A Narrative Analysis of the Longer Ending of Mark: 
Encounter with the Risen Jesus

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I. Introduction

Today, most scholars agree that Mark ends at 16:8. As Anne Moore rightly puts it, “it is now an opinio communis that the

1 Throughout this paper, “Mark” refers to the author of the Second Gospel, as well as to the Second Gospel itself. Also, “the longer ending of Mark” will be referred to as “the LE.”

Marcan text ends with 16:8.” However, if Mark ends at 16:8, why does the commonly received text include the last twelve verses? Kurt and Barbara Aland claim that “the longer ending of Mark 16:9–20 is found in 99 percent of the Greek manuscripts as well as the rest of the tradition.” Also, Daniel B. Wallace points out that “at least 95 percent of all Greek MSS and ancient versions have the LE.” According to Carl B. Bridges, “All English translations include the Longer Ending, at least in a note if not in the text itself.” In fact, there are many endings of Mark, “among


7 See Michael W. Holmes, “To Be Continued ... The Many Endings of the Gospel of Mark,” BR 17, no. 4 (August 2001): 12. Holmes points out that
which vv. 9–20 is probably the oldest, and has been most widely accepted.” 8 In 1546 the LE “was declared part of the Catholic canon of sacred Scriptures at the Council of Trent.” 9 Recently, Bridges also argues for the canonical status of the LE in his article “The Canonical Status of the Longer Ending of Mark.” 10 In this paper, the LE will be seen as part of the canon of sacred Scriptures. By using narrative criticism, we shall demonstrate how the narrative features of the LE are integrated into the whole book of Mark. 11

After the seventeenth century, paleography came into existence as a systematic study, and during the nineteenth century many important NT manuscripts were discovered. 12 Since the

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8 Moloney, Mark, 355 n. 3.
9 Ibid.
10 In his article, Bridges lists out three criteria used by the church of the first few centuries to determine the canonical status of any book: its conformity to the “rule of faith,” its connection to an apostle, and its widespread use in the churches. For Bridges, the LE has the canonical status because it satisfies these criteria well enough. According to Donald Harrisville Juel, Brevard Childs thinks along the same line, though his reasoning is a little different from that of Bridges. See Juel’s article, “A Disquieting Silence: The Matter of the Ending,” in The Ending of Mark and the Ends of God: Essays in Memory of Donald Harrisville Juel, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: WJKP, 2005), 3, where Juel comments: “[Childs] argues that verses 9–20 should be read as the canonical reading of Mark because the verses employ bits and pieces from the remaining three Gospels.”
11 A question arises if Mark indeed ends at 16:8: why is the LE so commonly accepted, though it is not written by the author of Mark 1:1–16:8? This was the question that prompted me to investigate further and write this paper.
12 James A. Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 6. See also Bruce M. Metzger, Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An
nineteenth century, the question of authenticity of the LE (whether the author of the LE is Mark and the LE should be treated as part of the canon of the Scripture) has been debated hotly in the field of textual criticism.\textsuperscript{13} Textual criticism, as a comparatively new discipline, is widely used in the analysis of the authenticity of the LE,\textsuperscript{14} and the LE has been called “the gravest textual problem in the NT.”\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{13} Kelhoffer, \textit{Miracle and Mission}, 5–6.

