus had sent them, they report all that "they had done and taught" (6:30), even though "teaching" was not part of what they had been told to do (cf. 6:7, 12, 13). Mark apparently saw this as a regular part of Jesus' activity and so important that even his tradition did not include, the reader is told, that part of what the disciples had done was to teach. Mark saw a need of one who so regularly taught crowds in synagogues and at the seashore to also furnish his followers with teaching for their assigned mission. Although Jesus experienced rejection in his homeland so that those who heard his teaching were offended in him and refused all faith in him, to the extent

that the normal miraculous activity that accompanied Jesus' teaching and preaching was significantly reduced (6: 4-6a), this did not have any effect on Jesus' continued activity as teacher. If he did not perform his customary teachings because of their lack of faith, it did not hinder his teaching: "and he went about among the villages teaching," Mark tells us.

In such varied ways we can see that Mark, when he shaped the traditions at his disposal into the narrative of Jesus, took from the tradition and introduced references to Jesus as teacher where that was most appropriate. He also included such references where they were not so appropriate, at least not in the view of those who were otherwise as impressed with his narrative as a whole that they modeled theirs after it, namely Matthew and Luke. There is yet more to learn about Mark's understanding of the meaning of Jesus as teacher than can be gleaned from such a general survey of some of the evidence. That meaning for Mark is, it would appear, inextricably bound with Mark's understanding of Jesus as miracle-worker.

The place to begin an investigation of that understanding is with the first miracle story Mark records (1: 21-28). Even a quick reading shows that the framework of the story concerns Jesus as teacher, while the story itself is a healing miracle in the form of the expulsion of a demon. Furthermore the high incidence of Markan vocabulary and grammatical structure points to Mark as the

one who is responsible for giving to this story the framework it now has in his gospel. We have again therefore, on a smaller scale, the use of traditions similar to that which we find in the account of the Cleansing of the temple. This story is bracketed by traditions that interpret it. The interpretation here, indicated both by the juxtaposition as well as the content of the introduction and conclusion provided by Mark, clearly intends to point to the power of Jesus' teaching. Not only does Mark tell us that Jesus' teaching in the synagogue elicited astonishment from those who heard it because of its power and authority (vv. 22,27), he also provides us with an example of that power and authority. Only a word had to be spoken and the demon, a servant of Satan (3:22) had no choice but to obey. The implication is clear: Jesus' power that permits him such incredible acts of authority is also present in his spoken word when he teaches. Even the very command by which this power against the demon is manifest is identified as teaching (v.27). Mark indicated the importance of Jesus as teacher by such a demonstration of the power inherent in his words. Interestingly, both Matthew and Luke apparently thought that there were other ways to show what it meant that Jesus was a teacher, and both changed this story from Mark in such a way that the emphasis was no longer on Jesus' teaching. Matthew omitted the miracle altogether and used the verse about astonishment at Jesus' teaching as the reaction to the Sermon on the Mount (7: 28-29). Thus Matthew chose a different way, that is, by a long teaching session of Jesus

(cf.5:2), to show the authority with which Jesus taught. Luke keeps the introduction (Lk.4:31-32), but alters the conclusion so the reaction now concerns just the miracle, not the teaching (4:36). That is a clear indication that this story in Mark represents Mark's own understanding, one which the other two evangelists found either strange or inappropriate, and so changed it.

Mark, of course, can also point to the astonishment of people at Jesus' teaching in contexts other than miracle stories (e.g.,6:2; 11:18), but this initial episode surely indicates that for Mark the power of Jesus' words which caused such astonishment was the same power as that which was narrated in that first story. Jesus' power is as apparent in his teaching as in his exorcisms. That may also explain Mark's desire to have Jesus addressed as "teacher" in the midst of miracle stories. The request to save the disciples from the stormy sea is preceded by the address "teacher" (4:38). The messenger who from the household of Jairus came to tell Jairus that his daughter is dead and beyond the power of a healer, identifies Jesus as a "teacher"(5:35). The father of a possessed boy, having brought his child in search of Jesus and healing, precedes his request for help by addressing Jesus as "teacher" (9:17). The Aramaic form of that address (rabbi) is used by the blind Bartimaeus when he asks for healing (10:51), and by Peter as he calls attention to the fact that the fig tree which Jesus had cursed had withered (11:21). Such

evidence indicates that the identification of the wondrous power of Jesus' teaching, established with the first miracle story in the gospel, is continued by Mark right through the narrative.

In the light of such an understanding of Jesus as teacher, it is surprising that we are not given more specific instances of the content of that teaching. Time and again, we are told that Jesus taught without any indication of what it was he said (2:13; 6:2; 6,34; 10:1). When the content is given, it is short and specific. Two of the three announcements of Jesus' impending sufferings are identified by Mark as "teaching" (8:31; 9:31). Jesus' explanation of the reason for his "cleansing" acts within the temple is similarly identified as "teaching" (11:17) as is his discussion about whether or not it can be legitimate to think of the messiah as David's son (12:35). Mark wanted to show that he was merely giving selections from Jesus' teachings (the phrasing of 4:2 and 12:18 make that clear), but only in one instance are we given the content of a longer teaching session of Jesus. That session is contained in the fourth chapter of Mark's gospel, which is the focus of our study.

The fourth chapter, with its parables and sayings, is the result of Mark's work as editor and assembler of traditions. Mark knew that this was not the only time Jesus spoke in parables (cf. 3:23), but he concentrated the parables he had into this section of his gospel with the result that we would probably also be

correct in thinking that Mark understood parables as an important teaching technique of Jesus (cf. 4:33). We would probably also be correct in thinking that what is contained in the parables is an indication of the content of Jesus' teaching as Mark understood that content. Let us now consider in more detail the evidence that allows us to conclude that Mark assembled this material.

The theme and vocabulary of 129.-132. give every indication that Mark composed them. Grammatical constructions that regularly occur in materials for which he seems responsible also occur here, and the themes of "teaching," "sea," and "crowds" are characteristic of Markan summaries. Even the boat Jesus entered seems to presume the present context. Jesus had asked that it be readied in 3:9, but it was not used at that time. Thus grammar, vocabulary, and context all point to the Markan composition of 129.- 132. Furthermore, the parable itself is introduced with a double command to pay attention: "Listen, behold." The parable also has at its conclusion a command to give close heed (133.17), and that command is introduced by a shortened form of the Markan attachment formula ($\kappa\alpha\iota \ \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu \ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$, here shortened to $\kappa\alpha\iota \ \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu$). Since the Markan attachment formula also occurs in 133., Mark's composition technique emerges. To a parable that already began with a command to give close heed ("behold," $\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon$), Mark provided a framework marking the same point ("listen," $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$, 133.1; "who has ears to hear, let him

hear, "133.17). Sentence 134. is also a regular Markan motif (Jesus explains privately to his disciples), and 135.-135.2.3 are again introduced with a variant of the Markan attachment formula. Mark has thus attached this saying about the mystery of the kingdom to the context of a teaching session as well. The explanation of the parable is again introduced with one of the variations of the Markan attachment formula (*καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς*, 136.). Perhaps Mark interposed 134.2.3 between parable and explanation. If he did, then we will have to expect that they interpret each other as has been the case in other places where Mark inserts one tradition into another. The conclusion of the explanation is followed by another attachment formula (137.) and two sayings (137.2 - 137.4). Both Matthew and Luke put these sayings into other contexts, an indication that they circulated independently of the context into which Mark put them. We then have for a second time the saying about ears and hearing which Mark had earlier attached to the end of the parable, followed by the attachment formula, and two more sayings, (138.- 138.5). These sayings are again reproduced by Matthew and Luke, but, as before in different contexts. The two following parables are both introduced with a variation of the attachment formula (139. and 140.), and 141.-143. bring the whole session to a conclusion, repeating as a general rule (142.-143.) something of which we saw one example (134.). The next story is also introduced with a variation of the attachment formula (v.35) indicating that Mark is continuing to arrange the stories. Interestingly enough, from

that point on, the stories are introduced without any form of the attachment formula. Apparently Mark found them already attached to each other.

In summary then, the teaching session contained in 4: 1-34 is an example of the way Mark assembled independent traditions into a connected narrative.

3.2.1.1.2.2 ΠΑΡΑΒΟΛΗ (Parable)

Let us now consider the second pivotal word παραβολή. In what way does the word παραβολή contribute to our understanding of the nature of Jesus' speech? To the modern reader this may seem a very straightforward question because we are accustomed to think of parables as simple and vivid stories used to illustrate our Lord's teaching and make it easier to understand and remember. But according to Nineham (1963:126 ff.), that does not loom to be Mark's view. To Mark the parables seem to be intended "to wrap up Jesus' teaching and make it obscure, and so prevent it from having its full impact on those who were not meant to be enlightened and saved by it."

The Greek word παραβολή meant in ordinary usage the putting of one thing alongside another by way of comparison or illustration. Aristotle defines the word as meaning comparison or analogy (Rhet. 11, xx, 2-4). But in the Septuagint the meaning of the word is affected by the meaning of the Hebrew word māshāl (Aramaic: mēthēl) which it was used to translate. As

māshāl has a number of uses, so, in biblical Greek, does the word παραβολή. Nineham (1963: 126 ff.) furnishes us with the array of it's meanings.

It often means a short sentence of popular wisdom, an ethical maxim, or just a proverb in general, e.g. 1 Sam. 24:14, Ezek. 16:44, 18:2. It will be noticed that though such sayings sometimes involve a comparison (e.g. Prov. 10:26) they are often just terse epigrams, that is, what we should call aphorisms rather than parables (cf. Luke 4:23 or Mark 7:15.) The word also has other meanings in the Old Testament. It is used, for example, of the oracles of discourse of Balaam in Num. 23:7 etc., but curiously enough, the passages in the Old Testament which we should naturally call parables (e.g. 2 Sam. 12:1-14, 14:1 ff., Isa.5: 1-7) are not normally described by the word māshāl. There are two exceptions in Ezek. 17: 3-10 and Ezek. 24: 3-5 that show that the word māshāl could refer to them.

Thus, when we are told that Jesus made great use of the māshāl in his teachings, we have to ask which of the many forms of speech covered by the word is being referred to. The answer seems to be that Jesus used more than one form of the māshāl. At one end of the scale we have the proverb in Lk. 4:23, to which Jesus himself applies the word parable (cf. Mk. 7:17): while in Lk. 14:7 ff. the word is applied to advice on the conduct of ordinary life, in similar vein to the book of Proverbs. Then at the other end of the scale are full blown stories, like that of the Prodigal

son, which we tend to think of as the parable par excellence. Can we then tell for what purpose he used any, or all of these types of meshalim, and in particular is there any evidence that the māshāl was ever used to veil or obscure the truth?

A further point about the Old Testament use of māshāl is worth noticing. The word is sometimes used in connection with the word hidah which literally means a riddle and can come to denote speech which is indirect, as opposed to speech which is plain, open and straightforward. In the later books of the Old Testament there are no riddles in the literal sense, so where, as in Prov. 1:6, the word hidah occurs, it must refer to figurative sayings or pregnant aphorisms which call for reflection before they can be understood. The hidah and the māshāl clearly have affinity, since both depend on analogy for their force, and it may well be that the māshāl was sometimes used, not simply to illustrate and clarify teaching, but, like the hidah, to puzzle people and provoke them into reflection and consequent enlightenment. The māshāl might then be regarded as obscure, as some of Ezekiel's parables were (20:49) at its lesson might afterwards be expounded and driven home by an explanation (cf. Ezek. 24.3 ff). It is obvious that when used in this thought-provoking way the māshāl would have different effects on different people. Those who could and would engage in reflection would be illuminated, while those who would not, or could not,

would gain no insight from the māshāl even though they understood the literal meaning of the words.

Attention is also sometimes drawn to the frequent complaint of the Old Testament prophets that the word of God, which was meant to bring life and salvation, was so misunderstood and rejected because of people's sin and ignorance, that it became an instrument of judgement and condemnation (cf. Isa. 28:13, Jer. 23:29). Such misunderstandings of the prophetic message became so much a commonplace that when Isaiah was called to proclaim God's word, his commission from God took the form of an ironical command to say to this people: "Hear and hear, but do not understand, see and see, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed" (Isa. 6: 9-10).

Yet when the force of all this has been admitted, it remains doubtful whether it amounts to evidence that the māshāl was ever used as a deliberate means of obscurity, rather than revealing the truth.¹ There is only one strong piece of evidence to the contrary that has been quoted (Isa. 6: 9-10). Parables were constantly used by the rabbis at and after the time of Jesus. They make it clear that they used them for the sole purpose of clarifying and driving home their teaching. When we observe the close similarity of many of these rabbinic parables to Jesus,

both in form and subject-matter, it seems natural to suppose that he used parables in the same sort of way, and with the same purpose, as the rabbis. That is to say, his general purpose in using parables was to make the truth as fully understood as possible. Jesus may well have used parables, as the rabbis did, to provoke reflection and so bring his hearers to a recognition of the truth. But that is something very different from trying to conceal the truth.

It is nonetheless true that to us the bearing of one or two of the rabbinic parables is obscure. This is either because they have been transmitted to us without their original context which would have made their application clear or because the saying was a current one whose meaning was generally understood at the time of the utterance, though it is no longer known to us. From this an important point emerges; although a māshāl in Jesus' time was not intended to obscure, its meaning was essentially bound up with its original context and the particular circumstances of its utterance, and so it would become enigmatic as soon as the circumstances were forgotten. Because the sayings of Jesus were commonly preserved without their original context, and as a result their precise bearing, very soon became a matter of uncertainty and conjecture. This is also particularly true of the parables. Moreover, as time went on, the conditions which had originally given rise to the parable frequently changed, and the church, being naturally unwilling to discard the known words

of Jesus, found new applications for them which made sense in the changed circumstances. So by the time a parable reached the Evangelists its original bearing might have been entirely lost (cf. e.g. Mt. 7:6 - "throwing pearls before swines" and Mt. 24:28 and Luke 17:37 - the saying about the eagles) or it might have attracted to itself one or more later applications and meanings. It was thus natural that parables should come to be thought of as rather enigmatic and mysterious utterances.

Another factor which operated in the same direction was the tendency to treat the parables as allegories. We have already treated this aspect extensively in the first chapter of this study. Christendom had to emancipate itself from this allegorisation if the truth about parables was to be appreciated. In Mark's gospel we find an allegorical interpretation to the parable of the Sower. The seed stands for the word, those sown on the pathway stand for a certain category of people, and so on with all the other items in the parable. It also seems to be Mark's view that the reason why the readers could not understand the parable was because they could not discover the equivalents. They could not find the key, as it were, to the code.

But our findings suggest that in fact māshāl was seldom, if ever, of this allegorical type. It was a quite different type of saying, with a different purpose. The typical parable consisted of a story, which might be either true or imaginary, but in

either case was completely true-to-life and consistent. The persons and events did not stand, item by item, for anything else, but the story was meant to be heard out to the end, when it would be found that as a whole it had something to teach. It might exemplify the right sort of conduct in a memorable and appealing way (e.g. the parable of the Good Samaritan) but very often the lesson would depend on an argument by analogy (cf. e.g. Lk. 7: 7-10). We are expected to consider the story as a whole, and to reflect on its central feature until it brings home an unrecognised truth about our relationship with God. Because many of the parables are basically arguments from analogy, they have only a single point to make. Our references to A. Jülicher in chapter one have reiterated his noteworthy contribution in this regard. Therefore we can generalise that allegorical features were the attempts of the early church to extract meaning from obscure or apparently unedifying texts. The allegorising explanation of the Sower-parable ascribed to Jesus in Mk. 4: 14-20, the story of the unwilling guests (Mt. 22:1 ff.), and the explanation of the parable of the Tares in Mt. 13: 36-43 would all furnish us with examples of this practice. There remains, however, still another possibility that should not be ruled out because of its simplicity. This has to do with the probability, despite its seeming remoteness, that Jesus himself may have composed allegories on occasion.

This completes our limited discussion of the background and New Testament usage of the concept of παραβολή. Let us now proceed further into the parable of the Sower's Harvest.

3.2.1.2 Sentence 133.- 133.17 The Parable of the Sower's Harvest (4: 3-9)

Sentence 133.13 focuses on the lack of productivity of the seed that fell among the thorns. While a progression is discernible in the first three soils: those seeds falling on the path enjoy no growth at all, those on the rocky ground produce shoots, and those in the thorny ground grow a little. All three types, however, produce no crop. Therefore this obvious lack of productivity when stated in our text has a well thought out and deliberate intention. It serves to highlight the productivity of the last type of soil and almost anticipates the contrasting yield of the good soil, the focal point of this parable.

The next sentence that introduces new information is the sentence 133.15. This undoubtedly constitutes the tertium comparationis of the parable of the Sower's Harvest. The hyperbolic manner in which the harvest is depicted accentuates the bumper harvest. This has prompted Jeremias (1954:150) to sum up the abnormal tripling (thirty, sixty, and hundredfold) as a harvest presented in true Oriental fashion. A tenfold yield counted as a good harvest, and a yield of seven and a half as an average one. Hunter (1971:36) views this segment of the parable as an example

of the rule-of-end stress, where the spotlight falls on the last item in the series.

In sentence 133.17 we are confronted with an almost jarring but forceful reminder that introduces a note of urgency to this parable. The importance of attentive hearing to this parable in particular is advocated.

A few transformations occur in our text. This comprise of NP shifts which moves a noun in the sentence to a sentence-final position. In sentence 133.4 it will be noticed that the noun τὰ πτερυγα (the birds) has been moved across the verb to a sentence-final position. In sentence 133.10 the NP αἱ ἄκανθαί (the thorns) has also been moved to a sentence-final position. The function of both these movements are stylistic. Furthermore, the synonymous parallelism that is realised between these two sentences are rendered more striking by these transformations of their noun phrases to a sentence-final position.

3.2.1.2.1 METAPHORIC USAGE AND THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER'S HARVEST

We shall begin a literary analysis by giving consideration to metaphoric usage. It is our contention that the theory of the metaphor is the only adequate framework within which a theoretically-founded interpretation of the parable can be given. Unlike the traditional approach of isolating words that are used figuratively and identifying them as metaphors, we also observe

that entire parables can serve as a vehicle of symbolic language usage.

In the parable of the Sower's Harvest, we notice that the actual vehicle seed (σπορος or σπέρμα) is not mentioned in our text but is substituted by the words ὁ, ἄλλο and ἄλλα. Despite this substitution, our challenge on hand remains the recovery of the tenor of our metaphor.

9 Sentence 136:3 offers us a clue. Here it is stated that the sower sows the word (τον λόγον). Therefore we can speak of certain semantic features of ὁ λόγος and its cognates, namely, (the gospel) (the kingdom of God) (new teaching) having been retopicalised and transferred. The absence of the tenor in the micro-context of this pericope gives it a suspended status. Since this is recoverable in the Interpretation of the Sower (sentences 136. - 136.17) that immediately follows our parable, it becomes only a temporary suspension. Our literary analysis of the metaphoric usage could be summed up in that the gospel (and its cognates) constitute the suspended tenor of our metaphor.

3.2.1.2.2 A PARABLE OF THE SOWER/SOILS/SEED/SOWER'S HARVEST?

Before we proceed any further, let us comment on the title that we have given to this parable. The parable of the Sower takes its name from Mt. 13:18, "You therefore, hear the parable of the Sower." The Markan account of the Sower is remarkably similar to the Matthaean report, perhaps a sign of faithfulness and the

importance the parable had. Mark's parable speaks of the seed in the singular, Matthew's in plural; and the yield is reported in an ascending order in Mark (13:16) and a descending order in Mt. (13:8b). Luke's parable differs more extensively in detail but contains the same rudiments. Nevertheless, because, the traditional name of this parable has not been derived from its contents, scholars have debated throughout the years whether this parable is indeed a parable of the Sower (cf. Michaelis:1956 and Smith:1975), or of the Soils (cf. Dalman:1902 and Ladd:1974), or of the Seed (cf. Smith:1937 and White:1964).

According to the Markan point of view, it would seem that the major accent in this parable lies on the seed and its fate, even though the words σπορος or σπέρμα are not explicitly mentioned. The importance of the Sower, for example, comes to bear only in terms of the seed. Of the types of soils, reference is made to that which is rocky (13:6) and to that which is good (13:14), but to none other.

The seed, on the other hand, is a constant throughout the story. The circumstances alter from one scene, but the fate of the seed is always carefully depicted. Furthermore, despite parables customarily reaching their culmination at the end, this parable culminates with the eye resting, not on the sower or the soil, but on the abundance of grain that the sown seed has produced. Consequently, the parable of the Sower is in reality a "parable of the Sower's Harvest."

Yet even though we are of the opinion, we shall, for the sake of convention and to facilitate the discussion of the relationship between the pericope and the one known as the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower (4: 13-20) continue to refer to it under its familiar designation of the "parable of the Sower."