\textsuperscript{14} Before the nineteenth century, the LE was almost as universally accepted as authentic. Then, in the first part of the nineteenth century, the authenticity of the LE is seriously challenged by scholars, among whom are J. J. Griesbach, Samuel P. Tregelles, Henry Alford, Constantin von Tischendorf, August Klostermann, B. F. Westcott, and F. J. A. Hort etc. In 1871, John William Burgon published an important book, arguing for the authenticity of the LE (\textit{The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark} [Oxford and London: James Parker, 1871]), and his view was followed by Abbé J. P. P. Martin, George Salmon, Ivan Panin, Gerhard Hartmann and others. Another strong argument for the authenticity of the LE is Farmer’s monograph, \textit{The Last Twelve Verses of Mark}. The history of scholarship on the LE can be found in Kelhoffer, \textit{Miracle and Mission}, 1–46. Until most recently, the LE is mostly examined from a text-critical perspective. See Maurice A. Robinson, “The Long Ending of Mark as Canonical Verity,” in \textit{Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views}, 40–79; J. K. Elliott, “The Last Twelve Verses of Mark: Original or Not?” in \textit{Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views}, 80–102; idem, “The Text and Language of the Endings of Mark’s Gospel,” \textit{TZ} 27 (1971): 255–62; David Alan Black, “Mark 16:9–20 as Markan Supplement,” in \textit{Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views}, 103–12; Bridges, ”Canonical Status,” 231–42; Wallace, “Mark 16:8,” 1–39, here Wallace mainly addresses the issue from the perspective of textual criticism. We have pointed out that most recent scholars tend to consider Mark’s intended ending is at 16:8 (see n. 2), but there are still some scholars who think that Mark’s original ending was lost. See Robert H. Stein, “The Ending of Mark,” \textit{IBR} 18, no. 1 (2008): 79–98; N. Clayton Croy, \textit{The Mutilation of Mark’s Gospel} (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

\textsuperscript{15} James R. Edwards, \textit{The Gospel according to Mark} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
However, I rarely find any book or essay that analyzes the LE by means of narrative criticism.\textsuperscript{16} Many books and essays treat the LE’s author as non-Mark and consider the style of the LE non-Marcan as well. For them, the LE may be borrowed from other NT Gospels, Acts and early extracanonical Christian literature.\textsuperscript{17} Scholars who regard the style of LE as non-Marcan are inclined to cut the LE from Mark, leaving Mark 1:1–16:8 an entity on its own.\textsuperscript{18} Some scholars are reluctant to incorporate the LE into Mark, for it seems to destroy the open-ended nature of Mark’s original ending.\textsuperscript{19} In this paper, I will utilize narrative criticism to examine how the LE can be integrated into Mark 1:1–16:8, even if the LE may not be the original writing of Mark.\textsuperscript{20} I believe that

\textsuperscript{16}I did not find any book or essay that deals with the LE with narrative criticism in the course of my research. However, I am very excited to find an essay, published in 2009, on Mark’s expanded form ending (Mark 16: 1–14+ Free Logion+15–20) by means of narrative criticism, though its analysis is brief. See Thomas R. Shepherd, “Narrative Analysis as a Text Critical Tool: Mark 16 in Codex W as a Test Case,” \textit{JSNT} 32, no. 1 (2009): 77–98.

\textsuperscript{17}Kelhoffer, \textit{Miracle and Mission}, 48–156.

\textsuperscript{18}Most recently published commentaries on Mark or monographs about Mark do not include the LE in their analyses.

\textsuperscript{19}For instance, Hooker is one of the leading scholars who are unwilling to accept the LE into Mark, “the unknown redactor has brought Mark’s story to a conclusion—and to a full stop. The disciples have spread the Good News throughout the world, and we have our ‘happy ending’ \textit{Mark’s challenge is muted, and there is no longer any pressure on the reader to respond}” (Hooker, \textit{Endings}, 28–29, italics added). In the following paper, I will show that the LE can be incorporated into Mark without undermining the open-ended nature of the narrative.

\textsuperscript{20}Most contemporary scholars argue that Mark probably ends at 16:8, and the LE was later composed by a non-Marcan author. See Petersen, “When is the End not the End?” 151–66; Boomershine, “Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8,” 213–33; Lincoln, “The Promise and the Failure,” 283–300; Bush, “Mark’s Call to Action,” 22–28; Thomas, “A Reconsideration,” 407–19;
the author of the LE intentionally imitates Mark to integrate the LE into the second Gospel.\(^{21}\) The methodology of narrative criticism will be expounded first. Then I will utilize this methodology to analyze the LE. Finally, this paper will demonstrate how the LE integrates itself into Mark.\(^{22}\) The anticipated conclusions are as follows: (1) the story of risen Jesus in the LE should be treated as a unified story with a rich narrative structure; (2) the LE can be combined with Mark 1:1–16:8 as a whole; and (3) the narrator of the LE invites the reader to encounter the risen Jesus and fulfill his summons.

II. Methodology: Narrative Criticism

1. The Origins of Narrative Criticism and Its Significance

   Historical-critical methods have their limitation, for they interpret the Gospels not as meaningful stories in themselves, but they seek to discover the historical circumstances behind the stories.\(^{23}\) For “these books [the Gospels] are stories about Jesus, Williams, “Literary Approaches,” 21–35; Hooker, *Endings*, 11–28; idem, *Saint Mark*, 382–94; Moloney, *Mark*, 339–54; Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 288–99; Best, *Mark*, 72–78; and so on.

   Kelhoffer intends to demonstrate that the LE is composed “to improve Mark’s ending in conscious imitation of the NT Gospels,” including Mark 1:1–16:8 and other Writings. See Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 65–122, italics added. However, he missed the question, “Did the author of the LE compose the passage to integrate it into Mark in conscious imitation of it?” This is the question to which this paper attempts to answer, because Kelhoffer, like other textual critics, inclines to analyze the LE with an approach of textual criticism.

   Though she admits that the LE is an attempt to complete Mark, Hooker does not consider the LE a fitting conclusion to Mark: “Although this section [the LE] was obviously added to Mark in an attempt to ‘complete’ the gospel, it could hardly have been written for that purpose” (Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 389).

   Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 2.
not compilations of miscellaneous data concerning him. They are intended to be read from beginning to end.”


Compared to historical-critical methods, narrative criticism brings in new shifts in New Testament studies. First, it moves from fragmentation to unity; in other words, narrative criticism is a more holistic point of view. Second, it shifts from history to story, meaning that narrative criticism is a text-oriented approach,

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24 Ibid.
26 Rhoads, “Practices and Prospects,” 23. See also Cynthia Long Westfall, “Narrative Criticism,” in Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation, ed. Stanley E. Porter (London: Routledge, 2007), 237, where Westfall remarks that “the 1980s provided a watershed, when narrative criticism came to be regarded as a critical method of biblical studies in its own right.”
27 According to Rhoads, “Redaction criticism, form criticism, source criticism, and even composition criticism break up the narrative in order to get at the questions they pursue. Distinctions between redaction and tradition, between history and tradition, naturally fragment the text ... By contrast, literary questions about narrative features tend to reveal Mark’s Gospel as a whole cloth” (David Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism and the Gospel of Mark,” in Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel, 3).
28 Rhoads states it as “from history to fiction” (emphasis added). See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 4. However, “fiction” may lead one to think that
as it focuses on the narrative world of the Gospels’ stories. If the Gospel is created as a unified story, then the narrative approach can discover the integrity of the story it is told, and it may satisfactorily solve many apparent enigmas and discrepancies in the Gospels.29

2. The Value and Critiques of Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism is an invaluable tool in the process of interpreting Scripture. Mark Allan Powell enumerates eight benefits of narrative criticism: (1) It focuses on the text of Scripture itself; (2) it provides insights into biblical texts for which the historical background is uncertain; (3) it provides checks and balances on traditional methods; (4) it tends to bring scholars and nonprofessional Bible readers closer together; (5) it adopts a position that is close to the believing community; (6) it offers potential for bringing believing communities together; (7) it offers fresh interpretations of biblical material; (8) it unleashes the power of biblical stories for personal and social transformation.30

In short, the major contributions of narrative criticism are establishing the narrative of the text as a legitimate object of study as well as bringing in the interactions between the text and readers. Given the power of narrative analysis,

[M]any writers of monographs, commentaries, and articles now regularly deal with the narrative in its final form and of the story-world of the New Testament narratives without sorting out tradition and redaction or engaging in historical

29 See also Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 3.
30 Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 85–91.
reconstruction form the text.\(^{31}\)

Although there are so many benefits that narrative criticism can offer in analyzing the Gospels, we should note the critiques against narrative criticism. Powell has observed five possible objections and he gives his responses to these challenges.\(^{32}\) In a similar manner, David Rhoads offers four valuable questions raised by the opponents of narrative criticism.\(^{33}\) I would like to summarize these critiques and questions briefly and reflect on them.