The Sower is the first of the so-called "Parables of Growth" (cf. Dodd 1961:140). Unlike the others, it is not prefixed with the introduction "The Kingdom of Heaven [God] is like [may be compared to]" This is perhaps due to the prevalence of a strong pre-Markan tradition that both Matthew, Mark and Luke were acquainted with. Yet despite the absence of this introductory formula, the very presence of the story of the Sower in Mark's parable chapter, classifies it as a "parable of the kingdom".

Two major impressions are created by the evangelist Mark regarding public response to Jesus up to this particular utterance of parabolic speech. One is that of resistance to his teaching authority by the Pharisees. In open conflicts, Jesus is accused of blasphemy, table fellowship with sinners, failure to fast, and breaking the sabbath (2:1-3:6). Such concerted opposition occasioned the first strategic withdrawal from the towns and synagogues (3:7). Ironically he was also driven from the towns because of his enormous popularity. This point , extraordinarily important for the setting of the parable is

stylised emphatically by Mark. There was a popular claim of almost hysterical proportions and response to his healing ministry (1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3: 7-8). His family came for him (3: 31-35). Of necessity he taught in the country by the lake in a boat. The literary context of the three gospels indicates a large crowd (Mk. 4:1; Mt. 13:2; Lk. 8:4). Both Mark and Matthew reported that it was necessary for Jesus to enter the boat. This situation may well explain his choice of parable, and this setting should caution us from turning the story entirely into a teaching for disciples.

Our parable may be outlined as follows: the fourfold series of scenes in which the seeds which fall on the path are devoured by the birds, those which fall on the rocky ground are scorched and withered, those who fall among the thorns are choked, and those which fall on good soil produce fruit. These four scenes fall into two groups: the seeds which do not produce fruit and those which do. From the stand point of form, although the parable of the Sower depicts an experience that was typical in ancient Palestine, it must be classified as a fable; because it describes an event in past time. Moreover, since we have discovered that the story contains metaphors, it is a mixed form, or, more exactly, of an allegorical type.

3.2.1.2.3 THE ORDER OF SOWING AND PLOUGHING IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER'S HARVEST

The agricultural picture of the parable of the Sower has prompted questions concerning the order of the sowing and ploughing in the

Parable of the Sower. Jeremias (1954:12 ff.) has asserted confidently that in Palestine sowing precedes ploughing and White (1964: 300-307) contradicted him just as confidently. The same texts are often adduced to support both positions.

According to classical, Old Testament, inter-testamental, New Testament, early Christian, and Rabbinic literature, ploughing regularly follows sowing in order to bury the seed. Ploughing before sowing is also the generally recommended procedure, but this was not always done. In particular, when wheat was sown prior to the first autumnal rains, the common practice in Palestine seems to have been to sow directly on to unploughed fallow ground. Therefore, the situation Jesus had in mind in the parable of the Sower, cannot be decided on the basis of uniform practice but must be evaluated from the parable itself.

It may be assumed in the light of the absence of indication of a special sowing in the Bible and post-Biblical literature that Jesus envisaged an autumn sowing, probably of wheat. The questions remain, however, Was this autumn sowing before or after the rains had begun? and if before, was it in ploughed or unploughed land?

Jeremias (1954:11 ff.) confidently describes a scene possible before the start of the rains:

The Sower is depicted as striding over the unploughed stubble and this enables us to understand why he sows "on the path": he sows intentionally on the path which the villagers have trodden over the stubble, since he intends to plough the seed in when he ploughs the path. He sows intentionally among the thorns standing withered in the fallow because they , too, will be ploughed up. Nor need it surprise us that some grains should fall upon rocky ground, the under-lying limestone, thinly covered with soil, barely shows above the surface until the ploughshare jars against it.

Jeremias has stated that the sower sows "intentionally" on the path he will soon plough up. But the parable, if anything, suggests that the seeds falling on the path, shallow earth, and among thorns were not sown there intentionally but inadvertently. For in the parable, all the seeds which are mentioned as falling on the three soils are described as unfruitful. Further, the parable says that birds eat the seed on the path; and this is more likely to happen on an unploughed path. It is doubtful whether a farmer would plough up the villager's path since they could be expected to make a new one over the freshly planted seed. It is also questionable that a sower would "intentionally" sow among parched thorns, since new thorns often rise near their predecessors. And anyway, the thorns among which the seed is said to fall seems to refer not to the parched thorns remaining

from summer, but to those which later sprung up (ἀνέβησαν 133.10).

The scene pictured in the parable of the sower is true to life without imagining any special intention or exceptionally careless farming. Patches of shallow earth and thorns are so plentiful in Palestine that seeds would inevitably fall on some of them, whether before or after ploughing. Perhaps more seed would be lost among rocky patches and thorns in an unploughed field. But this could not demonstrate that the field was unploughed since the parable does not specify anything about the proportions of seed falling in the various soils. Neither the confidence of Jeremias that the field was unploughed nor that of White that the field was ploughed seems warranted. The scene portrayed in the parable of the Sower is sufficiently generalized to apply to almost any sowing in Palestine. Therefore, in terms of the realism of the parable, it makes little difference whether or not the field was ploughed before sowing.

3.2.1.2.4 A PRE-MARKAN TRADITION TO THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER'S HARVEST?

We have made reference to the possibility of a pre-Markan tradition to the parable of the Sower. Weeden (1979: 97-120) and Crossan (1973: 244-246) contend that the early christians who created the interpretation of the parable of the Sower (4:13-20) also left the imprint of their hermeneutic on the parable by reworking certain of its sections to resonate in concert with the interpretation. Parts of Mark 4: 5,6,7 and 8, in particular, are

deemed to constitute significant and carefully conceived alterations in the original parable. Once these alterations are identified and excised from the parable, then only can the form and content of Jesus' original message emerge in clarity.

Crossan (1973: 244-246) provides us with clues which suggest that the account of the experience of the seed which fell on the rocky ground has been intentionally embellished and reshaped.

1. The length of this particular seed episode is noticeably longer than the other episodes and strikingly longer than the climatic episode of the grain-bearing seed.
2. The triple reference to the soil deficiency of the rocky ground appears unwarranted and out of place in the normally terse narrative style of a parable.
3. Two conflicting images are used to depict the fate of the seed which has fallen on rocky ground. One image is that of seed which strikes shallow root and springs up for a while before it finally withers (133.6; 133.7; and 133.9). The other image is that of seed that dies in the scorching heat of the first day's sun (133.8).

Crossan argues in his article that these curious features of length and redundancy can be plausibly accounted for as expansions of the original account. In the parable, as Jesus told it, the destruction of the seed was simply attributed to the scorching of the first day's sun. But this imagery of the sun scorching the seed sown on rocky ground, Crossan contends, did not adequately correspond with the allegorical signification attributed to this particular seed-event in the Interpretation. Consequently, that section of the parable was reworked into closer alignment with the pictorial image of the Interpretation. The seed was redepicted as being shallowly rooted, experiencing a spurt of growth, and then withering under the heat of the sun.

When these alleged insertions are excised from the text and the episode of the seed on rocky ground is structurally aligned with the episodes of the other wasted seeds, the cogency of Crossan's insight becomes evident. Such an arrangement is rendered by Weeden (1979:99) in this way:

ὁ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν / καὶ ἦλθεν τὰ πετεινὰ / καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτό.
 (Some seed fell along the path/and the birds came/and devoured it.)
 καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ πετρῶδες / καὶ ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος / ἐκαυματίσθη.
 (And other seed fell on rocky ground; and when the sun rose/it was scorched.)
 καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας / καὶ ἀνέβησαν αἱ ἀκάνθαι / καὶ συνέπνιξαν
 αὐτό.
 (And other seed fell among thorns/and the thorns grew up/and choked it.)

From this structural arrangement certain features held in common by these textual units emerge. First, each unit exhibits a

threefold, terse paratactic construction. Second, in each unit, the seed remains completely passive. In each unit an external agent actively manifests itself (birds, sun, thorns). And in each unit the external agent destroys the seed violently (devoured, scorched, choked). The ramifications of this version of the Markan account are absolutely important for the development of our interpretation in this study.

According to our "theoretically-founded" exegetical paradigm (as expounded in chapter two), Crossan's hypothetical text realises a synonymous parallelism. Each unit reveals that words occupy paradigmatic equivalent positions and therefore could be regarded as being semantically equal. We shall explore this feature in a more detailed manner when we deal with the pericope of the interpretation of the parable of the Sower.

In addition to 133.6; 133.7; and 133.9 Crossan argues that the reference to ἀναβαλόντες καὶ αὐξανόμενα (growing up and increasing) in 133.15 is a secondary elaboration which introduces an awkwardness in the narrative logic. This reference to the seed "growing up and increasing" is positioned anachronistically after the end of the growth process has already been indicated by the statement, "it brought forth grain." Crossan cannot find anything at the corresponding point of the Interpretation (4:20) that would have motivated the insertion of the phrase "growing up and increasing" in the parable at 133.15. In fact he finds this particular insertion

introduces a new motif in both the parable and the interpretation :the "growing" motif.

An analysis of Mark's fourth chapter reveals the presence of this same motif at other curious points. It is found in negative form in the expansion material of 4: 5-6. It is found in the parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (4: 26-29) and the parable of the Mustard Seed (4: 30-32) and, significantly, at points where those parables have also been secondarily expanded (4: 28,31 ff.). The presence of the growth motif in all of the expanded sections of the parables in Mark chapter four leads Crossan (1973a: 45-46) to conclude that Mark is responsible for making all the additions to the parables in the chapter and for introducing the motif of growth into the respective parabolic messages.

This identification of a growth theme is very convincing but perhaps Crossan should not attribute their creation to Mark. Weeden (1979:101) basing his hypothesis largely on the work of H.W.Kuhn offers us a rather convincing alternative. It is both their contention that the redactor is not Mark but the pre-Markan christians who first fashioned the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower and created the parable collection which Mark has appropriated for his own in Mark chapter four. Weeden has shown that the collection of the parables, the creation of the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower, and the secondary expansion of the parable of the Seed Growing Secretly and the

Mustard Seed were all motivated by the peculiar sociological and theological problems of some pre-Markan christians. Furthermore the community responsible for the Interpretation is also viewed as the one responsible for the changes in the original form of the parable of the Sower.

The early christians who allegorised the parable did so to transform it into a vaticinium ex eventu to address explicitly the crisis threatening their community. In the development of the allegory for this purpose it was not difficult for them to make the birds of the parable (133.4) into a symbol representing Satan (136.5). Nor was it difficult to make choking thorns (133.10) into a symbol signifying " world concerns" which stifle the maturing process of some christians (136.13). But, as we have noted, the image of seed being scorched by the sun did not adequately satisfy the need for a symbolic-representation for christians who initially and superficially respond to the gospel with enthusiastic commitment, but later lapse when faced with life's misfortunes or the onslaught of persecution (136.7 ff.). Consequently a new version of the fate of the seed on rocky ground was fashioned to provide the adequate symbolic-representation for that particular community crisis (133.7 and 133.9). Crucial to the framers' kerygmatic credibility would have been the desirability to harmonise fully Jesus' parabolic description of the seed on rocky ground with the christian situation depicted in the Interpretation.

The growth motif in 133.15 (growing up and increasing) is central to the Interpretation which reveals that there is a programmatic development of progressive degrees of christian growth as one moves categorically from the first type of response to the gospel to the last. If this reference to growing up and increasing is removed the parable would have no hint of growth. Here again one can appreciate the desire ^{of} if the early christian community to harmonise the Interpretation with the parable itself.

Let us comment further on 133.13 (and it yielded no grain) in our consideration of the growth motif in the parable and the Interpretation. What is its function? We have already identified it as a focus which comprises that information which is not anticipated by the reader of the text. In terms of narrative logic the comment, "and it yielded no grain," is superfluous, if not anticlimactic consistently, for it introduces the concept of an active role for the wasted seed in a narrative which up to that point has portrayed all ill-fated seeds as completely passive. Whereas the wasted seed passage focuses on the disastrous fates experienced by the seeds, the comment in 133.13 shifts attention to the issue of productivity or lack of productivity. The comment also strains structural consistency because its presence in the text produces a fourfold construction for the episode of the seed among thorns which

stands in stylistic tension with the threefold construction characteristic of the rest of the parable. Deletion of the comment robs the parable of nothing - an opinion Matthew and Luke apparently shared since they both deleted it (Mt. 13:7 and Lk. 8:7). This absence in Matthew and Luke has prompted the view of 133.13 as an interpolation which was inserted to cohere with the needs of those who created the interpretation.

In summary, we can consider the above-mentioned expansions as contributing nothing essential to the message of the parable. On the contrary, they tend to blunt its conciseness, confuse its narrative logic, blur its focus and even soften its parabolic impact. If they are removed from the parable, the thrust of the parable is enhanced. The allegorical counterparts of the expansions of 133.7; 133.9; and 133.13 and the growth motif inherent in these counterparts are essential to the message of the Interpretation. When the parable is viewed to serve as the basis for the particular allegorical vision of the Interpretation, then and in that context and in the service of that purpose, the interpolations of 133.7; 133.9; 133.13 and 133.15 became essential elements of the reimagined parable, integral to its message and meaning.

On this final point, a word is in order with regard to the anomalous feature of the redactional insertion in 133.15 (growing up and increasing). This clause, while not having a

textual partner in the Interpretation itself, resonates with its counterparts in the expanded sections of the other parables in this Markan collection. It sounds at the outset of the collection a theme germane not only to the Interpretation but central to the theology of the entire collection. This theology being one formulated by the creators of the collection to assure, in the face of their missiological reverses, the growth of the kingdom to full manifestation.

3.2.1.2.5 A "THEORETICALLY-FOUNDED" INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER'S HARVEST

Having now excised the parable of the Sower from possible interpolations, let us proceed to offer a "theoretically-founded" interpretation.

In our discussion of the semantic aspects of the parable of the Sower, we have highlighted the use of focus to introduce information that is not anticipated. When Crossan (1973:108) speaks of the motif of discontinuity, he is referring to this very same feature. The surprisingly abundant size of the harvest in the face of the frustration of the sowing process throughout most of the parable is not something one would have anticipated in the conclusion. This focus/motif of discontinuity certainly appears in the unexpected break in the order of the serial development used to accentuate the harvest: thirty, sixty and hundredfold. The reader further experiences a triadic dissonance created by the final 100, where 90 or 120 would normally be expected. But the final effect of this reversal of the readers

expectations is not the undermining of confidence but in its reinforcement.

In chapter one we have demonstrated the inadequacy of allegorical interpretation in eliciting the basic message inherent in a parable. Objectivity was advocated as the only true and honest pursuit and we were cautioned against imposing any restriction that truncates interpretation. We also were made aware of the possible existence of parables bearing allegorical features. Stated differently, a parable could not contain a number of metaphorical disclosures, related but different, each functioning polyvalently, yet joining in concert to create the parable's total metaphoric impact.

An appreciation for this polyvalent, isomorphic signification in parables has provided some interesting inroads to the meaning of the parables of Jesus - this approach, called structuralism, has facilitated the recovery of the nature and function of symbolism, particularly with respect to the role and function of binary opposites and mythemes. But structuralism has serious limitations in its bracketing of socio-historical issues which has been addressed well by Paul Ricoeur (1975:63-73).

As was outlined in chapter two, there are two interconnected orders of symbolic reference which are vital to the derivation of meaning. On the level of the first order, the vehicle/signifier

(Weeden 1979:110) that is, the words: "birds devoured it" (seed) denotes a concept signified i.e., the idea of birds devouring seed. As the symbolic reference moves from the first order to the second order a perceptual transformation occurs. The first order vehicle/signifier and the tenor/ signified (Weeden 1979:110) become transformed into a parabolic sign which serves as the vehicle/ signifier of the second order tenor/ signified. In parables this second order tenor/ signified (e.g., whatever significance birds devouring seeds connotes) is never explicitly stated. As a result the reader experiences an unstable indeterminacy which as Dodd (1961:5) expresses "teases or lures" him/her into supplying the tenor/ signified in order to complete the signification/metaphoric process. In supplying this conceptual entity which the reader identifies as the tenor the reader is dependent not only on the semantic structure of the parabolic sign, but also upon his/her meaning-system.

When the reader is strongly influenced by established, comprehensive meaning-systems, there is a strong tendency to provide the text with meaning, rather than discerning meaning in the text. This reading-in meaning/eisegesis occurs particularly when the meaning-system of the reader is at significant variance with the meaning-system of the parabler. Therefore Susan Wittig (1979:91) states "if the receiver of the [parabolic]² sign does not possess that meaning-system [of the sender],³ he cannot discover the exact signified [tenor] intended by the sender

although he may understand very well the nature of the signifier [vehicle] and may be able to decode with difficulty the first order system."

A congruence between the meaning-system of the encoder and the meaning-system of the decoder is critical for decoding the tenor of the parable. How can this congruence be achieved in the case of the parable of the Sower? The interpreter's first task is to identify the meaning-system of the parabler and then to find an interpretative meaning-system that corresponds with the parabler's meaning-system without sacrificing the integrity of the interpreter.

/ The task of identifying the meaning-system of the parable of the Sower would have been easier if we knew the specific socio-historical occasion when Jesus uttered the parable. Lacking knowledge of that, clues to the parabolic meaning-system must be derived from two points of reference: the vehicle of the parable of the Sower and its principle subject, the kingdom of God. In the dynamic interrelationship which exists between the two, lies the parabler's meaning-system and also access to the tenor. What are the clues that one can garner from the parable's tenor?

Any cursory reading of our parabolic text yields the realisation that the meaning-system of the parable of the Sower has to do with the natural environment. Its semantic structure depicts

events taking place in nature. By analysing this semantic structure our understanding can be carried beyond a superficial rendering to an appreciation of the inner dynamics at work within the text. These dynamics would contribute to the identification of the parabler's inherent meaning-system. We shall now turn to such an analysis.

When the four instances of sowing are placed in parallel alignment and one reads the resultant grid synchronically, one discovers not only that the final instance of sowing leads to a culminating jolt of extreme proportion and extravagant abundance, but also that each of the episodes of the wasted seed terminates in a similarly extreme manner. They end in a jarring note of extraordinary violence. The seeds are devoured, scorched, choked. It is almost as though the fate of all the seeds, not just the fate of the abundantly producing seed, should be marked with an exclamation point.

When this jarring character of the verbs of destruction, used to describe the fate of the wasted seed, is set over the jolting character of the extravagant productivity of the seed on the good ground, one is alerted to the presence of the rule of contrast or binary opposition as Weeden (1979:111) calls it. Recognition of this parabolic feature elicits the realisation that the parable is speaking not just of failure and success in the normal course of farming but to the deeper issue of the fundamentally

dialectical character of all life, that is, the struggle between good and evil, life and death, creative advance and dissolution.

Perceived from the theoretically founded exegetical framework this rule of contrast/binary opposition could be stated as realizing an antithetical parallelism. This parallelism confirms the judgement alluded to earlier, that the purpose of the three episodes of the wasted seed is not to communicate some message about the relative growth or lack of growth of seed upon different kinds of soil. Rather, the sole purpose of the wasted seed section is to depict in sharpest fashion one side of this antithetical parallelism. This one side (devoured, scorched, choked, wasted seeds) serves as a foil for the other side (thirtyfold, sixtyfold, hundredfold: harvest). The antithetical parallelism then has been responsible for establishing and intensifying the phenomenon of resolution by reversal.

If our analysis is pressed further, an additional phenomenon is exposed in the underlying structure of the parable. Each of the three wasted-seed sections unfolds in a tripartite surface structure: a sowing scene, a scene depicting the emergence of agents of destruction, and a scene depicting the destruction of the seed. Each of the wasted-seed sections is energised by a dialectic; the struggle between life and death. Life in this case is represented in the first scene of the tripartite pattern and death is represented by the last.

The intermediate scene of the pattern, in the arrival of the birds, the rising of the sun, and the growth of the thorns, when read synchronically, appears to embrace both motifs of death and life in an ambiguous and intriguing way. The birds, sun, and thorns depending upon the point of reference of the dialectic in the underlying structure, stand for life and death. The birds represent life when they eat the seed to sustain their own life. But in representing life for themselves, they also represent death for the seed. The sun represents life in making growth possible, as in the case of seed sown on good ground. But at the same time it represents death in the case of the seed on rocky ground. The thorns in actualising their own growth represent life with respect to themselves. In actualising their own life, however, they represent death for the seed sown among them. The tensive power of the dialectic created by the antithesis of life and death in the parable is preserved with compelling force and symbolic richness by the ambiguity of the middle term of the tripartite pattern of the wasted seed-section.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that the parable's meaning-system embraces far more than a simple story about agricultural failure and success. Issues of ontological scope pulsate beneath the story-line. Before discussing the significance of these issues for identifying the parabolic meaning-system, it is

necessary to examine the parable's ultimate referent and what clues it can contribute toward identifying the meaning-system.