First, are the Gospels coherent narratives or are they collections of disparate material? For some historical critics, the Gospels are a patchwork of embedded traditions and authorial redactions, “like pearls on a string,” which cannot be treated as a unity.\(^{34}\) Three responses can be given here: (1) It is assumed that narrative criticism treats the Gospels as the final story, without regard to its historical compositions.\(^{35}\) (2) Readers of a Gospel

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32 Powell’s five possible objections to narrative criticism: (1) Narrative criticism treats the Gospels as coherent narratives when they are actually collections of disparate material. (2) Narrative criticism imposes on ancient literature concepts drawn from the study of modern literature. (3) Narrative criticism seeks to interpret the Gospels through methods that were devised for the study of fiction. (4) Narrative criticism lacks objective criteria for the analysis of texts. (5) Narrative criticism rejects or ignores the historical witness of the Gospels. See Powell, What is Narrative Criticism?, 91–98. Rhoads also provides four critiques of narrative criticism, which have some overlaps with Powell’s.
35 Powell has rightly observed, “All works of literature have a compositional
book are surely expected to read the story as a whole and not to sort out its tradition or redaction. \(^{36}\) (3) There might be some incoherence, such as “‘cracks and crevices’ that occur in the Gospels as a result of the conflation of sources.” \(^{37}\) However, narrative criticism is open to the incoherence. It tries to study how a reader experiences the story in its final form, even when it does not cohere so well.

Second, does narrative criticism detach the text from history and even reject historical analysis? This method of narrative criticism seems to be non-historical and “so undermines the historical grounding of Christian faith.” \(^{38}\) However, it should be noted that historical information is not downplayed in narrative analysis, because “knowledge of the history and culture of the first century is a crucial aid to understanding Mark’s story-world.” \(^{39}\)

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\(^{36}\) For first-century audience, they might hear a Gospel and experienced it as a whole, not as pieces of earlier tradition. See Rhoads, “Practices and Prospects,” 27.

\(^{37}\) Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 92.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 96.

\(^{39}\) Surely, this knowledge of history is something different from using elements of a text to reconstruct historical events, but the historical information is not rejected in narrative criticism. See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 4. See also Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 97: “Narrative criticism demands that the modern reader have the historical information that the text assumes of its implied reader ... In a basic sense, this comprises practical information that is common knowledge in the world of the story: how much a denarius is worth, what a centurion does, and so forth. It may also include recognition of social and political realities that lie behind the story. It may involve understanding particular social customs and recognizing the meaning of culturally determined symbols or metaphors. Narrative criticism must rely upon historical investigation to provide the reader with this sort of insight.”
Moreover, narrative criticism has its own value in the analysis of a Gospel, as we have shown before.

Third, is it legitimate to utilize a modern literary theory (narrative criticism) in the study of ancient literature (the Gospels)? Even though narrative criticism arose from modern secular literary theory, it is not necessary to exclude thereby the applicability of narrative criticism in the analysis of a Gospel. The biblical writers may not have the knowledge or the terminology of modern literary theory, but they could have used it when they told the stories.\textsuperscript{40} We acknowledge that narrative criticism invites the readers (not only first-century audience, but also modern readers) to participate in getting the meaning of a text, which may seem too “modern” and subjective to the Gospels’ original intention. On the other hand, it is impossible for us to know exactly an ancient author’s intention. At least,

it [narrative criticism] provides us with an interpretation of the text to which author and reader together can contribute—an interpretation which corresponds with the experience of many readers of the gospel.\textsuperscript{41}

3. The Definition of Narrative Criticism

Our understanding of narrative criticism is based upon the works of Rhoads\textsuperscript{42}, Powell\textsuperscript{43} and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{40} Here is an example that Powell gives, “John may not have know what ‘irony’ meant. Still, from our perspective, his story frequently develops in ways that we would call ironic” (Powell, \textit{What is Narrative Criticism?}, 93).

\textsuperscript{41} Hooker, \textit{Saint Mark}, 394.

\textsuperscript{42} Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 1–22.

\textsuperscript{43} Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 239–55.

\textsuperscript{44} Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?” in \textit{Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies}, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress,
According to Rhoads and Malbon, a narrative can be separated into the “what” and the “how”:\(^{45}\) The “what” is the story,\(^{46}\) which indicates the content of the narrative, including plot (focus on the conflicts),\(^{47}\) characters\(^{48}\) and settings.\(^{49}\) The “how” of the narrative is the \textit{discourse}, which indicates the way that

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\(^{45}\) Both Malbon and Rhoads follow Seymour Chatman to explain story and discourse as “the what” and “the how”: “I have followed Seymour Chatman. Chatman distinguishes the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of narrative. The ‘what’ is the story ... The ‘how’ of the narrative is the discourse, the particular way in which a given story is told, including the arrangement of events in the plot, the type of narrator, point of view, style, the rhetorical devices” (Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 6). “The distinction between story and discourse that was highlighted by literary critic Seymour Chatman has proved useful to narrative critics. Story is the \textit{what} of a narrative; discourse is the \textit{how}. Story indicates the content of the narrative, including events, characters and settings, and their interaction as the plot. Discourse indicates the rhetoric of the narrative, how the story is told ... Story and discourse are not really separable. What we have, in Chatman’s words, is the \textit{story-as-discoursed}” (Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 32).


\(^{47}\) According to Rhoads, plot is about the events of the story—how they are arranged, how they are connected, and what they reveal; the events “often involve conflict, for conflict is the heart of most stories” (David Rhoads et al., \textit{Mark as Story An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999], 73).

\(^{48}\) The main ways to analyze characters are through (1) what they say, (2) what they do, and (3) how other characters perceive them or react to them. It is not only what the characters “do” but also who they “are” that need to be analyzed. See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 10; idem, \textit{Mark as Story}, 151–59.

\(^{49}\) According to Rhoads, settings in Mark include temporal settings (such as Sabbath, nighttime, and Passover) and spatial settings (such as desert, sea, mountain, synagogue, house, the way, Galilee, Jerusalem, and Temple) are all either indispensable to the drama of the story or, at a minimum, important enrichment to the story. See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 13.
an author tells a story. An author might use some techniques to impose his or her story-world upon the reader, including the narrator,\textsuperscript{50} implied author,\textsuperscript{51} implied/ideal reader,\textsuperscript{52} point of

\textsuperscript{50} The narrator is a rhetorical device that the author uses to “get the story told and get it told in a certain way.” The narrator may be a character in the story or maybe outside the story being told. The narrator in Mark, existing outside the story, “speaks in the third person; is an implied invisible presence in every scene, capable of being anywhere — with Jesus alone or with his opponents — to ‘report’ the action; displays full omniscience by narrating the thoughts, feelings, or sensory experiences of many characters; often turns away from the story to give direct ‘asides’ to the reader, explaining a custom or translating a word or commenting on the story; and narrates the story from one overarching ideological point of view” (Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 15). See also Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 34.

\textsuperscript{51} Implied author is a notion closely related to the idea of narrator. For Rhoads, “the implied author is reconstructed from a narrative by uncovering the ‘core of norms and choices’ implicit in a work; that is, the implied author is equivalent to the overarching beliefs and values of the story along with the choices implicitly involved in ‘what’ story is told and ‘how’ it is told” (Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 17). Powell has similar idea, for he means the implied author as “the perspective from which the work appears to have been written, a perspective that must be reconstructed by readers on the basis of what they find in the narrative” (Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 240). It is worth noting that in Mark, there is little or no difference between the implied author and the narrator. See also Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 18.

\textsuperscript{52} For Powell, the implied reader is “one who actualizes the potential for meaning in a text, who responds to it in ways consistent with the expectations that we may ascribe to its implied author.” Also, “the concept of the implied reader is a heuristic construct that allows critics to limit the subjectivity of their analysis by distinguishing between their own responses to a narrative and those that the text appears to invite” (Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 241). To be simple, “the implied reader is the one who would be necessary for this narrative to be heard or read” (Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 33).
view,\textsuperscript{53} and rhetorical devices (chiasms, parallelism, irony, and repetition of structure or words, empathy, etc.). \textsuperscript{54}

Generally speaking, narrative criticism focuses on the stories in biblical literature and it tries to determine the effects that the stories are expected to have on their audience.\textsuperscript{55} As Rhoads rightly observes, “analyzing the narrative involves understanding not only the world of the story, but also the impact which it may have on the reader.” \textsuperscript{56} It is also worth mentioning that, for narrative criticism, the nature of the Gospels is literature. Therefore, narrative critics investigate the Gospels from a holistic point of view, namely, “narrative critics focus on the narrative of each Gospel as a whole and try to come up with an integrated interpretation of all the elements of the narrative.” \textsuperscript{57} Therefore, for the narrative analysis of the LE, we will keep our eyes on its unity and its effects on the reader.