3.2.1.2.5.1 THE TENOR/ULTIMATE REFERENT OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER'S HARVEST

Among interpreters who acknowledge the extra-linguistic dimension of parabolic reference, it is axiomatic that the ultimate extra-linguistic referent of all Jesus' parables, whether explicitly stated or not, is the kingdom of God. Norman Pérrin's discussion of the term, kingdom of God, has contributed a great deal to our understanding of Jesus' use of this term. Pérrin (1976:203) contends that for Jesus the phrase, "kingdom of God, serves as a symbolic evoking myth." By this Pérrin means Jesus appropriated the term from his Jewish heritage where "kingdom of God" historically drew its meaning from the ancient myths. These myths centered around God as creator of the world and God as Lord of history. But Pérrin claims that while Jesus is indebted to this legacy, he departs from his contemporaries, particularly the apocalyptists, in disassociating the kingdom from any historical or cosmological objectification. Despite the echo of the eschatological-war myth in some of Jesus' kingdom sayings (e.g. Mt. 11:12; Mk. 3:24-27) Pérrin insists that Jesus sought to shatter the apocalyptic confidence in history and cosmology and any other attempt to make a continuous, orderly whole of existence by confronting his hearers with the reign of God in the radically other, existential experiences of life (1976:32-56; cf. Crossan, 1973a : 23-27). As Pérrin , as well as others, would have it, for Jesus the kingdom of God has no space-time location

or point of reference. It is no more nor less than a radical eruption of the activity of God in human experience.

Pérrin has been very helpful in cautioning against misrepresenting Jesus' understanding of the term "kingdom of God." But he presses the case, perhaps a bit too far, when he brackets out all the inherited mythic creation motifs and mythic salvation-history motifs of the term, kingdom of God in Jesus's thinking. Excising the mythic elements of cosmological coherence and historical continuity from this traditional Jewish symbolic reference to God's activity in the world empties this symbolic reference of all but an existential, world-shattering, non-cosmological, non-temporal, and anthropocentric meaning.

Nevertheless Pérrin's interpretation is understandable, given his dependence upon existential ontology and his use of the criterion of dissimilarity for isolating the authentic teachings of Jesus. Pérrin (1976 : 56) claims that all parables of Jesus mediate an experience of the kingdom of God. But the experience mediated by the meaning-system of the parable of the Sower does not coincide with the understanding of the kingdom of God that Pérrin claims for Jesus.

By relating the kingdom of God to the natural events of this parable, the parabler has drawn upon a meaning-system which integrates the kingdom of God (the activity of God) with the

affairs of nature. Our analysis of the parable suggests that the meaning-system created by linking "kingdom of God" to the parable mediates an experience about the way in which God's creative activity reaches fruition in the forces that impede and frustrate it. The metaphorical force of the parable can be confined to the human dimension but such a limitation is an artificial one in the light of our analysis. The image of the Kingdom suggests that God's activity is not always existentially disruptive of the space-time continuum but is, at least on some occasions, instrumental in preserving and bringing about the actualisation of the purpose of this world of space and time.

Support for this interpretation of the symbol "kingdom of God" can be found both in other nature parables (Mk. 4:26-29, 30-32, and par.) and in some of Jesus' other pronouncements. For example, Jesus taught his followers to petition daily for God to provide bread (Mt.6:11 and Lk. 11:3). To have taught this to his followers suggests that he felt one could depend upon God's continuous providential provision for daily necessities. Jesus also taught his followers to pray for God's aid in the face of temptation. Could such a request mean anything less than the need for God's help to preserve the continuity of faithful relationship in the face of the disruptive consequences of temptation? There are also sayings of Jesus that acclaim the way in which God directly provides for the continuing needs of the

natural community of birds, lilies, grass (Mt. 6:25-30 and Lk. 12:22-28; Mt. 10:29-31 and Lk. 12:6-7).

Process thought enables us to appreciate the dimensions of Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God where existentialism could not. An interpretation informed by a process perspective agrees with P  rrin and other interpreters that Jesus introduced novel insights about the kingdom, insights that often depart radically from previously held perceptions, and that are often experienced as world-shattering. But a process perspective also appreciates the dimensions of coherence and continuity in Jesus' thinking, dimensions which he inherited from the mythic traditions associated with the term, kingdom of God. Moreover, a process perspective contends that the meaning and significance of novelty can only be adequately appreciated in the context of the continuity of the dimensions of past experiences and reality, and the anticipation of the continuation of at least some measure of those dimensions in a coherent present and future.

Having identified the meaning-system of the parable, the meaning-system which Jesus apparently used to point to his intended tenor, we must now turn our attention to the appropriation of a contemporary meaning-system which is sufficiently congruent with the meaning-system of the parable to guide us to the tenor of the parable. Only a realistic ontology embracing the totality of existence can provide a meaning system for the contemporary

interpreter that corresponds to the meaning-system of the heart of the parabolic event of our parable.

The process orientation can succeed where the existentialist and structuralist orientations have failed because it ontologically envisions every aspect of reality as dynamically, holistically, and creatively interrelated and progressively interdependent. What is perceived by structuralists as experienced only by human beings namely, inter-subjectivity, Whitehead claims (1968:20-39, is ontologically characteristic of everything. Consequently, patterns of reality (such as binary opposition/antithetical parallelisms, etc) which structuralism attributes to the deep recesses of the mind, a process perspective attributes not to the generation of the mind but to an ontological character of the environment to which the body belongs. Inherited through the sense experiences of the body, these patterns are brought into focus in the mind and articulated propositionally through the structure of language.

What is perceived by existentialism as ontological givenness of discontinuity is explained by Whitehead (1960:12 ff.) as the feature of novelty present in any given moment to a lesser or greater degree in the actualisation of everything. In process perspective, novelty may either promote continuity by further enhancing it or may breach continuity and introduce a significantly different thrust.

Through the congruence of the meaning-system derived from process thought with the meaning-system of the parable, we are able now to move through the meaning-system of the parable to what appears to be the relation of the Kingdom of God to what is encoded in the parable. To engage in this, we shall first draw some impressions which our analysis elicited.

The first impression is that the parabolic imagery mediates an experience of the thwarting of the creative purpose by destructive forces. The imagery of agricultural setback in the wasted-seed section dramatises this point well. Would not any Palestinian acquainted with vicissitudes of a farmer have found his feelings from experiences of agricultural failure resonating with the description of the plight of the wasted seeds?

A second impression is that while the conflict between creative and destructive forces is real and cosmic, the conflict is not to be interpreted as an ontological struggle of a radically dualistic nature. Nowhere in the descriptive imagery of the destructive forces is there a hint of radical cosmic dualism, the type of dualism characteristic of world views which have ontologically given up on the cosmos (e.g., apocalypticism, Gnosticism). For example, apocalyptic signification would use explicit steno-representations of evil that leave no doubt with regard to the distinction between what is ontologically evil and

what is ontologically good. Wheelwright (1962:1-20) distinguishes a steno-symbol from a tensive one in that the former functions in a very distinct one-to-one relationship whereas the latter is a symbol so pregnant with meaning that its referential meaning cannot be exhausted. The allegorisors of our parable have achieved a one-to-one relationship by translating "birds" into an explicit steno-representation of evil, that is , Satan (136.4).

The parable, however, also contains symbols for destructive forces that are not stereotyped as evil or as having evil intent. At least with the exception of the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower, this is true of these particular symbols throughout the New Testament. Even when the sun is portrayed as a destructive force elsewhere in the New Testament, it is always depicted as an instrument used by God against the wicked and /or the oppressors of the elect (Rev. 7:16; cf. Jas. 1:11).

A third impression is that the parable mediates an affirmation of the creative order and a confidence that its creative purpose can be realised despite the presence of destructive forces within the cosmos. Again the imagery of the bountiful harvest is well suited for creating this impression, and it is likely that a Palestinian, acquainted with the farmer's joy and satisfaction from past experiences of good harvests, would find such feelings resonating with the point being made by the bountiful harvest.

When these impressions are linked to insights drawn from our discussion of Jesus' understanding of the kingdom, further nuances of the parabolic tenor as it relates to the Kingdom of God is obtained. Firstly, when Jesus used the natural imagery of the parable to draw attention to the Kingdom of God, he was not speaking just of the human condition. Nor was he drawing attention to some struggle between human beings and the natural environment (cf. Wilder 1974 : 141). The happy ending of the parable is a happy ending about God's creative activity unfolding in the cosmos. Whatever meaning that has for the human community must be understood as part of the cosmological message of the parable.

Secondly, by virtue of the integration of the symbol, Kingdom of God, and the parabolic imagery, the tenor seems to refer to this world, this created order, as the place where God's creative purpose is being fulfilled. It is the place of the Kingdom. Both tragedy (sowing of seed, threat to seed, destruction of seed) and comedy (extravagant harvest) take place in this world. This world, the whole cosmos, is where God's Kingdom is concretely manifested, not in another world as the early church portrayed it.

To suggest that the term, Kingdom, for Jesus has a spatial dimension or was spatially located is to fly in the face of the

prevailing opinion of New Testament scholars. Despite some prevailing opinion to the contrary, the parabolic tenor elicits the clear impression that the cosmos is the place where God's kingdom is both manifest and being brought into actualisation. A process meaning-system enables us to recognise this cosmological focus on the kingdom, because the process ontology holds that there is an inseparable interrelationship of the activity of God with every aspect of the cosmos.

In drawing attention to the cosmological home of the kingdom, the place where God's purpose is being actualised, there is no intention of minimising the eschatological character of the kingdom in Jesus' thought. That is clearly central to Jesus' teaching (e.g. Mk. 1:15) and its echoes are present in the final thrust of the parable. The eschatological in-breaking of the kingdom is also depicted in the final triadic dissonance of the parable of the Sower. Rather than leading to the fixation of thought about the kingdom as realised, the asymmetrical character of the triad (30-60-100) forces the thought pattern as well as cosmic reality beyond the present to the future, to the lure of God for full and final actualisation.

Lastly, just as the asymmetrical triad forces thought pattern beyond mental closure, so also the parabolic tenor as a tensive symbol continues to evoke disclosure of meaning. A meaning which further enriches the appreciation of the parabolic intent.

Consequently, no exposition of this parable or any parable can fully encompass the totality of its intended symbolic reference.

Let us now terminate our discussion on pericope A with some consideration to 133.17. There are good reasons to believe that the parable was framed in its pre-Markan history by two secondarily attached admonitions, namely, the imperative ἀκούετε ("hear" 133.1) and the admonishment ὅς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούτω ("He who has ears to hear, let him hear," 133.17).

First, Jeremias (1954:14) has argued that the clause καὶ ἔλεγεν ("and he said, 133.17), by which the latter admonition is introduced, is a pre-Markan editorial connective clause. Second, ἀκούετε (133.1) linked with ἴδου ("behold") creates a tautology. In view of the similarity in motif between ἀκούετε and the final admonition, ἀκούετε was likely affixed by the same hand to the parable (cf. B.T.D. Smith: 124; C.W.F. Smith :61). Third, given the penchant which the creators of the interpretation have for the word ἀκούω (4: 15, 16, 18, 20), and given their strong theological interest in the receptiveness or lack of receptiveness of "hearing" the kerygma, it follows logically that the creators of the interpretation framed the parable with ἀκούετε and ὅς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν

ἀκουετο in order to lead the readers thinking towards an application of the parable.

From our theoretically founded framework, a comment on the aforementioned framing is warranted. These carefully conceived additions to our parable clearly reveal the desire of the creators of our document that we regard it as a coherent whole. Therefore this framework material forms an inclusio. Furthermore the presence of the cognates of ἀκουω in (136.5; 136.7; 136.12 and 136.15) once again confirms our basic hypothesis that the parable of the Sower has been remarked subsequently because of a noble desire by the early christian community to harmonise the interpretation with the parable itself.

Sentence 133.17 constitutes a challenge to the hearers. Jesus was not evidently taken up by the impressive display of fawning "followship". Despite the Galilean enthusiasm being at its height, Jesus still deemed it necessary to throw his hearers back on themselves in self-examination. With this call Jesus involves his hearers in the situation he is describing and prompts them to form a judgement upon it. He also warns them that there may be more to the parable than appears on the surface; there can be superficial hearing which misses the point.

We have also identified 133.17 as a possible focus which introduces new information into our text. By the use of the

device of alliteration this emphasis is further heightened. A simple story centering around the agricultural failures and successes of a farmer takes an eternal significance. The destiny of the hearers seemed to critically hinge on their ability to hear (ἀκούειν). This point is reinforced by the interpretation which provides a paradigm for responsible hearing. But before we turn to that pericope, we need to consider the intervening section on the purpose of parables.

3.2.2 Pericope B: The Purpose of the Parables (4 : 10-12)

- | | | |
|---------|----|---|
| 134. | 10 | καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ μῶνας, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς παραβολάς. |
| 135. | 11 | καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, |
| 135.1 | | ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· |
| 135.2 | | ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται, |
| 135.2.1 | 12 | ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, |
| 135.2.2 | | καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν, |
| 135.2.3 | | μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς. |

The new information that is introduced at this point includes reference to ἠρώτων αὐτὸν ("they asked him" 134.). What is clearly communicated here is a regular (?) convention of enquiry subsequent to incomprehension or partial comprehension. The separation of people into two distinct categories : the disciples and those around them ὑμῖν (135.) and the Jews ἐκείνοις τοῖς ἔξω (135.2) is both new and very intriguing. το μυστήριον (135.1) must undoubtedly constitute the pivotal information of the pericope. Therefore a fair concentration will

be given to this "mystery of the kingdom of God". Other focii centre around $\mu\eta$ ἴδωσιν (135.2.1), $\mu\eta$ συνιῶσιν (135.2.2) and perhaps the final sentence (135.2.3). It would be observed that sentences 135.2.2 and 135.2.3 hinge on an understanding of $\tau\omicron$ $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ $\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ for their meaning.

In sentence 135.2 a deletion of $\delta\epsilon\delta\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ is observed. This deletion is maintained in Luke 8:10 but is inserted in Mt. 13:12. The verb $\delta\epsilon\delta\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ constitutes a type of Passivum Divinum, whose use was probably originally prompted by the Jewish reverence that prohibited one from sounding the divine name. Therefore the expression "it has been given to you" is a circumlocution for "God has given to you". Given this subject as being God, the deletion in sentence 135.2 is all the more significant. If it were included, the "hardening theory" would be intensified by such ammunition since it would mean that God was actively responsible for such a negative intention. Despite this "softening" effect of the deletion, the sentences that follow still present us with statements that are not very easily resolved.

We have already alluded to the concept of $\tau\omicron$ $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ being central to the pericope under discussion. This also constitutes the most important metaphor and has been the primary factor that has engendered a great deal of controversy around (134. - 135. 2. 3). A number of scholars like Montéfiore (1909: 102) and

Linnemann (1967 : 118) have called it a tendentious invention of the evangelist. For others like Jülicher (1910) and Dodd (1936), the passage owes its origin not to Mark himself, but to the post-Easter community which was faced with explaining the unbelief of a majority of the Jews. Others have taken exception to that line of thought D.W. Riddle (1937 : 83), for example, noted that were Mark alone responsible for this unusual passage, it " would almost certainly have been edited away." V. Taylor (1952 : 257) concurred, stating that 4: 10-12 "is best explained if it took its rise in something Jesus actually said.....". But it remained for Jeremias (1954: 14 ff.) to establish the case for the authenticity of the logion. He cited the semitic features such as the antithetical parallelism, the repeated periphrasis, and especially the agreement of the quotation from Isa. 6:9 ff. with the Targum as opposed to the MT and LXX. Jeremias (1954: 14 ff.) concluded that "the recognition of this agreement creates a strong presumption in the favour of the authenticity of our logion and is of fundamental importance for the exegesis of Mark 4: 11 ff." A number of other scholars like Cranfield (1959 : 154), Via (1967 :9) and Pérrin (1963 : 132) now accept the view that this passage is as likely from the mouth of Jesus as any other old gospel material.

Though Jeremias accepts verses 11-12 as authentic material going back to Jesus, he admits that the saying seems out of place. He explains this misplacement by proposing that Mark was misled by

the catchword *παράβολη* and failed to realise that the insertion of this logion would not fit the context of this parable-chapter. But Jeremias (1954: 17-18) goes on to conclude that "the logion is not concerned with the parables of Jesus, but with his preaching in general."

As Jeremias and others have pointed out, the Greek *παράβολη* has a number of meanings in the New Testament, from "proverb" (Lk. 6:39, 4:23) to "symbol" (Heb. 9:9, 11:19, cf. Mk. 13:28) to "riddle" (Mk. 7:17). Jeremias (1954:16) refutes those scholars who still claim that Jesus' parables were intended solely to clarify his teachings, never to veil them. He uses linguistic evidence to show that in verse 11 *παράβολαίς* is to be understood as "riddles," which is the "usual meaning" of its Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents. This point is generally accepted (vide e.g. Taylor, Nineham, Boobyer).

In the view of Boobyer (1961:62), Jeremias does not go far enough in his analysis. The term *παράβολη* in contemporary Jewish and early Christian writings could also extend to include "any utterance which was something of a riddle, in the sense that it contained a hidden meaning clear only to specially privileged eyes." Boobyer (1961:63) finds that in Mark "any cryptic form of speech, intentionally enigmatic, could be named a parable." He then looks at 4: 11-12 and 8: 17-21 and comes to the conclusion that here the word parable has an even broader significance.

Boobyer (1961: 63,64) refers to the evangelist's usage of the term παραβολή. But can we conclude that the understanding of parables displayed in these verses is merely that of Mark, in stark contrast with Jesus' original purpose in using this form solely to enlighten and to clarify his meaning? Anyone who declares that Jesus' parables could never have had anything but that one purpose is over-generalising and resting on a preconceived assumption. Traditions of esoteric teaching were not limited to the Hellenistic sphere, but were also present in contemporary Judaism, as Jeremias (1969: 237 ff.) among others have demonstrated. Jeremias shows the concept of esoteric wisdom to have been "a deciding factor, far too little recognised, for the influence of the scribes", who considered themselves, and were considered, "the guardians of a secret knowledge, of an esoteric tradition....." Like the parties represented by the writings at Qumran, the rabbis borrowed the term μυστηριον, speaking of their God-given misteyrin (or misturin). Therefore such a conception of a "mystery" was probably available to Jesus, who may possibly have employed parables (meshaliṁ) to preserve the misteyrin. Since in contemporary Judaism the term māshāl usually betokened a puzzled riddle, J.Drury (1973:379) has pointed out there is a "reasonable assumption that the living tradition of the parable as a dark word, riddle, and allegory was as available to Jesus as it was to Mark....." M.I. Boucher (1973 : 95-102) has given body to this "reasonable assumption", treating in detail the mystery motif in post-exilic Judaism.

Boucher stresses the long Hebrew tradition behind the concept of the mysterious parable in particular. Nineham (1974 :302) et al. agree that the rabbis clearly used parables in order to illumine yet they offer no accommodation of the possibility or "reasonable assumption" that the parable was in form a "dark word". Could the māshāl be enigmatic in form while elucidatory in function? Allow me to offer a few suggestions.

Firstly from our theory in chapter two we observe that $\mu\sigma\rho\eta\mu\iota\sigma$ functions as a vehicle for a suspended metaphor. The tenor is not mentioned in the macro-context of the Gospel narrative. We have also discovered that the relationship between tenor and vehicle is the logical formula underlying the suspended metaphor. This $\mu\sigma\rho\eta\mu\iota\sigma$ as the vehicle leads to a variety of tenors in the macro-structure of the Gospel a.o. such as (secret) (enigma) (esoterism) (puzzle) (riddle) (proverb) (symbol) (cryptogram) (cipher) (code). These tenor highlights the enigmatic form of the parable. We have suggested that despite this enigma, the function of a parable lies in an elucidatory function. Viewed from the perspective we arrive at another set of possible tenors such as (divine) (impending rule) (teaching) (eschatological) (decisiveness) (grace) (destiny) (revelation).

The wider context of the ministry of Jesus assists us in identifying that of the two sets of possible tenors, the first category becomes suppressed thereby giving preference to the

latter grouping. This confirms the elucidatory function of parables and commends them as revelatory teaching method.

Before dealing with the overall interpretation of our passage, let us further examine the language and structure of our text. It would seem that the questioners in 134. were originally "those around him" (οἱ περὶ αὐτόν), and that τοῖς δώδεκα is a Markan addition (cf. e.g. Jeremias, Linnemann, Bultmann, etc.). Though it seems plausible that the group consisted of Jesus' followers in the broad sense, it is well to remember that there is no intrinsic evidence that a closed circle is referred to here. The audience is merely those close to Jesus in a literal (and presumably also a figurative) sense, and may or may not have been restricted.