### III. Narrative Analysis of the LE

Before beginning the narrative analysis of the LE, the main content of the LE will be summarized first, as Francis Moloney rightly suggests:

\textsuperscript{53} There are diverse perspectives in a story, such as God’s point of view, Jesus’ point of view, the narrator’s point of view, or the characters’ point of view etc. See Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 246; Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 15–16.

\textsuperscript{54} Rhoads has mentioned several rhetorical devices (“Narrative Criticism,” 20–21). Powell describes “empathy” as follows, “The effects that a narrative has on its readers are often determined by the empathy that these readers feel with particular characters in the narrative” (Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 246).

\textsuperscript{55} Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 239.

\textsuperscript{56} Rhoads, \textit{Mark as Story}, 1.

\textsuperscript{57} Merenlahti and Hakola, “Reconcepting Narrative Criticism,” 15.
(i) Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, but the disciples do not believe (vv. 9–11).
(ii) Jesus appears a second time, to two disciples on the road in the country, but the disciples still fail to believe (vv. 12–13).
(iii) Jesus appears to the disciples and upbraids them for their continuing failure (v. 14).
(iv) At this final appearance, Jesus commissions his disciples for a universal mission, promising salvation, charismatic gifts, and protection for all who believe (vv. 15–18).
(v) Jesus ascends to heaven, to the right hand of the Father, and the disciples go forth to preach everywhere, supported by Jesus (vv. 19–20). 58

Therefore, “The Gospel of Mark, as handed on by the author of vv. 9–20, concludes with a passage that reports three resurrection appearances, but which is articulated in five stages.” 59 It is worth mentioning that James Kelhoffer considers only the third appearance a narrative and opposes the first two appearances as such. 60 We acknowledge that the first two appearances are brief, but it is inappropriate to exclude them as narrative. The brief narratives can be categorized as “summary,” which refers to “instances when discourse time is briefer than story time. The reader perceives that the event took longer to transpire within the world of the story than it takes for the narrator to report it.” 61 Thus,

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58 Moloney, Mark, 358–59.
59 Ibid., 358.
60 Kelhoffer repeatedly states, “Only the third appearance can be characterized as a narrative ... in the first two appearances there is no narrative but rather a statement that an appearance took place” (Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission, 180, 188, 237).
61 For example, Luke covers several years of Jesus’ life in one sentence: “The child grew and became strong.” (2:41) See Powell, What is Narrative
let us begin to enter into the world of the story in the LE.

1. The “What”: The Story of the LE

In this part, three elements of the LE will be examined—plot, characters, and settings. Plot, as we have mentioned, refers to the arrangement or movements of events. The driving force of the plot is the conflicts. Characters comprise all figures in the story (including God and Satan if they appear). Settings include both spatial and temporal settings.

i. The Plot of the LE

The movement of events (plot) may occur in a variety of ways. My way to approach the plot is to focus on the conflicts. We will follow Rhoads’ five steps to trace the conflicts in the LE: (1) Who/what initiates the conflict and how does it escalate? (2) What is the conflict about and what is at stake? (3) What are the tactics of each side? (4) How is the conflict resolved/unresolved? (5) What are the consequences?

The conflict that runs through the LE is between Jesus and his disciples. Jesus initiates the circumstances of conflict with the disciples by appearing to Mary Magdalene, expecting that the disciples may believe his resurrection through the witness of Mary. However, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her [Mary], they ηπιστησαν (v. 11). The narrator does not

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62 Rhoads, Mark as Story, 152.

63 In the first appearance, there is no direct mention of the disciples, but v.10 “τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ γεινομένοις” ("those who had been with him") should be understood as the disciples, in view of Mark 3:14 "ἐποίησεν δώδεκα [οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὤνόμασε] ἵνα ὅσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ” (he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him). See also Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission, 186.
tell the reader directly why the disciples disbelieved Mary. Is it because they thought the resurrection of Jesus was unbelievable, or because they could not believe the words of Mary? Unlike the disciples, Mary had not always been with Jesus. It seems that the narrator leads the reader to the latter reason; for, in the second appearance, Jesus began to appear to “two of them” (v. 12), who were among the disciples, namely, the two who had been with Jesus as the rest of the disciples. However, when they went back and told the rest, “they did not believe them (οὐδὲ ἐκείνοις ἐπίστευσαν).” (v. 13)

When the disciples did not believe Mary’s witness, Jesus tried to convince them through his second appearance to two of the disciples. But the remaining disciples continued to respond in unbelief. Thus the conflict was escalating. Finally, the conflict reached its apex when Jesus appeared to the eleven. In this final appearance, Jesus’ rebuke of their unbelief and hardness of heart (ὑνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν) may induce the reader to remember some other occasions. On the occasion when the disciples were frightened and astounded at Jesus’ walking on water, Mark explains—by a close formal analogy to Mark 16:14b—in 6:52 that “for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened (οὐ γὰρ συνήκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁρτοῖς, ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη).” 64 On another occasion, Jesus questioned the disciples: “Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? (τί διαλογίζεσθε ὅτι ἁρτοὺς οὐκ ἔχετε; οὔπω νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε; πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν;) ” (Mark 8:17). 65 Hence, the narrator demonstrates to his reader that these disciples who had seen the miracles executed by Jesus still did not believe in the resurrection

64 Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission, 188.
65 Ibid., 189.
of Jesus. Moreover, these three appearances may echo Jesus’ three predictions of his resurrection to the disciples (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Therefore, the disciples neither understood Jesus’ words to them when they were with him, nor even believed the testimony of those who saw Jesus after he had risen. Thus the tension between Jesus and his disciples culminated at Jesus’ third appearance. At that point, the disciples’ unbelief and hardness of heart was salient to the reader.

The tension subsequently was mitigated and resolved by Jesus’ demand that the disciples preach the gospel to the whole creation (vv. 15–18). The consequence of the story of the LE is the fulfillment of Jesus’ words in his ascension to heaven and the disciples’ mission to the world.

ii. The Characters in the LE

Characters are the key element in a story-world. Jesus, the disciples, and Mary Magdalene are the figures that appear in the LE. Jesus is of course the dominant character there as in Mark’s story.

a. Jesus

Jesus is the center of attention among the characters. He is depicted as the Son of Man with prophetic wisdom and insight, and a divine being as well as a common human being. We can discern the characterization of Jesus through his actions, his sayings and others’ responses to him.

For Jesus’ actions, several verbs need mentioning. The word ‘Ἀνίστημι in v. 9 appears repeatedly in Jesus’ prediction of his death and resurrection in the book of Mark (8:31; 9:31; 10:34). It is directly related to the Son of Man (τὸν ἴδον τοῦ ἄνθρωπον … ἀναστήμαι). Therefore, through using this verb, the narrator points to Jesus’ identity as the Son of Man. This Son of Man appeared
first to Mary Magdalene, and then to the two disciples and finally to the eleven disciples. He appeared again and again to them, expecting the disciples to remember what he had predicted when he had been with them. He hoped they would believe he had risen and he was the Christ. However, once again the responses of the disciples were unbelief. Eventually Jesus was angry and rebuked (διώκει) them. Twice, Jesus endeavored to lead the disciples to believe that he had risen before they saw him with their own eyes; but his attempt was in vain. Like a common human being, Jesus was angry. He could not but rebuke the disciples’ unbelief and hardness of heart.