The precise purport of the question put to Jesus in 134. ("they asked him concerning the parables", ἤρωτων αὐτόν... τὰς παραβολὰς) will be defined largely by how one views verses 11-12 in general. To those who consider these verses an insertion into the older context of 1-13, he may have been asked, as in Luke, about the meaning of the parable of the Sower. Mark pluralised the singular of his source. Others like Boobyer declare that that was not at all the case, and that Matthew illumines Mark's intention' accurately: "Why do you speak to them in parables?" Suffice it to say that the view that Mark pluralised a singular is based on a questionable assumption, and

is without corroborative evidence. As for the general sense of the people's question, it is usually taken as either, what does the parable mean? or why does Jesus speak in parables? Like most either or questions, this one seems to leave out some other plausible alternatives. Moule (1969:102) attacks the idea that the questioners were totally in the dark, and begging for the key without which they would understand nothing. "Why should it not mean that they had begun to work out (the parable) significance, but wanted to ask questions about them?" (1969:103). It is also possible that the questioner's query could include more than a single specific point. The phrasing of the text would allow for questions both on the understanding of Jesus's speech-forms in general, and on points of certain specific parables, which each type of question probably overlapping the other.

"And he said to them" (καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς) is, in Jeremias' words (1967:14), "one of Mark's typical link-phrases." But while Jeremias and others saw in that fact clear evidence that verses 11-12 were inserted into an older context, we see only a clue that different traditions may have been connected. It does not follow from the presence of this phrase that the evangelist received 1-10, 13 ff. as an organic unit, even though some sort of disjunction at verse 10 seems to exist.

"To you...to those outside" ("Ὑμῖν...ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω) of sentences 135.1 and 135.2 (respectively) derived from

sentences that realise an antithetical parallelism. This accentuates the division of people into either of these categories and sets up a major contrast. Likewise $\gamma\iota\upsilon\epsilon\rho\alpha\iota$ is parallel to $\delta\epsilon\delta\omicron\rho\alpha\iota$, and $\tau\omicron$ $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ to $\tau\alpha$ $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$. Yet despite the fact that a contrast is clearly intended, it would be false to conclude, as Jülicher (1910, I:123 ff.) did, that a strict dichotomy is implied, or even necessarily two mutually exclusive categories. Those who in 135.1 are said to have received the "secret" must deal with the parables just like everyone else. The contrast is that ^{??}there are, or should be, capable of comprehending Jesus' words. "In short," concludes Moule (1969:99), "there is nothing to prevent our regarding the two positions, namely, inside and outside as descriptions merely of the result of ways of responding to parables on a given occasion."

Verse 12 is perhaps the most obscure passage dealing with the use of parables. The view that $\iota\upsilon\alpha$ mistranslates the Aramaic de is only a speculation, and the difficult $\mu\eta\mu\omicron\rho\epsilon$ remains as M. Black (1967:212 ff.) himself confessed that nothing is more certain than that Mark intended $\iota\upsilon\alpha$, and we must accept the word as such. Yet it does not have to be translated "in order that." A good argument could be made that the consecutive is intended, not the purposive. But the most widely accepted view is that $\iota\upsilon\alpha$ here refers to the fulfillment of the Old Testament text which follows. Do we again have to choose between the

options? Does such a reference to the Old Testament prophecy necessarily exclude a consecutive, or even merely explanatory, connection? Perhaps the meaning is actually more along the lines of, "...hence (it is as the scriptures say): they indeed see but do not perceive ..." Perhaps verse 12 merely explains verse 11 through an illustrative passage from the scriptures. Kirkland (1977:7) suggests ἵνα to be translated as "so it is ..."

As for the $\mu\eta\pi\omega\rho\epsilon$, Jeremias offers us a highly plausible interpretation. The Aramaic dilema shares with $\mu\eta\pi\omega\rho\epsilon$ the meanings "in order that not" and "lest perhaps"; it also has the meaning of "unless". Be that ~~has~~ it may, all things considered, the best understanding of dilema comes from Kirkland (1977:7) whose suggestion is not "unless" but "otherwise". True, the hearers could receive forgiveness if they repented, but it was their incomprehension which prevented them from repenting. Their "hardness" was not the cause of their incomprehension, but rather the symptom. If and only if they perceived the message within the parables could the hearers turn to receive God's forgiveness.

The beginning of verse 13 has been one cause of the theory that verses 11-12 are an interpolation. Because of the singular, "Do you not understand this parable?" Many have assumed that this referred to the story of the sower in 3-9. Boobyer (1961:66 ff.) disputes that supposition and asks that if it were true, how should we understand 13b: "How then will you understand all the

parables?" Boobyer, like Wrede earlier, notes that the parable of the Sower can only with great difficulty be construed as a "key parable". There is nothing special about it. If verse 13 does not refer to the sower-parable, to what then does it refer? Boobyer (1961:66 ff.) suggests 4:11-12 as fitting all the requirements. It concerns the perception of Jesus' followers, explaining that they have been privileged to know the essence of his teaching while "outsiders" must puzzle out his meaning. This view of verse 13 is shared by Bowker (1974:313), who further explains that "the surprise of Jesus in verse 13, which has perplexed some commentators, is not at all odd ..." For to those who have already been given the secret, the point of his words and actions should be immediately evident. They are not in the category of 'those outside', consequently they should know what he is talking about "in parables." But almost in despair, one feels, Jesus says that they are virtually putting themselves into the category of "those outside."

Trying to go further in explaining the chapter, Boobyer (1961:68-69) emphasizes that Mark's ideas in locating our pericope here can best be seen in light of the preceding three chapters, in which a sharp contrast is made between the receptive and the unreceptive; the believing and the unbelieving. According to Boobyer, verses 10-12, setting apart the sower-parable and its explications, brings to a point the contrast which has been building between the success in communicating the Messianic

secret to some and the failure to convince others. It cannot be totally denied that such a contrast of the receptive and the unreceptive may have been present in the evangelist's mind when he edited this section of his text. Is Boobyer's thesis a satisfactory answer to all the complexities of our passage? Was το μυστηριον της βασιλειας του Θεου really the "Messianic secret"? Was the secret communicated through secret instructions given in private to a few disciples? Were "outsiders" kept ignorant by murky puzzles meant to dumbfound them? Neither Boobyer nor anyone else has offered a clear and comprehensive answer to all the questions.

For decades the speculation that Jesus used secret explanations to instruct his disciples has not only persisted but grown. Yet the arguments employed by those who advance that view leave much to be desired. Although it seems likely that Jesus explained some of his parables to his disciples, it is highly questionable that he regularly did so in secret.

S. Brown (1973:60) has remarked that recent scholarship has shown that the central theme of Mark is not really the "Messianic secret" as Wrede declared, but "discipleship". Indeed, according to Wrede's own theories, the idea of the Messianic secret arose only after Jesus' death. W.C. Robinson (1973:22) says that since "Wrede himself hesitated to claim for his concept the various expressions of a privacy motif ...I think we do better to respect

Wrede's hesitation"Boucher (1973:115-116) further states:"to speak as though all the secrecy passages were Messianic or Christological is to distort the problem. It is more accurate to speak generally of mystery and to see messianism as only one of its elements. One of those expressions of a secrecy motif which some have attributed wholly to the Messiasgeheimnis is Mk.4:11-12." The position of Brown (1973:60 ff.) offers us a viable alternative in his resolution that the "secret of the kingdom of God" in 4:11 is not the "Messianic secret".

J.R. Kirkland (1977:11 ff.) takes us even further down the road in resolving this enigma. From other first century texts he deduces that in the period of the "first" gospel $\mu\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\mu$ could have the meaning of not only a secret knowledge which could not be understood without aid, but also of a truth which was capable of easy comprehension once one perceived what it was. If the mysteriousness of the Kingdom was "ein Problem der Wahrnehmung", we hardly need to search for some specific "mystery" to read into these verses. Rather we should examine how the kingdom itself was to be perceived, especially in relation to the disciples. This, we believe, is the problem dealt with in these verses, and the understanding of that fact may serve as the key to comprehending them, if viewed in their original context. The proper context of verses 10-13 can be found not in the sower-parable and its explication, but in the next verses which can reasonably be held to be authentic words of Jesus. That would be verses 21-25, but

especially verses 24,25, the apex of the chiasmic structure in chapter 4. We have also mentioned that this section (pericope D) unifies the multiple lines of action in 4:1-34. It interprets the other parables of chapter four and is interpreted by them. Let us therefore adjourn further discussion until we consider verses 24-25. Our prior task centres around pericope A², to which we now turn our attention.

3.2.3 Pericope A²: The parable of the Sower's Harvest Explained (4:13-20)

136	13	καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς,
136.1		οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην,
136.2		καὶ πῶς πάσας τὰς παραβολὰς γνῶσεσθε;
136.3	14	ὁ σπείρων τὸν λόγον σπείρει.
136.4	15	οὗτοι δὲ εἰσιν οἱ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὅπου σπείρεται ὁ λόγος,
136.5		καὶ ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν εὐθὺς ἔρχεται ὁ Σατανᾶς
136.6		καὶ αἶρει τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐσπαρμένον εἰς αὐτούς.
136.7	16	καὶ οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἐπὶ τὰ πετρῶδη σπειρόμενοι,
136.8		οἱ ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνουσιν αὐτόν,
136.9	17	καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ῥίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
136.10		ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν·
136.11		εἴτα γενομένης θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζονται.
136.12	18	καὶ ἄλλοι εἰσὶν οἱ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας σπειρόμενοι·
136.13		οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ τὸν λόγον ἀκούσαντες,
136.14	19	καὶ αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἡ ἀπάτη τοῦ πλοῦτου καὶ αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμῆσαι εἰσπορευόμεναι συμπνίγουσιν τὸν λόγον,
136.15		καὶ ἄκαρπος γίνεται.
136.16	20	καὶ ἐκεῖνοι εἰσιν οἱ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν σπαρέντες,
136.17		οἵτινες ἀκούουσιν τὸν λόγον
136.18		καὶ παραδέχονται
		καὶ καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν τριάκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑκατὸν.

For a semantic representation of each sentence we will specify both the presupposition and focus. The presupposition of a

sentence is the information which the reader can deduce from the context of each sentence. The interpretation of the parable in the gospels, especially Luke, reflects the struggles of the early church with the demonic and apostasy. It is a moving sermon to the church to stand fast. Three basic causes of desertion emerge from the several gospels and they constitute the most important examples of the presuppositions of the sentences 136.-136.18.

136.4-136.6 First is the failure to understand (Mt. 13:19). They have heard the word (Mk. 4:15; Mt. 13:19; Luke 8:12), it has been sown in their heart, but Satan has come along and snatched away the Word. Luke made it explicit that this group had not yet believed and been saved (8:12). The seeds that fell on the path met with no response. For Matthew understanding must precede conversion (13:19a). One suspects that his church saw the need to instruct catechumens until the peril of misunderstanding was past. Mark, however, stresses the active role of Satan for this category of apostasy.

136.7-136.11. The second cause of reversionism centres around persecution and tribulation. This is explicitly persecution because of the Word (Mk. 4:17c; Mt. 13:21c) related to the picture of the rocky ground. This group heard the Word and responded but the plants had no real root. In times of stress they "fall away" (Mk.4:17; Mt.13:21; Lk.8:13). They were

scandalised and deserted. Luke reported that they believed for a little while and then quit in time of temptation (8:13).

136.12-136.14. Worldliness constitutes the third cause. Mark classically named three divisions that choked the word: the cares of the world, the delight in riches, and the desire for other things (4:19).

The new information that our text supplies must concern two sentences in particular: sentence 136.15 (καὶ ἄκαρπος γίνεται) and sentence 136.18 (καὶ ἄκαρπος ἐν τριακοντα ἐν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑκατόν). Sentence 136.15 wants us to pay attention to the fact of the lack of productivity, whereas sentence 136.18 shows a bumper harvest in "Oriental fashion".

In the course of the last century, there has been considerable discussion among scholars as to the authenticity of the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower. On the one hand, many commentators, such as Cranfield (1951:405-412), firmly maintains that at least the general lines of the Interpretation probably go back to Jesus and that it is "premature" to regard the inauthenticity of this explanation as "an assured result of modern criticism." On the other hand, other commentators, such as Jeremias (1967:77 ff.) contend that the Interpretation must be construed as a product of the early church. Almost all scholars, however, from the standpoint of transmission, agree on the

priority of Mark's text. Let us now compare the Matthaean and Markan versions.

Matthew appropriates Mark's text (4:13-20) in a literal fashion. In fact, if we ignore for the moment any insertions and the less significant alterations, we discover that Matthew emends only one feature of the Markan pericope. He attempts to rectify the apparent confusion Mark instigates by referring the seed that is sown first to the Word (136.3) and then to the people who hear the Word (136.4; 136.7; 136.12; 136.16).

To eliminate this inconsistency, Matthew passes over 136.3 for the most part and introduces each subsection of the Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower with a fixed formula that should be translated as follows: "Just as in the case of that which was sown (on the rocky ground, etc.) so it is with the person who hears the Word (and immediately receives it, etc.)." In this way, the attributive participle ὃ σπείρειν (that which was sown), even though grammatically it could denote either the individual, or the Word or the seed, can, from the intention of the text, be seen to refer to the seed. Matthew overcomes the confusion of Mark's text by dropping any direct reference to the Word and referring the seed exclusively to the hearers (cf. 13.38).

Before proceeding on to a more detailed analysis of the Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower, we shall summarise all our scattered comments on 136. - 136.3. Verse 13 (136.; 136.1; 136.2) must be regarded as either redactional or an authentic saying of Jesus whose original situation of utterance has been lost to us. Sentence 136., a typical Markan introduction formula, has been utilised, rather awkwardly at that, to serve as an interlude between the parable and its Interpretation.

We have, already, on a number of occasions made reference to the possible existence of a pre-Markan tradition. This possibility could also unlock the solution to the Markan identification of the Word to the seed (136.3). Having already considered how Matthew smoothens this apparent confusion, only an Interpretation that antedates the gospel of Mark can adequately account for such and ostensible inconsistency.

From a structural point of view, Mark's fourfold use of formula-"and these (others, those) are the ones..." - demonstrates that each subsection of the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower is a miniature parable in its own right. The whole unit then is a composite of four similitudes and a transitional statement(136.3). More precisely, the first three realise a synonymous parallelism with the fourth functioning antithetically. As it was demonstrated in the parable of the Sower, the harvest of the seed falling on the good soil becomes

the focus. This rule of contrast is accentuated by the demonstratives οὗτοι (these - 136.4) ; οὗτοι (these- 136.7) ; ἄλλοι (others 136.12) ; and ἑκεῖνοι (those 136.16). Once again we encounter two different categories: those not bearing fruit (the ones along the path upon the rocky ground, among the thorns) and those which are fruitful (the ones on the good soil).

3.2.3.1 THE SEED SOWN ALONG THE PATH

The first parallelism is the simplest in structure among the synonymous ones. Earlier on, in the parable, we referred to the prevalence of three basic ideas inherent to each of the parallelisms. The seed is sown, an external agent enters the scene, and the seed is rendered unfruitful. In verse 15 (136.4; 136.5 ; 136.6) we encounter these three dimensions but also accompanied by some embellishment: ὅπου σπείρεται ὁ λόγος καὶ ὅταν ἀκουσῶσιν. This feature of "hearing the Word " pulsates throughout the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower. This motif therefore highlights the message of this passage in the life of the early church. Attentive hearing was the only defence to Satan's activity. We have already made mention of the "birds" in our parable of the Sower functioning as a steno-symbol for Satan. If attentive hearing was the only antidote against reversion, one can then understand the framing of the parable of the Sower at the beginning and end with a solemn call to attentive hearing.

The "one's sown upon rocky ground", our second parallelism, is by no means a concise unit. In its expansion we find important clues of the Sitz-im-Leben of this passage. Lane (1974:161) suggests that details within the parable have to be understood "in terms of their appropriateness to the historical situation in which the parable was spoken."

3.2.3.2 THE SEED SOWN ON THE ROCKY GROUND

The protagonist of this second similitude is characterised as those "who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with joy." Mark speaks of "receiving" the Word in place of "understanding"($\sigma\upsilon\nu\iota\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$) it (cf. Mt. 13:19,23). The reason for that, in Matthew's eyes, understanding is the mark of the true disciple, the disciple in whom the Word roots itself so firmly that he bears fruit (13:23). Mark, however, simply wishes to communicate the superficiality of this reception of the Word. Therefore these people are said to "have no root in themselves, but endure for a while" (13:10).

Mark states that this second category of persons encounters affliction ($\theta\lambda\iota\psi\iota\varsigma$) and persecution ($\delta\iota\omega\gamma\mu\omicron\varsigma$) on account of the Word (13:10). If we investigate each of these terms, we find that affliction occurs three times (4:17;13:19;13:24) in the gospel of Mark. As to its signification, Mark in contrast to Paul, who knows of affliction also as mental and spiritual anguish (2Cor.2:4;7:5;Phil.1:17), seems to employ this word solely to specify "distress that is brought about by outward

circumstances" (Arndt-Gingrich 1957:362). At any rate, *thalps* is so variegated in meaning that it can encompass tribulations as diverse as death, enduring the hatred of enemies, apostasy, betrayal, the agitation of false prophets, lawlessness, and lovelessness (cf. 13:9-13). It is noteworthy that while persecution derived from outside the church, some of the vicissitudes we have just listed arise from within the church itself. It is, however, uncertain why family members betray one another. This could possibly result from either personal pressure of persecution or divided loyalties and religious allegiances within the family.

Paradoxically, the occurrence of such afflictions strengthens the church in its eschatological consciousness. In principle, these christians view all manner of affliction in terms of the messianic woes (13:8), which signal the end of the age and prefigure the coming of the Son of man (13:26). Affliction is misfortune born of divine necessity (13:7), the endurance of which marks the individual as belonging to the eschatological community of God, the company of the saved (13:13), the band of the elect (13:20,22). Hence, from Mark's standpoint, we may summarily define affliction as divinely ordained distress that is external to the christian but of the very essence of the disciple (cf. 8:31 ff.), something that strikes at the church in the latter days both from within and without and must be endured by him who will be saved.

The word "persecution" (διωγμός) is, as we might expect, very similar in meaning to "affliction". It appears twice in Mark's gospel (4:17;10:30). By contrast, it occurs eight times in Matthew's gospel (5:10,11,12,44;10:23 twice ;13:21;23:34) and occupies a special place in his teaching.

Persecution, like affliction, could also cover an array of meanings. It could denote injury of some nature inflicted through physical or verbal abuse. It may designate that one is the victim of perjured testimony offered in a court of law, or that one suffers verbal or physical assault which apparently can, under circumstances, attain such severity as to make it comparable to being scourged or even crucified or killed.

Mark's gospel contains strong evidence to the effect that the church being described here experienced both Jewish and Gentile persecution, but also from within family members. A brief digression on the date of the publication of Mark's gospel will shed more light on the state of affairs of Mark's church(?). Donald Guthrie (1970:72 ff.) after citing many of the conflicting traditions concerning the date of publications of the gospel of Mark, however, suggests a very early dating i.e. after the Neronian persecution and probably after Peter's death, that is, around 65-69 A.D. Although this dating of Mark lends much support to our idea of a "suffering" church, we nevertheless have to challenge

this viewpoint. There are just too many details that depict a church living after the fall of Jerusalem. We shall only highlight one weighty reason that argues for a later date. This concerns the prophecy about the Temple being razed to the ground (13:1 ff.). Martin Hengel (1985:8 ff.) takes up this issue, amongst others, and argues very convincingly for a date after the Fall. If we accept this dating, then the experience of the church contemporaneous with the writing of the gospel, can be easily recreated. We are aware of the persecution of the christian leaders, like Peter and Paul. Therefore other christians would also have experienced some tribulation and persecution themselves.

But as in the case of affliction, Mark's references to persecution disclose that it, too, has an eschatological emphasis. For the most part the church is persecuted on religious grounds(10:30). Such religious persecutions ^{are} is considered to be divinely ordained and therefore to be expected. Indeed it is to be endured with joy, for it is the very hallmark of discipleship and shows up the person who submits to it as standing in the tradition of Jesus and the Old Testament prophets. What is more, persecution for the sake of discipleship carries with it the promise of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven (cf.Mt. 5:10).

To sum up, persecution is defined principally as physical or verbal abuse, which the christian must be prepared to suffer at the hands of hostile Jews, Gentiles, members of his own family,

and even other apostate christians, because of his allegiance to Jesus, his Lord. If the personal cost for the christian is so high, so is his reward: the knowledge that he is sharing in the lot of Jesus and the prophets and the promise that he will inherit the kingdom of Heaven. "Persecution" is mentioned in the same breath as "affliction". The latter term denotes the broad spectrum of all kinds of distress which a christian may suffer. The former denotes a specific type of distress, namely, physical or verbal assault. Both "persecution" and "affliction" combine to form almost a hyperbolic expression signifying every misfortune which can befall a christian in the time before the end by reason of his allegiance to Jesus, the Risen Lord.

Mark reports that this category of persons, as a result of the affliction and persecution it encounters, "falls away" (σκανδαλιζω, 136.11). The word family σκανδαλον-σκανδαλιζω-σκαδαλιζομαι occurs in all of the synoptic gospels: eight times in Mark, nineteen times in Matthew and three times in Luke.

The fundamental concept which lies at the basis of σκανδαλον-σκανδαλιζω has to do with the hindrance or the lack or loss of faith, and therefore gives this word-group a highly eschatological meaning. We see this particularly in those places where Mark utilises one of these terms in conjunction with the alternatives of salvation and perdition (9:42 ff., 45, 47). So

eschatologically coloured as σκανδαλιζομαι is, it goes without saying that it exhibits a close affinity to affliction and persecution.

Before we leave this second section, let us consider briefly the statement that "affliction or persecution arises on account of the Word"(136.11). This concise remark reflects a post-Easter theology. In the course of the ministry of Jesus, Jesus himself was the rock of decision that was set in Israel for the rise or fall of many(Lk.2:34), a thought that Matthew expresses in those passages in which Jesus speaks of "falling away because of me" (26:31,33). After Easter, the rock of decision and therefore also of offence becomes, in one respect, the Word as the church's missionary proclamation and the Word as the church's credo. When therefore, Mark's text reads that "affliction or persecution arise on account of the Word", this reveals the natural tendency, in fact the necessity, for the church to supplant the person of Jesus with the Word about him. During the ministry of Jesus, the issues of salvation and damnation were determined for men in confrontation with his physical person. In the time of the church, they are determined by the kerygma, in which Jesus calls men into his kingly rule, and by credo, in which the disciples of Jesus profess their continued allegiance to him. Once Jesus himself provoked controversy, now the Word of allegiance to him provokes ^{for} more severe affliction and persecution.

To recapitulate, the similitude of the seed sown on the rocky ground provides us with added insight into the conditions within the early church. The picture it mediates is that of a suffering community physically threatened from without by both Jews and Gentiles and troubled from within by false doctrine, serious ethical offences, and even apostasy. Against this background of peril and dissension, Mark sees in this similitude an admonition of Jesus to the christians of his community. Jesus exhorts these christians to be disciples who have heard the Word aright, which means that they are to show that the Word by which they have been called into God's kingly rule is so firmly rooted in their hearts that no affliction or persecution they may be called on to endure as a result of their professed allegiance to him (Jesus) will cause them to lose their faith and lead to their spiritual demise.

3.2.3.3 THE SEED SOWN AMONG THE THORNS

Let us now consider the third similitude of the seed sown among the thorns (136.12 - 136.15). This takes us into the sphere of the christian's struggle with worldly influences. It is noteworthy that Matthew's account is linguistically totally dependent upon Mark's (13:22).

G.D. Kilpatrick (1950 : 124 ff.) has sketched the character of the community in which Matthew's gospel held sway. By examining the word "city" as well as Matthaean references to money and economic conditions, Kilpatrick comes to the conclusion that

Matthew's community must have been rather "well to do" and so was little concerned about poverty.

If we apply the results of Kilpatrick's investigation to this similitude in Mark's gospel, it takes no imagination to see why Mark should be interested in having the members of the church warned against the "cares of the world"; the "delight in riches"; and the "desire for other things." For if these christians did live in a wealthy city, such temptations would constantly be present to "choke the word" and render it "unfruitful" in their lives. In recognition of this danger, Mark employs this similitude so that Jesus might exhort the christians of this church to be disciples who have heard the word correctly, and would not be involved in "the world" to keep them from being fruitful for God.

This perhaps is an opportune place to comment on this first section, comprising of three similitudes that centre around unfruitfulness. Throughout these similitudes we have observed how details in the Interpretation have become embellished with 'real-life tensions' of the Sitz-im-Leben of the church. Now we can appreciate more fully how these situational factors have even made inroads into the actual parable of the Sower.

3.2.3.4 THE SEED SOWN ON THE GOOD SOIL

We now come to the last of the four similitudes. This category of persons offers us a simple but stark contrast to the

aforementioned three categories. Unlike Matthew with his penchant for understanding συνιέναι Mark adheres to the idea of hearing the Word (ἀκούσῃν τὸν λόγον). Whilst we cannot speak of a decisive difference in meaning between receiving (λαμβάνουσιν, 136.8) the Word, and accepting (παράδεχονται, 136.17) it, the latter verb, according to Taylor (1966: 262) is stronger than λαμβάνω and "can express the idea of welcoming."

From a structural point of view verse 20 (136.16 - 136.18), like the parable of the Sower, has no reference to an external agent that robs the seed of its fruitfulness. Furthermore, despite the redactional features in verse 9 (133.15 - 133.17) our verse here is plain and straightforward. Two constants, nevertheless, remain : the seed being sown on the good soil and the results stated again in a triad of dissonance. Understandably, our comments here will seem to echo those of the parable.

With the similitude of the seed sown on good soil, the interpretation of the parable of the Sower reaches its culmination. Coming as it does at the end of the unit, this similitude occupies the position of stress. What is more decisive, however, is that while the other three are negative in outlook, thus exhorting the church to hear the Word correctly by reverse example, this one is positive in outlook. In it the members of the church are confronted with an ideal christian who

hears the Word correctly and therefore welcomes it. This final similitude, therefore, is an appeal of Jesus to all segments of the church, particularly to those who may have made themselves prey to the offenses that were covered in the first three categories.

If we compare the Interpretation of the parable of the Sower with the parable itself, we find that in their correspondence each section stresses one of the four different categories. In both, the seed and its fate comprise the common denominators. The seed falling on the different types of soil serves as a steno-symbol for the different types of reception that the Word encounters.

Trocme (1977:467) extends this idea further and speaks of four groups of people in the ministry of Jesus which he asserts Mark wishes to identify. The first group of people, which Mark compares with the path, is that of the hearers of the Word in whom Satan is at work to prevent them from accepting any element of it. This probably refers to the scribes of Jerusalem, who are Jesus' arch-enemies and guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Trocme regards these people as being totally in the hands of Satan. The second group, compared to the rocky ground might well be Jesus' relatives and natural friends, who were bound to be well disposed towards him in the first place but then became frightened and hostile. The third group compared to the thorny place, Trocme asserts, are the ordinary disciples or hearers of

Jesus, who have not broken with society and remain tied with it in all sorts of ways. Finally, the fourth group is "those around him with the twelve," who have accepted all the implications of their missionary calling and bear fruit, that is, gain converts.

Whilst this identification is very interesting, perhaps one should not lose track of the intentio Jesu. We have isolated a purpose of teaching by reverse example. This rather moves us away from ossifying the unfruitfulness as permanent categories and constrains the hearers to emulate the ideal christian as portrayed by the fruitfulness of the final category. This offers both hope and encouragement to the hearers. Unfortunately, Trocmé's identification lacks this vital element and perhaps even borders on a sort of fatalism.

3.2.3.5 THE STRUCTURE OF MARK 4:1-20

We shall now give consideration to the structure of Mark chapter four, verses one to twenty (129.-136.18). Dodd (1963:315-334) in his analysis of dialogue forms in the gospels isolated one type which appears to be confined to the Fourth Gospel. Four elements characterised this kind of dialogue : an oracular utterance by Jesus, blank incomprehension or crude misunderstanding, a reproachful retort by Jesus, and explanation or extension of an enigmatic saying. Lémico (1978 : 323 ff.) more recently identified such types in the gospel of Mark and in 4: 1-20. Here a slightly modified pattern emerges: ambiguity (parable of the Sower vv 3-8,) incomprehension ("... they were asking him about

the parables" vv10), surprised/critical rejoinder ("... know ye not this parable? vs 13a), and explanation (Interpretation to the parable of the Sower vv.14-20).

What is particularly interesting is Lémico's discovery (1978:323 ff.) that these dialogue forms are found in the Old Testament more than half a millennium earlier than John, in Jewish apocalyptic, and, of course, in Mark. Furthermore every structural phenomenon in Mark 4: 1-20 can be accounted for in the pre-or para-Markan situation.

To summarise, the pattern adduced above reflects in a conventional way the sort of didactic interchange which was common to the prophets, Jesus and the early church. One of the important consequences of Lémico's finding must centre around the caution of accepting editorial creativity prematurely.

Let us now turn to verses 21 to 23 which deal with the parable of the Lamp.

3.2.4 Pericope C. The Parable of the Lamp (4: 21-23)

137.	21	καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς,
137.1		μήτι ἔρχεται ὁ λόχνος ἵνα ὑπὸ τῶν μύδων τεθῇ ἢ ὑπὸ τῆν κλίνην;
137.2		οὐχ ἵνα ἐπὶ τῆν λυχνίαν τεθῇ;
137.3	22	οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτὸν ἑὸν μὴ ἵνα φανερωθῇ,
137.4		οὐδὲ ἐγένετο ἀποκρύφον ἀλλ' ἵνα ἔλθῃ εἰς φανερόν.
137.5	23	εἴ τις ἔχει ὦτα ἀκοῦειν ἀκουέτω.

The new information that is introduced in this pericope includes references that, once again, reveal the Markan penchant for ἄκουω. Pericope A¹ with its Markan framing, provided us with important clues on the author's structural devices of composition. Both Matthew and Luke put this saying into other contexts. This seems to argue for the possibility that they circulated independently of the context into which Mark put them. We also encounter for the second time the saying about ears and hearing which Mark had earlier attached to the end of the parable of the Sower. So, this Markan editorial activity must constitute the focus of our pericope.

Let us now proceed with a literary analysis of 137.-137.5. A very important metaphor, that of lamp (λυχνος), has prompted the traditional caption of this parable, "the parable of the lamp". A translation of λυχνος as lamp is definitely more in keeping with the sophistication of society two thousand years ago. A rendering of λυχνος as candle, as in the King James Version and the like, would therefore be unjustified. This noun metaphor, whose vehicle is λυχνος, can be termed a suspended metaphor with a resumptive function. Although the tenor is not to be found in the immediate context, the text does provide us with important clues. This distinctively Markan formulation has two very interesting features: the use of the definite article before "lamp" ὁ λυχνος and the choice of the verb "come". "Does the lamp come for the purpose of being placed under the bushel or

under the couch? Does it not come for the purpose of being placed on a lampstand?" asks W.Lane(1974:165). The use of ἐπ^νερα^ν is therefore intriguing since lamps do not come but are brought and placed. The fact that the noun lamp cannot take a verb of motion indicates the violation of selection restrictions. This violation of selection restrictions signifies that lamp (λυχνος) is metaphorised.

From our discussion, the suspended tenor of the metaphor of the lamp can be recovered. Mark's ἐπ^νερα^ν is rendered intelligible if Jesus was speaking of himself as the lamp through which the gospel has come into the world. Even better still this could refer to the gospel as the tenor. Therefore compatible features of a lamp a.o. like (divine) (light) (rule) (beacon) (guide) (truth) (knowledge) (elucidation) (perceptiveness) (manifest) are transferred to the gospel. If we were to extend this range to the macro-context of the four gospel accounts we would arrive at the following semantic features, among others: (divine) (revelation) (messianic) (eschatological) (authority) (obedience) (righteousness) (mission) (christological). This confirms our premise that here again we encounter a metaphoric usage of language. On this assumption, the use of the definite article (ὁ) before lamp can be construed as intentional. The verb metaphor φανερωθῆ^ν (137.3) functions in a supplementary role to our primary metaphor in this pericope. A similar

situation is evident for the vehicle φανερόν (137.4) of another noun metaphor in our pericope.

In our pericope we also notice the literary device of foregrounding. Sentence 137.1 offers us an example of an antithetical parallelism. It is more precisely an elliptical parallelism or incomplete parallelism. The comparative is omitted after οὐκ ἵνα because of sharp contrast and antithesis with lampstand. Lampstand is thus foregrounded by fragmentation.

Is a lamp (A) brought to be put (B) under a bushel or
under a bed?

(Is it) not on a lampstand (A¹) to be put (B¹)

A pattern of A, B, A¹, B¹ links them as a unit and encourages a comparison between its segments. Sentences 137.3 and 137.4 also realise a synonymous parallelism. For there is nothing hid (A) save that it should be manifested (B) ; neither was anything made secret (A), but that it should come to light (B). Once again a pattern of A, B, A¹, B¹ is created. Whilst the two sentences are synonymous in relation to each other, they are antithetical within themselves. The contrast that is drawn in 137.1 between hiddenness under the bushel or under the bed and open manifestation upon the stand is sustained in 137.3. This sentence with its antonyms conveys a meaning that something which is hidden now shall be later unveiled or something which is a

secret shall become known. This tension between the hiddenness and manifestation, whilst being enigmatic, is critical for an understanding of the kingdom of God. We have already noted certain semantic features of a lamp such as (divine) (light) (rule) (beacon) (truth) (knowledge) (guide) (elucidation) (perceptiveness) (manifest). These positive features are placed in juxtaposition to features a.o. such as (hiddenness) (conceal) (partiality) (proleptic) (incomplete) (fragmentary) (fractional). This dialectic nature of the kingdom of God has been taken up in the history of New Testament research.

The old liberal view is represented by von Harnack's What is Christianity? (1901). He understood the kingdom of God as the pure prophetic religion taught by Jesus : the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the infinite value of the individual soul, and the ethic of love. In 1892, Johannes Weiss published a book entitled The Preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God, in which he argued that Jesus' view of the kingdom was like that of the Jewish apocalypses : altogether future and eschatological. Albert Schweitzer (1911) picked up this idea and interpreted the coming of the kingdom in the immediate future, an interpretation that he called konsequente Eschatologie (consistent eschatological). Since Weiss and Schweitzer, most scholars have recognised that the apocalyptic element belongs to the kernel and not the husk of Jesus' teachings, but few contemporary scholars view the kingdom as exclusively eschatological (cf. Hiers 1970).

Rudolf Bultmann in his Jesus and the Word (1935) has accepted the imminent approach of the eschatological kingdom but he sees the true meaning in existential terms : the nearness and the demand of God. In Great Britain, the most influential interpretation has been the "realised eschatology" of C.H. Dodd (1970:115 ff.). In The Founder of Christianity (1970) he sees the kingdom, described in apocalyptic language, as the transcendent order beyond time and space that has broken into history in the mission of Jesus. If a majority of scholars have approached a consensus, it is that the kingdom is in some real sense both present and future, that is, the "already now" and the "yet to come."

A number of weak puns also occur in this first section of our pericope: λυχνος and λυχνιαν; κρυπτον and ἀποκρυφον; φανερωθη and φανερον. Verbs like ἔστιν and ἔγευεο also function metaphorically as vehicles that refer to the immediacy of the revelation of the kingdom of God. The use of coupling between 137.3 and 137.4 further conveys this idea of the kingdom being in the process of revelation. We also note that a double synonymous parallelism is realised in sentences 137.1 and 137.3. We should also mention that additive and associative principles of composition are at work here.

Earlier, we identified sentence 137.5 as framing material that constitute the focus of our pericope. This statement of a solemn call to hear and perceive the deeper significance in the parable,

is a call to perceive the secret in its veiledness. Therefore Deist and du Plessis (1981:143) speak of a parable in general as placing "everyone who is confronted with it before a decision (choice) of accepting or rejecting it. It then irrevocably brings judgement or liberation." This is in contrast to the saying in sentences 135. - 135.2.3. Mark's placement of this parable of the Lamp after 4: 11-20 suggest that he has in view the secret of the kingdom of God which is present in the person of Jesus, whose mission remains a "veiled enigma" (Lane. 1974 : 166). This seeming contradiction merits some discussion.

In sentences 135.-135.2.3 we are told that Jesus used parables to hide truth, while this parable seems to be intended to assist people in their understanding. The crux of the argument centres around sentences 137.3 and 137.4. The two main interpretations of these verses translate them with either a future tense or a past tense. Kirkland (1977 :12 ff.) argues against the use of the future tense and advocates rather that the secondary clauses be read as final (purposive). He adds (1977 : 12 ff.) that "the point of the saying is that what is hidden is meant to be manifested by the act of hiding it. A paradox is intended, one which explains the use of parables : Nothing is hidden (i.e., couched in "riddles", "cryptic saying") except in order that * it may thereby be revealed ; nothing is concealed except in order that it might come to light."

This constitutes a paradox par excellence, another characteristic form of Jesus' teaching in addition to parables. Jesus' parables were not constructed to prevent anyone whatsoever from comprehending but in order that the truth might be clearly discerned. The importance of this saying is strongly accentuated by the addition of sentence 137.4 and is furthermore emphasised by sentence 138.1.

But how is this truth (light) to be seen and who is it who will be able to understand. Sentences 138.2 - 138.5 are extremely helpful here. Our first question is answered by sentence 138.2
 ἐν ᾧ μετρῶ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν καὶ προστεθήσεται:
 "With what measure you measure, it will be apportioned and more given to you." As Gould (1913:78) explained, "If a man accustoms himself to small measures of truth, small measures will be dealt out to him, and vice versa."

It should be borne in mind that Jesus did not "deal out" truth by way of private explanation to those whom he for some reason elects. Rather, a wise and discerning person will see the truth hidden in parables, while the dull and unperceptive shall not. The followers of Jesus, who have already been taught concerning the kingdom, should have no trouble understanding any of their master's deeds or sayings. The same applies to anyone else who does not know Jesus, but who yet possesses great insight. If his disciples show a lack of comprehension (as in 7:17 ff.; 8:17,21;

etc.), they reveal thereby that they have no insight, and that they have not truly perceived and internalised his teachings. That would show themselves up to be on par with "those outside" who have not had the privilege of learning about Jesus' kingdom.

3.2.4.1 THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP (4:21-23) AND THE CALL TO OBEDIENCE (4:24-25)

Let us attempt to relate the different segments to sentences 138.4 and 138.5, the apex of our chiastic structure. Taken in connection with sentences 135. - 135.2.3; 137.5 and 138. - 138.5, what those who "have " have, is evidently understanding. They are to be given "more", that is , of the same thing that they already have, only the amount is to be increased. This understanding means comprehension of Jesus' cryptic sayings or his teaching in general about the kingdom. What is therefore "given" to the perceptive in sentences 135.- 135.2.3 is the key to understanding the kingdom of God which those who "have" can decipher.

The situation of the unperceptive is different. Sentence 138.5 tells us that to those who do not have ears to hear, the cryptic sayings will not only not reveal their true meaning, but will even confound what the undiscerning may think he already knows.

But that, too, is a way of teaching, since the riddles might be able to jolt the poor learner out of his usual trend of thought, thereby making him truly perceptive. Therefore, even when the cryptic sayings serve to conceal, they also paradoxically serve as a means to reveal.

So, by utilising the parabolic form, Jesus could simultaneously reveal more truth to those who already possessed some, and protect it from all others, who owing to their spiritual insensitivity were sure to misunderstand it, and interpret it to their detriment.

Let us now turn our attention to verses 24-25, the apex of the chiastic structure in chapter four. This pericope unifies the multiple lines of action in 4 :1-34. It interprets the other parables of chapter four and is interpreted by them.

3.2.5 Pericope D. The Call of Obedience (4: 24-25)

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 138. | 24 | καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, |
| 138.1 | | βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε. |
| 138.2 | | ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν |
| 138.3 | | καὶ προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν. |
| 138.4 | 25 | ὅς γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ· |
| 138.5 | | καὶ ὅς οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὁ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. |

This pericope comprises of the attachment formula (καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς), a warning on careful hearing (βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε), and two sayings. These sayings are reproduced by Matthew and Luke but in different contexts.

Yet again, the Markan redactional features constitute the focus of this pericope. Besides the normal note of urgency, an importance that references to ἀκούω convey, here they assume

an eschatological significance. New information surfaces in 138.3. We are told that we will receive more than our due. A bit of startling new information about losing what little we have, is encountered in the last sentence of this pericope.

There are certain other syntactic features (as mentioned in chapter two) which are determined on the basis of linguistic theory but which are of relevance only to the literary analysis. One of these features is the relevant transformations that have applied in the derivation of each sentence. The surface structure of the sentences in Mark 4: 24-25 as specified above shows the effect of several movement transformations and deletions. All these transformations that have applied in the derivation of the surface structure of the sentences in Mark 4:24-25 are optional. In all cases, as will be indicated, their function is stylistic. Attention is thus drawn to the application of the following transformations in the derivation of the surface structure of the text.

Topicalisation has been identified as a transformation which moves a constituent in a sentence to the sentence-initial position. The fronted constituent becomes the topic of the sentence. In sentence 138.2 the protasis (ἐν ᾧ μετρω μετρεῖτε) has been moved to the left across the apodosis (μετρηθησεται ὑμῖν) to the sentence-initial position. The function of this movement is to emphasise the protasis and

thereby heighten the importance of one's decision. It is one's decision that becomes the criterion for one's judgement. This emphasis is also conveyed by sentence-initial position of ὅς yap ἔχει (138.4) and καὶ ὅς οὐκ ἔχει (138.5). The way one responds to what one has, however little it might be, will determine one's destiny.

The positioning of the divine future passives in sentences 138.2 (μετρηθήσεται), 138.4 (δοθήσεται) and sentence 138.5 (ἀρθήσεται) relegates them to a secondary position. In each case the divine agent, ὑπο τοῦ Θεοῦ, is deleted in the derivation of the surface structure but present in the deep structure. God confirms the decisions of men in a way which surpasses all expectations. In addition to verses 24 and 25 serving as a midrash on the parables, Maartens (1987:3) adds "It unites all subordinate lines of action: it comments on the contrast between the harvest produced on good soil as opposed to the many losses suffered; above all the proverb signifies the abundance of divine grace manifest in the impending rule of God which ushers in the new age of the Kingdom." This also conveys an idea of God not actively meting out rewards and punishment in isolation to our actions. But his eschatological judgement is contingent to our response. The alliteration in sentences 138.2 (μετρω μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται) establishes a causal relationship between the noun μετρω and the verb

μετρηθησεται. In a way, one can speak of one's decision determining the outcome.

In chapter two we described deletion as a transformation by which a constituent in the deep structure of a sentence is omitted in the derivation of the surface structure .

Let us now turn to the literary analysis of sentence 138.-138.5. Again we make reference to chapter two where we referred to cohesion. We will pick out patterns of meaning running through the text and give attention to how foregrounded features identified in isolation are related to one another and to the text in its entirety. We shall begin by giving consideration to metaphoric language usage in this pericope.

Maartens (1987 : 6) isolates, the principal subject of Mark 4: 24,25 in the words, ὁλκότες τι ἀκούετε. A syntagmatic link is identified between this expression and that of μετρωσάτε καὶ μετρήσετε in Mark 1 :15. They could be regarded as being semantically equal. According to Maartens this discovery helps us recover the tenor of the suspended metaphor under discussion, namely, faith.

The focal expression, ἐν ᾧ μετρώ μετρεῖτε, engages in reciprocal interaction with faith, as principle subject. Within this mutual interaction only the comparable semantic features are

retopicalised and transferred to faith, as the principle subject. The retopicalised semantic features constitute the tertium comparationis and may be explicated as follows : (human) (faithfulness) (decision) (trust) (hope) (commitment) (eschatological) (perceptiveness) (obedience). These, among other semantic features articulate what the focal expression, ἐν ᾧ μετρεῖ μετρεῖτε, constitutes a literary sign.

An important metaphor that we encounter in this pericope has to do with a measure (μοδίου). It has been suggested by Jeremias (1954:91 ff.) ; Lane (1974:167); Anderson (1976:135) ; etc. that the parable of the measure ... has been included after that of the Lamp because of the reference to the bushel (μοδίου) in 137. A μόδιος is a dry measure containing nearly two gallons. We have already made mention of the different Lukan and Matthaean interpretations of these sayings. What is clearly discernible in this Markan context is a thoroughly eschatological thrust making μόδιος a metaphor for judgement.

Three metaphors relate to the idea of the measure: μόδιος, a noun metaphor and μετρεῖτε and μετρηθήσεσθε as verb metaphors. All the compatible semantic features of a measure are highlighted. So the tenor of the noun metaphor μόδιος could include, among other, such ideas as (decision) (human) (eschatological) (obedience) (righteousness). This metaphor

could therefore be said to function as a warning on the decision one makes. In the case of the verb metaphor $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$, reference is made to the judgement one passes. The third metaphor $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ presents the criterion for one's judgement. In Miller's terms (1971 :128) this is a submerged metaphor. The principle subject or tenor is permanently suspended from the text. The tenor of this verb metaphor, $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, is the Son of man (Mk. 14:62) as eschatological judge. The retopicalised semantic features transferred from the vehicle, $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ to the principal subject judgement, may be articulated in the following semantic features: (divine) (justice) (righteousness) (faithfulness) (redemption) (proleptic) (eschatological dispensation) (destiny). We are cautioned to be extremely careful about our decision as it constitutes the basis upon which we shall be judged.

The conjunctive $\kappa\alpha\iota$ in 138.3 is an epexegetical $\kappa\alpha\iota$. The verb $\pi\upsilon\omicron\sigma\sigma\epsilon\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ alludes to the incomparability of divine grace evident also in the extraordinary harvest of the Sower. $\Pi\upsilon\omicron\sigma\sigma\epsilon\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ reinterprets $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ retrospectively. Also, the antithesis between $\delta\omicron\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ and $\acute{\alpha}\rho\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi'$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ concretises $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$. This antithesis contrasts the consequences of those who commit themselves and of those who exclude themselves from the grace of God. "The main thrust of this symbolism " says Maartens (1987:7), "is to

articulate the significance of the grace of God which rewards its recipients beyond human comprehension."

In the parable of the Measure an antithetical parallelism is realised in sentences 138.4 and 138.5

For to him who has (A) will more be given (B); and
from him who has not (A) even what he has will be taken away(B).

The author has chosen to select antonyms thereby rendering this parallelism an antithesis. Attention has already been given to the future passives. They are moreover divine passives which give these sayings an eschatological ring.

3.2.5.1 THE POSITIONING OF VERSES 24-25 WITHIN 4:1-34

Let us now turn to a discussion on the positioning of vv. 24-25 within the teaching block 4: 1-34. Willi Marxsen (Eng.tr.1969) has furnished us with a most convincing redactional analysis of Mark 4: 1-34 . According to Marxsen the text was based on a

"parable-source", which contained what is now found in verses 3-8,9,10,13-20,26-30 and 31-32. The evangelist added a few editorial remarks, and worked into the Gleichnisquelle some material from a different tradition , that is, verses 11-12 and 21-25 (cf. Marxsen 1955: 264 n.l.). Through placing 11-12 between 10 and 13 , Mark produced a twofold answer to the question , making the whole section (verses 10-13) a transition from the parable to its allegorisation. Thus the entire text,

according to Marxsen (1955:261) (vv. 1-20) was fitted into a scheme found elsewhere in Mark :

1. a parable
2. a question of comprehension (or a lack thereof)
3. an application of the parable

Kirkland (1977 :16 ff.) , whilst accepting the analysis offered by a redaction criticism of 4: 1-34, offers an even more convincing possibility. He advances the idea that if we looked at the two traditions which Mark combined as an individual units complete in themselves, the meaning of each becomes clearer. He sees verses 10 and 13 as belonging not to verses 9-13, 14 ff. (which he calls Text A) but to verses 11-12, 21 ff. (which he calls Text B) . When the two texts are placed side by side we obtain a very interesting comparison.

Text A

1. Verses 3-9 : The parable of the Sower, and an exhortation to hear.
2. (Lacking)
3. Verses 14-20: An explication of the Sower-parable.
4. Verses 26-32: Two more parables with the seed theme.
5. Verses 33-34: Editorial explanations (33 an early addition, 34 a later addition).

Text B

1. Verses 10-12: A question; the saying about the secret of the kingdom and the inability of many to comprehend it
2. Verse 13: A question concerning incomprehension.
3. Verses 21-25 : The explanation of the enigmatic saying in 11-12.
4. (Lacking)
5. (Lacking)

Kirkland (1977:17) thus demonstrates that Text B represents in itself a complete example of the parable - question - explanation motif mentioned by Marxsen. He goes on to add that Text A, on the other hand, consists solely of three seed-parables, and an allegorising explanation of one of them. This block 4: 1-34 is viewed as Mark's attempt to combine the two sources to produce

one great parable - question - explanation structure but succeeding only in obscuring both.

Whilst we appreciate and value the insights of redaction criticism, earlier on, we sounded a cautionary note to too prematurely ascribing to the work of a redactor what could be the legacy from a pre-Markan tradition. Who can outrightly deny such a probability in our teaching block here. We are also, by now, all too well conversant with the multifarious problems of our text. Despite these apparent inconsistencies, it remains our firm opinion that Kirkland displays a heightened frustration that makes no allowance for a definite purpose behind this intentional ordering of material.

It is precisely this accommodation for a Markan purpose that constitutes the basis of our study here. In chapter two we drew attention to the highly structured nature of the text of the gospels in particular. Here, in this third chapter we attempted to unravel this structured nature of Mark 4: 1-34. Thus far we have encountered linguistic and literary features that have corroborated our theoretically-founded framework.

Whilst some scholars may yet insist that the author of Mark's gospel has exasperated the problems in Mk. 4: 1-34 by structuring the text in the manner that has been handed down to us, it is our considered opinion that the structure of our text furnishes us

with important clues to uncover the Markan Interpretation of his sources.

Since the sayings in the pericope D are found in different contexts in both Matthew and Luke's gospel accounts, the Markan placement must be significant. Earlier on in this chapter we outlined the contents of the eight pericopes of Mark 4: 1-34. In pericope A¹, we have observed the influence of pericope A² (the Interpretation of the Sower). It was sufficiently demonstrated how real life issues of the Sitz-im-Leben of the early church were reworked into this parable to correlate it with the Interpretation. However, the Markan redaction of sentence 133.15-ἀναβαλόντα καὶ αὐξανόμενα (growing up and increasing), is of greater significance to our immediate concern. This growth motif is particularly interesting because of its absence in all but two pericopes, namely, C¹ and A³. Therefore, we contend that the author, in addition to grouping these parables here, deliberately introduced the growth motif in A¹, thereby linking these three pericopes. So pericopes A¹, is linked to A²; whilst C¹ and A³ are linked to A¹. Pericope B on the purpose of the parables and pericope B¹ on the use of parables can be easily linked to each other on account of their preoccupation with the parabolic method.

How does pericope D fit into this framework? We have already spoken of this pericope as the apex of the chiasmic structure

evident in Mark 4: 1-34. Without having engaged in a detailed consideration of pericopes C¹, A³ and B¹, it would be difficult to give a full appreciation of the chiasmus or of this pericope functioning as the apex. Therefore here we will keep our observations both brief and provisional

Pericope D which centres on the parable of the Measure interprets all of the seven remaining pericopes. We have just established how pericope C reinterprets and clarifies pericope B. Attention has been given to the placing of B in between A¹ and A² to create a sense of continuation between the parable and the Interpretation. It remains to be demonstrated how pericope D reinterprets both pericopes A¹ and A². From the outset of both the parable of the Sower (especially sentences 133.1 and 133.2) and the parable of the Measure (sentence 138.1) attentive hearing is adduced to be highly important. The inclusion of the statement on hearing in sentence 137.17 and at the end of the parable of the Lamp in sentence 137.5 accentuate the decisive nature of proper hearing. So we see the pivotal role of pericope C vis-à-vis pericope A¹.

The link between pericope A² and pericope D is established by the Markan penchant for the verb ἄκουω that is particularly evident in pericope A² (the Interpretation of the Sower). The cognates of ἄκουω surface in sentences 136.5; 136.8; 136.13; and 136.16. Proper or attentive hearing functions as a synonym

for true perception of the Word (τον λογον). We have chosen to reserve comment on how pericope D reinterprets pericope C and C¹ till after we have dealt with them individually.

Let us now concentrate on pericope C¹, that of the parable of the Growing Seed.

3.2.6. Pericope C¹. The Parable of the Growing Seed (4:26-29).

139.	26	καὶ ἔλεγεν,
139.1		οὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ
		ὥς ἄνθρωπος βάλη τὸν σπῆρον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
139.2	27	καὶ καθεύδῃ καὶ ἐγείρεται νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν,
139.3		καὶ ὁ σπῆρος βλαστᾷ καὶ μηκύνεται ὥς οὐκ οἶδεν αὐτός.
139.4	28	αὐτομάτῃ ἡ γῆ καρποφορεῖ, πρῶτον χόρτον, εἶτεν στάχυν, εἶτεν πλήρη[ς]
		σῖτον ἐν τῷ στάχυϊ
139.5	29	ὅταν δὲ παραδοῖ ὁ καρπός,
		εὐθὺς ἀποστέλλει τὸ δρέπανον, ὅτι παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός.

The focus of this parable must centre around ὥς οὐκ οἶδεν οὗτος (139.3) "as he does not know" and αὐτομάτῃ (139.4) "of its own". The focus in sentence 139.3 and that in 139.4 both highlight the idea of the Seed germinating mysteriously and also "of itself", that is, unaided by man.

Sentence 139.3 furnishes us with an example of topicalisation. The noun ὁ σπῆρος has been moved to the left across the verbs βλαστᾷ and μηκύνεται to sentence-initial position. The function of this movement is to emphasise the noun σπῆρος as the topic of sentence 139.3.

When considering sentence 139.1 it will be noticed that the genitive construction ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ has been moved across the verb to sentence-final position. Also ὁ θερισμός has been moved to sentence-final position. Again the function of the movement is stylistic.

A literary analysis of pericope C¹ uncovers the metaphor of the growing seed. It is not just "the seed being scattered on the ground" that is the vehicle for the metaphor here, but the whole parable serves as a vehicle for the tenor, the kingdom of God. Another metaphor that surfaces in our pericope is that of the harvest (ὁ θερισμός). This functions ~~has~~ as a vehicle for the well known tenors such as (eschaton) (kairos) (judgement).

If we press on with a literary analysis we uncover some interesting features of foregrounding. Mary Ann Tolbert (1979:80 ff.) identifies a parallelism in our pericope. Her analysis of the text is as follows:

And he said, "the kingdom of God is
 as if a man should scatter seed (A)
 on the earth (B) and should sleep night and day,
 and the seed (A¹) should sprout and grow, he knows not how.
 The earth (B¹) produces of itself, first the blade, then
 the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the crop
 permits at once
 He puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

This (A B) (A¹ B¹) pattern between seed and earth realises a
 synonymous parallelism. The parallel repetitions in the surface
 structure reinforce and underline the importance of the two
 constants in the parable. Both the seed and the earth are
 critical for growth. Perhaps, better stated, it is the
 interrelationship that produces the miracle of growth. Tolbert
 (1979:79 ff.) also comments on what we will call the framing of
 our parable. It begins with a reference to the kingdom of God and
 ends with an allusion to the Hebrew scriptures (Joel 3.13).

We have identified the central section of the parable as the
 focus (139.2-139.4). P.R.Jones (1978:522 ff.) presents an
 analysis of this pericope that corroborates our identification of
 the focus. For him the structure consists of three points:

1. Sowing (v.26) sentences 139-139.1
2. Growing (vv.27-28) sentences 139.2-139.4
3. Reaping (v.29) sentence 139.5

Whilst the one character, the Sower, appears in all three parts, he is only active in parts one and three but not in part two. In part one he scatters (σάλη) the seed, and in part three he puts (ἄποστελλει) the sickle. But in part two he sleeps and rises, thus contributing nothing towards the growth of the seed. He is planter and harvester but certainly not the grower. The parable establishes an internal comparison, a tertium comparationis within the parable. What is stressed here is the total lack of concurrence between sowing and growing. Man can only sow but the aspect of growth rests solely in God. Human effort stands condemned. Thus growth lies totally in the divine initiative.

Jones' structural analysis (1978:523) exposes the prominence of part two as the "parables centre of gravity." These verses are distinctive because they contain two comments which we have identified as the focus of our parable. We are told that the sower did not know how the seed grew (sentence 139.3) and that the earth bears fruit αὐτόματη (sentence 139.4).

The meaning of αὐτόματη maybe paraphrased "without visible

cause" and "without human work." "Without human agency" seems to be the best rendering of αὐτοματη.

3.2.6.1 A SURVEY OF THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

Let us now survey the various attempts at an interpretation of this parable before us. It should be noted that nearly all the leading interpretations recognise αὐτοματη as the key to understanding this parable. Also, most serious students see this as a contrast parable. But generally it is viewed as some form of encouragement. Nevertheless, despite the variety in interpretations, there is a surprising unity. We will present various interpretations under titles because naming a parable is tantamount to interpreting it.

1. The allegory of the sower-reaper. The traditional allegorical explanation understood the sower as Christ. The harvest symbolised the judgement; the sleeping and rising as Christ's death and resurrection. The admission of not knowing (139.3) allowed for human free will. R.C.Trench (1948;101) who referred the sower primarily to Jesus, saw three stages of spiritual growth in the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear.

Such allegorising is excessive and obviously one that can be challenged when equating 139.2 with the death and resurrection of Christ, 139.3 with allowance for human will, and 139.4 with stages of spiritual growth. But the possible identification of the sower as Christ or the harvest as judgement cannot remain

unassailed. In our passage the mention of *νύκτα καὶ ἡμέρα* (night and day) conveys a meaning of "everyday" or even "daily". This is in contrast to the resurrection which was a "once-off" final event. Therefore any such tendency to identify the sower with Christ has to contend with, the continuous happening that night and day symbolises.

2. The parable of the confident sower. This optimistic interpretation is associated with Karl Weiss (1922), who has written extensively on the parable. He delineated three truths (1922:45 ff.): Jesus established his kingdom on earth (139.1); he hoped confidently for success (139.2 - 139.3); and this hope moves certainly to completion (139.4 - 139.5). Optimism becomes the ground thought of the parable. Weiss (1922:64) insisted that this portrait of the confident sower is superior to the common stress on passivity which short-circuits the last component of the parable while his approach takes and retains the unified wholeness of the parable. Thus he opted for the optimism of Jesus and claimed that each part of the parable plays a constitutive role in its construction.

This emphasis upon the optimism whilst lacking depth, reveals a certain amount of unity. Also, something of the cheerful faith of Jesus is captured. Weiss' interpretation did provoke much debate from his fellow Catholics.

3. The parable of gradual growth. Nineteenth century scholars, (such as J. Wellhausen, B. Weiss and P. Féine), influenced by liberal and evolutionary thought-frames, attributed a process or development to Jesus' kingdom teaching. They saw an immanent, slow and secret developmental process inherent in the description of germination and growth. The sower could do nothing other than trusting the seed. He must wait. So this parable functioned as a foil against excessive apocalyptic.

A.B. Bruce (1893:120) placed stress on "the blade, the ear, and the full corn" and proposed an interpretation of "progress according to natural law, and by stages which must be passed through in succession. Adolph Jülicher (1910:544-545) maintained his one-point parable by interpreting it as "the certainty of the development of the kingdom."

This stress on gradual growth, whilst failing to emphasise the harvest, usually presents notions of ethical development not obvious from the parables' content, thus de-emphasising the eschatological dimensions.

4. The parable of the harvest. Ironically both Schweitzer with his thoroughly futuristic view, and Dodd with his realised eschatology found the center of gravity in the harvest (139.5). The Dodd scenario (1961:143) is particularly impressive as he maintained that God was the Sower, the stages of growth belonging

to the Old Testament era, and harvest time referring to the present crisis of the ministry of Jesus. The climax of a long process had arrived, "something has now happened which never happened before." He pictured Jesus as standing in a crop ready for harvest as in Matthew 9:37-38 and Luke 10:2. Jesus fulfills the expectations of the Baptist. So Dodd is able to make much of the stages of growth as providential antecedents, as it were, to avoid a lapse of time before the second advent, and to relate the harvest through Joel to "the fullness of time."

Scholars such as V. Taylor (1959:266) have followed this line, but John Crossan (1973:84-85) has furnished us with an interesting variation which he dubbed "the parable of the reaper." Following the Gospel of Thomas and deleting sentence 139.4, Crossan is persuaded that the emphasis is totally on the farmer while Dodd centered upon the harvest. For Crossan, the parable is a stirring call to action, a call to reap.

5. The parable of the patient farmer. Bearing some similarity to the "confident sower", this view opposes the preceding approach (4. above) by relating the time of Jesus to seeding and waiting. This analysis not only centres upon the seed growing automatically but upon the contrast between the passivity of the farmer and the activity of the seed. Jeremias (1954:151-152) who classified it as a contrast parable, spoke of the seed growing unceasingly, without the farmer taking anxious thought or active steps. The

decisive beginning is made, and man should wait patiently upon God. N.Pérrin (1967:159) placed this parable in his chapter "Jesus and the future" and wrote of "the lesson of patient waiting, in sure confidence that what has been sown will be reaped, that what God has begun, he will bring to a triumphant conclusion."

This conviction that the Kingdom comes without human care has been championed as the essence of the parable by scholars such as Calvin, Schleiermacher, Johannes Weiss, Schlatter, and Lohmeyer. Despite it capturing the constant presence of the farmer throughout the parable account, it makes too little of the growth and of the harvest. N.A. Dahl (1951:149) has singled out the contrast between the sower's passivity during the time of growth and his hurry to put in the sickle at the moment the grain is ripe. This suggestion may well be the best since it takes the two centres of gravity seriously into consideration. It certainly deserves more attention.

While we prefer the title "the parable of the Patient Farmer," like in the case of the parable of the Sower, we here again will retain the well known caption to facilitate our discussion.

In drawing our interpretation it needs to be noted that the parable is definitely not an allegory in the usual sense, though subordinate allegorical elements are present. The sower may not

be identified with Jesus because the farmer in the parable is sower, sleeper, and reaper.

The kingdom comes by miracle, by a deed of God. The seed germinates and grows on its own. The seed and soil conspire, (as it were). The sower is planter and harvester but not grower. Even as he sleeps the seed and soil conspire, so he is dependent on nature's grace. He neither causes the seed to grow nor understands how it develops. The sower sleeping and rising night and day are, so to speak, repetitive acts of non-participation. The seed's growth is independent from the sower. The development from seed to harvest is God's deed. The kingdom on its own appears without human agency, a perspective that not only delimits the role of the sower but one which affirms the capability of seed and soil.

The parable shows that the sower had no instrumentality in the crucial growing. The sower did not, cannot, and need not cause the seed to grow. The negative perspective highlights the independence of the soil. Generally, the role of the believer is seen as one of dependence, of patient waiting, of confidence in the outcome, and certitude about the completion of what has been commenced. This is the good news that man does not need to make the kingdom come. So, in the words of E. Schweitzer (1970:103) the parable censures against "endeavours to force the coming of the kingdom or to build it-by a revolution like the Zealots, by

exact calculations and preparation like the Apocalyptists, or by complete obedience to the law like the Pharisees." Confidence is different from the idea of patience that became a strong category because of James 5:7. Lane (1974:170) insists that there is no reflection on the element of patience within the text. We have also observed the pitfalls of becoming anthropocentric by focussing primarily on the farmer.

The parable indicates that the seed does in fact grow and will reach fruition and that the earth bears fruit of its own. This picture from nature can be appropriately called "the self-growing seed." This parable affirms the power of God, the definite effecting of the kingdom by divine means. The kingdom is surely coming because God is actively engaged. The parable was an invitation to faith. It was not merely pastoral encouragement but it was for Jesus an expression of faith. He had eyes to see what God was doing through his ministry and its inevitable outcome. He believed that in his ministry the kingdom was dawning. He was sure that the kingdom had germinated, sure that it will grow, and will attain harvest. Faith then was to see the kingdom in the ministry of Jesus; to recognise God at work in a unique fashion. Faith was to share Jesus' faith that God was not only making a beginning but would as surely complete it out of his divine power.

To sum up, this parable contains a dramatic tension between the sleeping man and the sprouting seed. It teaches that the kingdom has a power of its own, that it is God-given. It is a strong rebuke to any trust in human endeavour.

3.2.7. Pericope A³. The Parable of the Mustard Seed(4: 30-32)

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 140. | 30 | καὶ ἔλεγεν, |
| 140.1 | | ὥς ὁμοιωσωμεν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, |
| 140.2 | | ἢ ἐν τίνι αὐτὴν παραβολῇ θῶμεν; |
| 140.3 | 31 | ὥς κόκκῳ σινάπεως, ὅς ὅταν σπαρῇ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, |
| | | μικρότερον ὢν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, |
| 140.4 | 32 | καὶ ὅταν σπαρῇ, ἀναβαίνει καὶ γίνεται μείζον πάντων τῶν λαχάνων |
| 140.5 | | καὶ ποιεῖ κλάδους μεγάλους, ὥστε δύνασθαι ὑπὸ τὴν σκιάν αὐτοῦ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηνοῦν. |

The new information that is supplied by the text includes references to : μικρότερον ὢν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων (smallest of all the seeds -140.3) and μείζον πάντων τῶν λαχάνων (greatest of all the shrubs - 140.4). Taken together they set up a contrast between small beginnings and unanticipated endings.

Sentence 140.3 provides us with an excellent example of topicalisation. The construction μικρότερον ὢν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων has been moved to the left across the construction ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς to sentence-initial position.. The function of this movement is to highlight the focus of this pericope.

We also notice that βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ has been moved across the verb to sentence-final position. Also μείζον πάντων τῶν

λαχανων has been moved to sentence-final position. Again the function of the movement is stylistic.

A literary analysis of pericope A³ uncovers the metaphor of the mustard seed. It is, like the parable of the Growing Seed, not just the seed which functions as a vehicle for the metaphor, but the parable as a whole. The entire parable constitutes the vehicle for the tenor, the kingdom of God.

There are also a number of terms in the parable of the Mustard Seed that display a metaphoric usage. Like in the case of the parable of the Growing Seed, we need to sound a note of caution against an interpretation that raises the importance of these subordinate metaphors. The following vehicles deserve mention:

τα πτερυγα του ουρανου (the birds of the air-140.5); λαχανων (shrubs-140.4); σπερματων (seeds-140.3). From our wider knowledge of usage of the terms in New Testament times, they point to the following tenors, respectively: the gentiles; the church; the gospel or the kingdom of God. Two very interesting verb metaphors also surface here in the parable of the Mustard Seed. They are ἀναβαλει and γιγνεται which find their tenors in the growth motif of our parable.

3.2.7.1 THE AWKWARDNESS OF THE MARKAN VERSION OF THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Before a literary analysis, first some comment on the parts of this parable where the traditions show signs of having undergone editorial modification. The awkwardness of the Markan version of

the parable of the Mustard seed is properly appreciated only if the Greek is fairly literally translated. Such a translation would run like this: "(It is) like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown on the earth, being smaller than all the seeds on earth; and when it is sown, it grows up and becomes bigger than all the shrubs, and makes large branches, so that the birds of heaven can lodge under its shade." The parable starts all right : "(It is) like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown on the earth, being smaller than all the seeds on earth...." But then it seems to break down resulting in grammatical chaos. The narrator repeats the words "and when it is sown." He then proceeds further repeating "on the earth".

Various explanations of this state of affairs have been offered. Some have referred to Mark's poor literary style. Others have tried to explain it as reflecting the language of oral preaching. Still others have thought of it as an error in transmission and (or translation (cf. Abbott 1901:94 ff. and M.Black 1967:165). Wenham (1972:21 ff.) sees this awkwardness in the Markan text as the result of the author's attempt to include a reference to the size of the seed and of the grown plant into an earlier form of the parable.

Whilst the possibilities cannot be completely ruled out as being highly improbable, we think that another solution can be offered. In this study, we began on a presupposition that the "highly

structured nature" of our gospel texts, in particular, were no accident. These had been a careful and deliberate reworking of the traditions. This parable under discussion, especially in its awkwardness, provides an excellent example to illustrate the grounds for our presupposition.

Resuming our literary analysis of the parable of the Mustard Seed we discover some interesting features of foregrounding. Tolbert (1979:80 ff.) identifies a chiastic parallelism in this pericope. Let us present her analysis of the text.

And he said, "with what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?

Like a grain of mustard seed,

which, when it is sown (A)

on the earth (B), is

the smallest of seeds

on the earth (B),

yet when it is sown (A)

it grows up and becomes

the greatest of all shrubs,

and puts forth large branches, so that

the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Tolbert identifies precisely these awkward modifications as contributing to the formation of our chiastic parallelism. They

involve the words for sowing and the earth. These repetitions occur in the crucial section of our parables. This pattern displayed by the parable of the Mustard Seed confirms the inseparability of form and content. It is precisely the modifications that make the correspondence between the form and content of this parable remarkably exact. The A,B,C,B,A pattern channels our attention upon "the smallest of all the seeds. That tiny seed forms the central point of the chiastic structure. Also, just as the seed when sown on the earth grows to the greatest of all the shrubs, so the chiasmus spreads from that central point to encompass the entire unit in its structural design. Furthermore the framing of this parable strengthens our case. Like the parable of the Growing Seed, our parable here begins with a reference to the kingdom and also ends with a reference to the Old Testament (cf. Ezek. 17:23, 31:6, and Dan. 4:21). It should also be noted that the introduction to this parable has a remarkable resemblance to Isaiah 40:18.

3.2.7.2 THE HISTORY OF THE SYMBOL OF THE MIGHTY CEDAR

Let us consider briefly the concluding section of this parable. The parable of the Mustard seed is undoubtedly meant to be read against the background of the history of the symbol of the mighty cedar. The interplay of Jesus' parable and the tradition has to be considered carefully. Only in this way can the full range of metaphorical overtones be discerned.

When the parable is set alongside the vision of Ezek. (17:22-24), the first impression one gains by the juxtaposition is that Jesus has created an almost light-hearted burlesque of Ezekiel's figure. The noble cedar, which provides a haven for the beasts and birds of the earth, is caricatured as a lowly mustard plant. But then the parable also takes on the character of serious satire. Jesus appears to have grasped the final injunction of Ezekiel's oracle radically, "the lord will bring the high tree low and make the low tree high." The noble Cedar of Israel as the hope of Israel will be comparable, in Ezekiel's view, to the secular cedars of the world. When Jesus takes up the figure, all cedars, including Israel's proud hope, will be brought low, and the insignificant tree, better still the mustard plant, will be made to bear Israel's true destiny.

The kingdom as Jesus sees it breaking in will arrive in disenchanting and disarming form, not as a mighty cedar but as a "lowly garden herb". The kingdom is expressed in language germane to comic relief. It will erupt out of "the power of weakness" and refuse to perpetuate itself by the "weakness of power."

The mustard plant does offer a refuge to the birds of heaven, but it is indeed a modest refuge. The contrast between insignificant beginning and glorious end challenges the pretensions of human hope. Man longs for a paradise for his final rest but is given a

lump of earth. The birds, too, encounter a similar response. They flock to the shade of a seasonal plant, thinking it to be their eternal home.

The kingdom is revealed in the parable with comic relief because that is essentially how the kingdom functions. It is not a towering empire, but an unpretentious venture of faith. As such, however, it is of course potentially world-transforming: "if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move hence to yonder place,' and it will move....." (Mt. 17:20). It is faith that, in its unostentatious way, reorders the face of the world.

3.2.7.3 THE TRIPLE TRADITION OF THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

The parable of the mustard seed belongs to what has been called the triple tradition because Matthew and Luke also represent a version of it. Also, the Gospel of Thomas contains its own account. These four accounts of the parable tell a roughly similar development of a mustard seed into an astonishing result. Despite the similar development, there are also differences. For example, Matthew says that the seed was sown on a "field", Mark on the "earth", Luke in a "garden", and Thomas on "tilled ground" (cf. H.K. Mc. Arthur 1971:201). Generally speaking, Mark and Luke stand apart from each other, and Matthew is a kind of happy middle. It does not appear that Mark or Luke are dependent on any other gospel. Matthew appears to have combined the

traditions of Mark and Luke. Apparently Luke reflected Q(Quelle), Mark reported the Roman tradition and Matthew combined Mark and Q.

An important point to note is that Luke and Matthew portray the parable in the past tense. The Lukan story is a running narrative of three stages after sowing, each introduced by *καὶ*. It contains no comment or interpretation, as it were, but very economically records growth, becoming a tree, and the arrival of the birds of heaven. Mark, on the other hand, is not a narrative but a general situation. Mark uses both subjunctives and the present tense. Whereas a definite man sowed in Matthew (13:31) and Luke(13:19), there is no man nor past orientation in Mark. Mark's general situation is far more likely for the time of Jesus, whereas the past tense narrative form in Matthew and Luke reflects the perspective of the later church (cf. McArthur 1971:-201). Furthermore, the Markan form contains internal contrast as do many other parables and it most faithfully reflects Palestinian conditions.

The parable is introduced by a remarkable double question: "How shall we compare the kingdom of God, or in what parable will we put it?" A few similar rhetorical introductions to other parables are found in the gospels (cf. Mt. 11:16//Luke 7:31; Lk. 13:20) and among later rabbis (cf. Ps. 8:5 and 14:1). But perhaps the most important Jewish precedent is Isaiah 40:18: "to whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with

him?" Mark has a deliberative subjunctive and the plural "we" which would have involved the hearer. This double question leading into the parable provides a glimpse into the nature and function of parables. A parable here is a comparison with the use of ⁶וּשְׁמָרָה (as - 140.3). It is the use of a picture to communicate ultimate reality.

In Mk. 4:31-32 the kingdom is compared to a tiny mustard seed that grows into a great bush. The seed is precisely the black mustard [*Sinapsis Nigra*], grown in fields both for the grains supplying a sharp tang and for the leaves which were cooked for greens (cf. Hunzinger, V11, 1971 :280). The Mishnah contains sayings about the smallness of the mustard seed as does one other saying of Jesus (Mk. 11:23 and parallels). While the mustard seed may not be absolutely the smallest seed, it requires 725-760 to weigh a gram (28 grams = an ounce cf. Hunzinger 1971 :289). According to Hunzinger (1971:288) even today mustard seed grows to a height of 2 to 3 metres (8 to 10 feet) around the Lake of Gennesaret.

The parable observed that the tiny mustard seed becomes the greatest of shrubs and has such large branches that birds rest in its shade (140.4). Even today birds seek out the shade of its big leaves and nibble on the mustard seeds. It seems certain that these birds were an allusion to the nations coming to join the Jews in the blessings of the end time (cf. Taylor 1959:270).

The result clause (140.5) is rather climatic, dramatising the size and success of the mustard bush.

The parable assumes Ezekiel 17 and claims that in the ministry of Jesus at that very moment God is planting his messianic kingdom. Jesus sought to persuade his hearers about the decisive importance of that moment. The kingdom had been inaugurated. Certainly the kingdom Jesus presided over was initially a small kingdom. Hunter (1960:43) sums up the thoughts of Jesus' contemporaries: "can something so contemptibly small be pregnant with the great purpose of God?" The disciples of the Baptist also admitted their doubt (Lk. 7:18,19). Jesus referred to this microscopic seed that would become a lofty bush. So one should not measure the importance of what is going on by its size. One cannot know its future from its present size.

An exegetical clue to our parable lies in the internal contrast. Stated differently this contrast between the smallest seed (140.3) and the greatest shrub (140.4) could be viewed as realizing an antithetical parallelism. J.D. Kingsbury (1969:78) therefore feels justified in "speaking of incongruence as an inherent feature of this parable." Despite this incongruence one has to remember that the greatest shrub grew from the smallest seed. The Markan tradition has taken up and even elaborated on the element of growth so distinctive of Q: the mustard seed is "sown upon the ground" (140.3), it "grows up" (140.4), and it

"puts forth large branches" (140.5). Therefore Mark's parable of the Mustard seed is characterised by two qualities: contrast and growth. These attributes make this parable a companion pericope to the parable of the Growing seed (pericope C¹).

The parable of the Mustard seed is the third Parable of growth Mark has incorporated into his fourth chapter. Whilst the prevalence of $\hat{\omega}_s$ (as/like - 140.3) makes it a similitude, upon closer examination we have discovered that the whole parable of the Mustard Seed functions as a vehicle of a metaphor whose tenor finds itself in the kingdom of God.

The contrast inherent in the parable arises quite naturally from the relationships that are compared. The small mustard seed is for the tree that grows from it what the manifestation of the eschatological kingdom of God in Jesus is for the future, glorious appearance of this kingdom.

The culmination of the parable is found in 140.4 - 140.5: "it becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." The point is that God is at work to establish his kingdom, since Jews and Gentiles are already being gathered into one community.

Mark intends two things in employing the parable of the Mustard seed. As a word to the Jews, the parable is apologetic. Through it Jesus pronounces that, contrary to Jewish belief, the kingdom of God has already come to Israel, for it was present in reality in his person and by extension, is now present in his church. Also, just as there is continuity between the mustard seed and the tree it produces, so the Jews cannot, as they have done, reject him and his church and still lay claim to God's latter-day realm. Through the parable Jesus also fortifies the Christians of the early church in their conviction that they are in truth the eschatological community of God.

An important aspect of the kingdom that this parable highlights is its universal dimension. It is all-embracing. Also in bringing his kingly rule in Jesus, God has chosen to manifest it in humility; that God has set in motion the process by which his kingly rule, through the agency of the church, spreads itself out, embracing both Jews and Gentiles; and that God will one day unveil his kingly rule in majesty as a splendid realm.

The function of this parable of the Mustard Seed within its immediate context is to serve as one further link in the apology against the Jews which Mark has been steadfastly unfolding throughout chapter four. Let us now turn to the final pericope.

3.2.8. Pericope B¹. The Use of Parables(4: 33-34)

141. 33 Καὶ τοιαύταις παραβολαῖς πολλαῖς ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον, καθὼς ἠδύναντο
ἀκούειν·
142. 34 χωρὶς δὲ παραβολῆς οὐκ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς,
143. κατ' ἴδραν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς ἐπέλυεν πάντα.

The new information that is introduced in this pericope includes references to contrasting features. They include: the multitudes (αὐτοῖς) and his own disciples (τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς); the word (τὸν λόγον) and all things (πάντα). The focus of our pericope lies in the expression "even as they were able to hear" (καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν). Once again we observe the Markan penchant for ἀκούω. This focal expression could well provide a vital clue in understanding the function of parables.

A number of movement-transformations are observed in our text. In both sentences 141. and 142. παραβολαῖς and παραβολῆς (respectively) have been moved to the left across the verbs. Also the position of τὸν λόγον is significant. This end-position correlates very well with πάντα of sentence 143. In the latter case, this sentence-final position serves to emphasise this constituent of the sentence. These movements are also stylistic.

Besides the reference to τὸν λόγον (the word) which is often used in the gospels as a vehicle for the tenors "the word of the

kingdom, the word of God, etc, " there are no metaphors that surface in this pericope.

With some help from Tolbert (1979:78) we identify a repetition of words in a parallel design. Her translation of this pericope runs as follows:

and with many such parables (A), he spoke to them (B)

the word, as they were able to hear it;

but without a parable (A¹) he spoke to them (B¹)

not, but privately to his disciples he explained everything.

This (A B) (A¹ B¹) pattern clearly realises a synonymous parallelism. Once again, let us turn to Wenham (1972:23) to establish our text. Here, we tend to agree with him that "but privately he explained everything to his disciples" may well be regarded as a sort of after-thought tacked on to our parallelism. Whilst we favour such a theory, we do well to remind ourselves of the element of contrast that this additional clause brings to this pericope.

The author of this gospel concludes his grouping with a summary statement that reveals he had made a careful choice of these parables from a much larger collection at his disposal. Mark once again informs us of Jesus' habit to teach using the parabolic form. The parables as a whole become vehicles to

proclaim "the word". This term (rov $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\nu$) also features in the Interpretation of the Sower, where it occurs eight times. Jesus uses parables here to accommodate the hearer's state of preparation. This means that he adapted his depth of teaching to the level of understanding that he found in his listeners. Lane (1974:174) contends that "Had he spoken to crowds in a direct manner they would have been forced to make a decision immediately. That decision could have expressed only unbelief and rejection." So this use of an indirect address provided some leeway. It was an expression of grace which allowed time for reflection. But it was also confrontational in that it judged their lack of preparation to receive the word directly.

Mark contrasts Jesus' utterance before the multitude with his private explanation of "all things" to his own disciples. "All things" is very comprehensive and refers to the mission of Jesus in which the mystery of the kingdom was unveiled. This section points back to 4:11-12 and reflects the two aspects of the revelation of God in the mission of Jesus. There was "veiling /partial disclosure" before the multitude and "disclosure/partial understanding" to the disciples through the private explanation which Jesus gives to his disciples. Through this private explanation which Jesus gives to his disciples, the mystery of the kingdom is unveiled. It is only through this revelation that the enigma is partially understood. But it is only at the

consummation that it will become fully and finally revealed to all men.

Having concluded our brief discussion on the last pericope of Mk. 4:1-34, let us now give consideration to the chiastic pattern that we see within this teaching block.

3.3 THE CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF MARK 4:1-34

Firstly, we note that the introduction in 4:1 and section on the calming of a storm in 4:35-41 form an inclusio of the sea. While this block (4: 1-34) emphasises the teaching authority of Jesus, 4: 35-41 establishes the authority of Jesus over nature. This framing therefore provides a basis for our assumption that these eight pericopes constitute a highly structured unit.

Pericope C¹ (the parable of the Growing Seed) and pericope A³ (the parable of the Mustard seed) reveal a similar structure. Both begin with references to the kingdom of God (139.1; 140.1-140.2) and they both end with an allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures (139.5 alludes to Joel 3:13 and 140.5 alludes to Ezek. 17:23, 31:6 and Dan 4:21). Finally, they both are concerned with seeds and growth. Hence, in terms of their content these two parables display many similarities. We have already highlighted that in so far as form is concerned they contain repetitive patterns.

Pericope A¹ shares similar references to seeds and growth. The reference to the seed having been sown in three accounts demonstrates the fact that in the person of Jesus the kingdom has been initiated. Furthermore, all three of the parables clearly depict growth (133.17-growing up and increasing; 139.3-sprout and grow; 140.4 -grows up and becomes). In the parable of the Growing Seed, the emphasis falls on the divine initiative or God's sole oversight over the growth of the kingdom. Man's contribution in the growth is one of total passivity.

The parable of the Mustard seed, whilst sharing a similar motif with the parable of the Sower, that of unanticipated results, also breaks through with another dimension. Pericope C with a universal thrust further interprets pericope A³ with its dimensions of publicity, openness, etc. The kingdom will be seen for what it is, it cannot be hid. Pericope A³ also interprets pericope C by including the Gentiles as the "birds" that make nests in the shade of the huge branches of these great shrubs.

Earlier on, we demonstrated how the parable of the Measure interpreted and was interpreted by the pericope on the purpose of parables. A similar relationship exists between the parable of the Measure and the pericope on the purpose of parables. Attentive hearing, true perception, etc. are the requisites of pericopes B, B¹ and the parable of the Measure. These three sections interpret one another.

The structure of Mk. 4: 1-34 that we presented followed the divisions of Maartens (1987:2ff) especially in isolating the apex of our chiastic teaching block. He sees the parables as composing "an extended chiastic structure with an inner circle and an outer circle" (1987:2). The parables of the sower and the mustard Seed constitutes the outer circle with the theme of divine grace, whilst the parables of the Lamp and the Growing seed make up the inner circle that highlights the aspect of the divine initiative in the manifestation of the kingdom. Both the inner and outer circles furnish contrasts that further develop the abovementioned themes. The parable of the Sower contrasts the theme of the incompatibility of God's grace, manifest in the extraordinary harvest to the universality of God's grace. This latter theme surfaces in the parable of the Mustard Seed. In the inner circle the parable of the Lamp particularises the theme of the divine initiative in the process of manifesting the kingdom which is concealed, whereas the divine initiative in the growth of the kingdom is highlighted in the parable of the Growing Seed. Maarten's correlation undoubtedly offers some challenging insights into the meaning of this teaching block. it would be interesting to see what new perspectives this analysis would furnish when applied consistently to the entire gospel of Mark.

In summary, then these parables of the kingdom clearly attest to the fact that the kingdom of God has been established in the

mission of Jesus. The reception of God's reign among the Jews, despite the stern reminder for very attentive hearing and an invitation for true perception, left much to be desired. Against such discouraging results and further apostasy, these parables affirm that God is still active. Whilst an element of uncertainty becomes understandable on account of the hiddenness of the kingdom, this situation was only a temporal one. The kingdom is destined for greater manifestation. It is concealed only for a while. The criterion for judgement rests solely on the decision that the individual makes. Since Jesus had inaugurated the kingdom, it will realise its full potential unaided by man. No human effort is required to give the kingdom a helpful shove. Also contrary to popular expectations, the kingdom begins in humility and insignificance but ends in glory and grandeur. The universal theme that emerges correlates throughout the macro-structure with the prerogative of salvation going from the Jews to the Gentiles.

Finally, the enigma of a parable as a veiled disclosure dissipates in the face of responsive and attentive hearing. It is precisely on account of this contingency that "some see and yet not perceive" whilst "others hear but do not understand."

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: RESUME OF METHODOLOGY, SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND SOME
THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 RESUME OF METHODOLOGY

We commenced this study by highlighting the more significant of the recent contributions in the fields of Linguistics and Literary Theory that necessitated the reassessment of exegetical theories and methods in New Testament studies. The contributions of General linguistics and Literary Theory have become particularly important for the New Testament scholarship.

In the history of New Testament research since the 19th century, three principal exegetical methods have emerged. The earliest of these three methods was Source Criticism which sought a solution to the synoptic problem in the literary dependence of one writer on another. The second method, Form Criticism, explicated the synoptic problem in terms of the preliterate period when gospel material circulated by word of mouth in small, isolated units. Form Criticism, with its emphasis on the life and needs of the primitive community tended to neglect the part played by the writers of the synoptics in the making of the gospels. It was inevitable that in due course the balance should be restored by the development of a third method. Redaction Criticism is a study of the evangelist as a creative author and theologian, and

an attempt to identify the character of the communities for which he wrote and in which his material had been preserved.

Despite the merits of these three methods, no adequate frame of reference has been advanced to explicate symbolic and metaphoric language usage widespread in New Testament literature. This study proposed a "theoretically-founded" exegetical framework for interpreting such language usage.

After conducting a survey of the historical critical methods of New Testament parable research in chapter one, we detailed, in chapter two, the main aspects of our methodology: a "theoretically-founded" framework. The text of Mark 4: 1-34 was delimited into sentences. The criterion used for this sentence specification $S \rightarrow NP VP$ was based on Transformational Generative Grammar. The presuppositions and focus of the sentence was determined by what was suggested by the initial preliminary (intuitive) interpretation. The definition of presupposition and focus was also taken from Transformational Generative Grammar. The transformations that had applied in the derivation of the sentences was determined as these transformations later became relevant in determining the poetic structure of the sentences. The concept of a transformation too derived from the Standard Theory of Transformational Grammar.

In chapter three, the structure of Mark 4: 1-34 was analysed in order to determine its contribution to the interpretation of this text. In this analysis the theoretical principles were taken from Literary Theory. Mark 4: 1-34 was approached as part of the Markan gospel narrative in order to establish how this contributes to the interpretation of Mark 4: 1-34. Again, the theoretical principles were taken from Literary Theory. The historical and socio-cultural setting of the text was described insofar as this contributes to the interpretation of Mark 4: 1-34.

Thereafter, the contributions of poetic structure; prosaic structure; presupposition and focus; and the historical and socio-cultural setting of Mark 4: 1-34 were combined into a unified, "theoretically-founded" interpretation of the text.

This interpretation provided new insight into the understanding of Mark 4: 1-34. This approach confirmed and, in some cases, refuted existing interpretations and readings of the text. The main feature of this study was that it provided a well motivated choice between two or more interpretations of some of the pericopes of the text.

Much attention was given to metaphoric language. We found that the interaction view of the metaphor provided an indispensable basis to explain metaphoric language usage prevalent in our text.

Whilst the recovery of the tenor of a metaphor was not always easy, albeit challenging, we isolated interesting compatible features that were retopicalised. It was primarily these semantic features that provided new perspectives to the meaning of the passage under discussion.

This practical application illustrated how the above-mentioned linguistic-literary paradigm can be applied to other symbolic and metaphoric language usage in the New Testament. It would seem appropriate to conclude that "theoretically-founded" exegesis with special reference to the interaction view of the metaphor provides an adequate framework within which to articulate the symbolic and metaphoric language usage in the New Testament.

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In chapter three we analysed symbolic and metaphoric language usage found within the parable of the fourth chapter of the gospel according to Saint Mark. We considered the tenor/vehicle relationship of most of the metaphors, for example, the bumper-harvest and the losses suffered which reveals the incomparable grace of God. A similar situation obtains in the parable of the Mustard Seed. The "birds of the air" (140.5) that find refuge in the grown mustard shrub was within the socio-cultural milieu of the early church, a well known reference to the gentiles. This parable highlights the universal grace that the Kingdom offers. Taken together, pericopes A¹, A² and A³ convey the wonderful

truth of the incompatibility of the grace of God. This grace transcends all human expectations, however open and benevolent they might be.

Pericope B concerns the purpose of the parables. This parabolic form of teaching seems to be a "dark word" intended for concealment rather than revelation. But pericope B¹ on the use of the parables offers some very interesting insights. Here parables function as riddles designed to clarify by challenging the reader in a fashion very akin to a brain-teaser or puzzle. Therefore, parables are not dark words. To the perceptive who take up the challenge to obedience (attentive hearing) it becomes the means to greater insight and truth.

This dialectic (hiddenness and revelation held in dynamic tension) characteristic of the βασιλειαν του Θεου, surfaces also in the parables of the Lamp (pericope C) and that of the Growing Seed (pericope C¹). The former accentuating the inevitability of revelation. Light stands in juxtaposition to darkness. It is neither designed for secrecy or hiddenness but for manifestation and exposure. The reference of the lamp being placed either under a bed or upon a lampstand leads to the idea of the divine initiative in revelation. Whilst the truth that the βασιλειαν του Θεου was being established in the ministry of Jesus was not always plain for all to see, the kingdom was never

intended to be exclusive to the Jews. This issue is explicitly taken up in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

A complementary theme of the divine initiative in growth surfaces in the parable of the Growing Seed. A Sitz-im-Leben of human achievement or activism sets up a contrast to the manner in which the kingdom is realised. It comes not through the achievement principle of the Pharisees, nor the rigours of the Essenes, nor through the revolutionary demonstrations of the Zealots but its initiative lies solely and totally in God.

In chapter three we identified the βασιλειαν του Θεου as the tenor of these parables. This is also true for several other parables that are found within the gospel tradition. The vehicles of these parables are in fact replacement vehicles of the principle subject, the βασιλειαν του Θεου. They contrast, supplement and correlate the different aspects of the Kingdom.

The term "βασιλειαν του Θεου" in Mark 1:14 is a compound metaphor that is explicated in Chapter four. It refers to the rule of God in its multiple facets : it clarifies its incompatibility (A¹ and A²); its universality (A³); and the divine initiative in revelation (C) ; in growth (C¹). These themes of the incompatibility of the grace of the kingdom and its divine initiative challenges the reader towards a response. The

decision that the reader makes in turn constitutes the basis of his/her eschatological judgement. This aspect is taken up by pericope D, the apex of our chiastic structure.

We gave Mark 4:24-25 the caption: "the Call to Obedience." The Kingdom also demands the obedience and commitment of its members. This was an indispensable requirement for the disciples of Jesus. An inclusio is created by the calling of the apostles in 1:17 and that of their commissioning in 6:7. The framing of this teaching block in chapter four heightens the radical "all or nothing" precondition of discipleship. It is precisely one's obedience that will determine one's destiny.

In this study continual reference was made to the tenor as the βασιλειαν του Θεου and the parable functioning as a vehicle. A basic presupposition was that the interaction view of the metaphor, that is , between tenor and vehicle, constitutes the only adequate basis to explicate parables. Some of the semantically compatible features of the Kingdom that were uncovered include (divine) (human) (universality) (cosmological) (eschatological). Taking the parables separately we arrived at some interesting perspectives. In the parable of the sower a real-to-life contrast is established between failure, defeat and losses and the following features of (victory) (triumph) (success) (conquest) (grace) (supremacy) (primacy). Because a parallel exists between the parable of the Sower and its

Interpretation a similar situation obtains there too. Frustration, failure, disappointment, misfortune, incompleteness and miscarriage form an antithesis to features of the kingdom like (accomplishment) (result) (attainment) (fulfillment) (achievement) (yield) (success) (consummation). The parable of the Lamp too leads us to certain features, among other, : (light) (beacon) (truth) (knowledge) (guide) (elucidation) (divine) (revelation) (messianic) (eschatological) (authority) (obedience) (righteousness) (mission) (christological). The following semantic features of the kingdom surfaces in the parable of the Growing Seed: (self-growing) (independence) (fruitfulness) (autonomy) (self-determination). In the parable of the Mustard seed features such as (universal) (inclusive) (embracing) (unlimited) (boundless) (grace) (comprehensive) (incomparable) (unique) (eschatological) are uncovered in the interrelationship between tenor and vehicle.

This study has implications for the understanding of the βασιλειαν του Θεου which is the principle subject. The βασιλειαν του Θεου is best understood as a dialectic relation between the rule of God and human response to the grace of God. This response is the tenor of the rule of God which determine the destiny of man. Human obedience and commitment is the object of God's rule. The inner dynamic of the rule of God is able to create obedience in the individual. The rule of God and obedience remain in a vital relation to each other.

This leads us to another important dialectic within Mark chapter four, highlighted in verses 24-25, the apex of our chiasmic formation. This dynamic correlates with the earlier mentioned interaction between tenor and vehicle and concerns the aspects of the indicative and the imperative in an understanding of the βασιλειαν του Θεου. In the gospel of Mark there is a progression, on the one hand, from the theme of the Messianic authority to the theme of the servanthood of Christ (10:45) in suffering. On the other hand, the plot of the story develops from the calling of the disciples to obedience in discipleship. This correlation of the indicative and the imperative Küng (1967:75) terms the "futuristic-present" structure relevant for the kingdom as well as the eschatological expectations. The short speeches in especially Mk. 9:1par., 13:30par and Mt. 10:23 must therefore also be interpreted within the eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet". Küng (1967:78) notices that it was not a concern for Jesus to engage in miscellaneous speculations about the "when" of the coming of the kingdom. Jesus spoke concretely of the people of God, their conversion, entrance into the kingdom, obedience in discipleship to the rule of the Christ in the light of the coming universal rule of God.

In the gospel of Mark the coming rule of God is realised in the believer's acceptance of the call of Jesus. The kingdom is

present in the words and works of Jesus. This kingdom can be redefined as the obedience-object (cf. Maartens 1985:158ff.) which the βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ creates. The gospel of Mark identifies this obedience-object in the lives of publicans and sinners (Mk. 2:16), the healing of sicknesses (Mk. 1:29 - 3:6), the following of disciples (a.o. Mk. 3: 13-19) and the humble receptivity of children (Mk. 10:15). This obedience-object in Mk. 10: 14-15 and Mk. 12:34 retopicalises semantic features such as (receptivity) (humility) (accessibility) (dedication) (obedience).

The account of the rich young man (Mk. 10: 17-31) offers an example where the imperative of the kingdom is concretised. Jesus' call to discipleship is personal. The mystery of the kingdom is revealed in Jesus' radicalisation of obedience to the law in obedience to God. This encounter of Jesus with the rich, young man correlates the theme of discipleship with Jesus' call to faith in Mk. 1:15. The relationship between the two is casual. The indicative is particularised in the imperative. The implicit obedience-object is the alternative tenor of the vehicle kingdom. Semantic features such as (self-denial) (trustworthy) (obedience) (certainty) (joyfulness) (commitment) (maturity) (responsibility) (dedication) (unconditional) are retopicalised and are placed on the obedience-object as tenor.

To summarise, this study has uncovered two suspended tenors. These tenors correlate with each other. On the one hand, the actual referent of the vehicle βασιλειαν του Θεου is sometimes the rule of God. Whilst on the other hand, the actual referent is sometimes the obedience-object which the rule of God creates. The "βασιλειαν του Θεου" is a composite metaphor. Like other suspended metaphors, the vehicle stands in a relationship with other replacement metaphors such as authority, teaching, preaching, gospel, new wine, lamp to mention but a few.

Let us now present a more comprehensive list of the compatible semantic features that we have uncovered for the tenor "the rule of God" in our study : (sovereignty) (majesty) (justice) (glory) (intransience) (presence) (transcendent) (theocratic) (cosmological) (universal) (authoritative) (futuristic) (heavenly) (eternal) (gracious) (godliness) (incomparable) (newness) (uncompromising) (proleptic) (creative) (judge) (love) (concealed) (self-determination) (fruitfulness) (humility) (suffering) (joyfulness) (servanthood).

In the case of the correlative tenor "obedience" the following features are derived:

(obedience) (fulfillment) (joyfulness) (perceptiveness) (fruitfulness) (perseverance) (faithfulness) (humility) (unconditional) (dedication).

4.3 SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

4.3.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The aim of this study, as stated earlier, was to demonstrate the merits of a "theoretically-founded" exegetical framework. A main feature was the significance attached to both the tenor and vehicle as a new way of understanding the βασιλειαν του Θεου. This interaction view of the metaphor approached the βασιλειαν του Θεου in a tenor/vehicle relationship. The parables often serve as vehicles to the tenor of the rule of God. We have also uncovered another tenor in the obedience-object that the rule of God creates. Both the tenors, whilst clarifying the meaning of parables, have significance for christology.

4.3.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTOLOGY

The structure of the βασιλειαν του Θεου correlates with the structure of christology. Mention has already been made of the dialectic of the kingdom of God that is evident in the parables of the fourth chapter of Mark. Let us now single out the parable of the Lamp to illustrate the implications for christology. A tension was noted between concealing and revealing or, better still, between the revealed and the not yet revealed. These aspects are especially important for an understanding of the messianic authority of Jesus. It was, in fact, a similar trend of revelation and constraint in the ministry of Jesus that

initiated the debate that eventually led to Wrede's theory of the "Messianic Secret". If this dialectic is pursued further it could furnish us with interesting christological insights. P  rrin (1968:357) has made some attempts in this direction. He refers to Mk. 8: 22-26 and 10: 46-50 which provide two independent references to Jesus healing a blind man. To P  rrin these passages present examples of both a "false" and a "true" christology. Both the references need to be seen as instances of revelation. The latter tenor of the βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ in the obedience-object also presents new challenges for christology. Earlier, we identified Jesus' call to the disciples as a call to obedience; a call to service (cf. Mk. 10:45). The principle of service/servanthood also features at the watershed of Jesus' ministry (Mk. 8: 27-33) and, therefore, deserves more careful scrutiny. Any commendation that is given to Peter for his confession has to be tempered in view of his obvious lack of true insight as revealed by his subsequent utterances. Peter's brazen rebuke of Jesus emerges only after Jesus' reference to the anticipated suffering, rejection and death of the Son of man. Peter, in his eschatological understanding could not accommodate a suffering Christ. Jesus' rebuke, which came in the strongest possible terms, attests to the crucial role of suffering. This incident offers a clue to true discipleship whose path is indispensably littered with suffering.

While, within the scope of this study, these implications for christology are only briefly mentioned, they remain important for further study in this field.

ENDNOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

(1) This text is from "Mark in Cola" by Dr P.J. Maartens (1977, privately distributed).

(2) The Extended Standard Theory distinguishes presupposition from focus. It is generally recognised that the philosopher G. Frege explicated the concept of presupposition to supplement the notion of assertion. Compare Katz (1972:127 ff.) for further reading. Presupposition is a referential condition associated with the meaning of a sentence. Katz (1972:130) defines the term as follows:

The term presupposition will be used here in a sense close to Frege's. The presupposition of an assertion will be taken to be a condition found in the meaning of the sentence expressing the proposition. It expresses a referential requirement whose satisfaction is the condition under which the proposition can make a statement, that is, the condition under which the proposition is either true or has a true negation.

The focus, in the Extended Standard Theory, is that information which is unknown to the readers and which is introduced to them by the writer or speaker. Focus is sometimes closely associated with the notion of contrast. The focus often contrasts other

constituents in a sentence. The focus is usually placed in a sentence - emphatic position. Compare Jackendoff (1972:230) for further discussion.

(3) For similar phenomena in English and Latin compare Ross (1967:65 ff.); Dillon (1976:5 ff.) and Verma (1976:26 ff.)

(4) Deletions may be applied to sentences in the deep structure subject to the "recoverability condition." The deleted element termed "the constant single element" is present in the underlying deep structure of the sentence and is available for representation by the semantic component (Bach 1974:100). To further establish the function of deletion in stylistics and their value for interpretation compare Fairley (1975:17) and Dillon (1975:220 - 237).

(5) Katz and Fodor (1963) formulated a specific content for the semantic component of Chomsky's Aspects Model. The violation of selectional restrictions in metaphorical language usage can be explicated in terms of their semantic distinguishers and semantic markers (together referred to as "semantic features"). The semantic distinguishers and semantic markers are by notational convention indicated between square brackets [] and parenthesis () respectively. For further discussion compare Katz (1972:34 ff.)

(6) A more detailed introduction to foregrounding can be found in Maartens (1977:51 ff.)

ENDNOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

(1) The use of the word māshāl in Ezekiel makes it clear that the obscure māshāl was the exception rather than the rule. When the māshāl was used to provoke reflection, this was because such reflection was held to be necessary for the uncovering of the truth. The aim was still solely a positive one of conveying, not covering, the truth.

(2) and (3) The words within the brackets are mine.

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SUMMARY

This study attempts to do the following: analyse a working methodology for interpreting biblical literature and to apply this methodology to the fourth chapter of the gospel of Saint Mark in order to illustrate how modern literary theory and linguistic analysis may be made fruitful for biblical exegesis. As such this study is an "experiment" in biblical hermeneutics.

Chapter one deals with a survey of hermeneutics of parabolic language (a combination of metaphors and symbols), that is, how parabolic research has proceeded thus far. Both the main findings of the traditional methods (Source Criticism, Form Criticism, and Redaction Criticism) and their inadequacies are discussed.

What we term in this study a "theoretically-founded" exegetical framework is analysed in chapter two. Here the details of literary theory and linguistic analysis are investigated to ascertain how aspects of these theories may contribute to New Testament hermeneutics. This chapter also introduces the working terminology of "theoretically-founded" exegesis.

Chapter three, the largest section of this study, deals with a step-by-step application of this methodology to the symbolic and

metaphoric language usage in Mark chapter four. Each parable is systematically dealt with. One of the main findings of this chapter is that the underlying thought (actual referent/tenor) of all these parables is the idea of the βασιλειαν του Θεου.

This important theological idea is then investigated vis-à-vis the words that Jesus specifically used. A second important finding of this study is that the substance of texts cannot be viewed in isolation from the structure of the text, for in symbolic and metaphoric language usage we show that the two are inextricably bound. This is also amply illustrated in chapter three.

The final chapter deals with conclusions by offering a resume of the methodology adopted, furnishing a summary of the main findings and pointing out some theological implications that these findings have for understanding the concept of the kingdom of God and for christology.

(325 words)