From Jesus’ conversation with the disciples about the miraculous mission that they were going to carry out, we can see that the narrator depicts Jesus as someone who has prophetic wisdom and insight, for what he predicts will happen does happen among the disciples (vv. 15–18, 20). Obviously, and finally, Jesus is shown as a divine being, as he “was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (v. 19). In sum, Jesus has been portrayed as both a common human being and a divine being. In this sense, he is a “round” character.  

b. The Disciples

The disciples in the LE are “round” characters, for their traits are changing, or even conflicting. The disciples repeatedly failed to meet Jesus’ expectation by disbelieving the testimony of those who had seen the risen Jesus (vv. 9–14). The narrator describes them as “thinking the things of men,” rather than aligning with Jesus’

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66 E. M. Forster divides characters into two types, namely, “flat” character and “round” character. If a character possesses only one trait or personal quality that persists over time, it is named “flat” character. If a character is given a number of traits, or developing traits, or even conflicting traits, it is called “round” character. See Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 35.
thinking. After Jesus’ death, the disciples were really sad. They “mourned and wept” as any human being would do (v. 10). But they neither remember nor understand what Jesus had predicted to them before (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). They even rejected the witnesses of Jesus’ messengers (Mary Magdalene and the two disciples).

However, the narrator develops the disciples’ characterization, by contrast and comparison, after they encountered the risen Jesus himself. The disciples “went forth and preached everywhere” as Jesus had commanded, “while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it.” (v. 20) Here is the striking contrast of the disciples’ characterization:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The messenger</th>
<th>First response</th>
<th>Encounter Jesus</th>
<th>Second response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The two disciples</td>
<td>ἐκεῖνης ἀπευθείας άπήγγειλαν τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ (10a)</td>
<td>κάκεινοι ἀκούοντες ὑπ’ αὐτῆς ἡπιστήσαν (11)</td>
<td>Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ὄσιν ἔξω αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφαινόμεθα ἐν ἐτέρῳ μορφῇ (12a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of the disciples</td>
<td>κάκεινοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς (13a)</td>
<td>οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἐπιστεύσαν (13b)</td>
<td>Ὑστερον [δὲ] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἔνδεκα ἐφαινόμεθα (14a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keys: Emphases show the similar responses after encounter with Jesus. Single underlines denote the contrasts of the disciples’ responses before and after encounter. Double underlines indicate the scope of the audience of preaching.

At least two observations can be made from the above chart. First, a remarkable transformation had happened to the disciples: before they encountered the risen Jesus, they did not believe the messages reported to them; however, after they met with the risen Jesus, they themselves became the messengers of the Gospel. Second, the scope of the audience of preaching has broken through the inner circle (within the disciples) and extended to the outer
circle (everywhere). This breakthrough happened after all the disciples met with the risen Jesus in person.

In sum, the disciples were first characterized as failure according to Jesus’ standards for discipleship. After the turning point—their encounter with the risen Jesus, their traits were transformed. They became Jesus’ ambassadors in preaching the Gospel everywhere.

c. Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene was first described in a negative light. Formerly she was possessed by no less than seven demons (v. 9). Of course, Jesus had already resolved that problem. After she encountered the risen Jesus, Mary became Jesus’ messenger to the weeping disciples, who obstinately did not believe that message about Jesus.

Interestingly, if compared with the characterization of those women in 16:1–8, the role of Mary reverses to a positive light:

There the women illustrate love and concern for Jesus in coming to the tomb with spices, but they fail to fulfill the command of the young man when they flee in fear and tell no one. Thus the roles of the women reverse: vv. 1–8, an initially positive role turning to negative; vv. 9–10, an initially negative role turning to positive.

Mary Magdalene thus can be seen as a round character by this changing depiction of her traits.

67 See also Shepherd, “Narrative Analysis,” 80.
68 Ibid., 81.
69 Ibid.
iii. The Settings of the LE

In terms of temporal settings, the narrator of the LE employs some transitional words to integrate the story of the risen Jesus. The narrator provides the timing of the first appearance in v. 9: πρωὶ πρωτῇ σαββάτου ... πρώτον (early on the first day of the Sabbath, first); then he employs a transitional phrase μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα (v. 12, after these things) to introduce Jesus’ second appearance to two of his disciples. By using ὑστερος (afterwards) in v. 14, the narrator relates Jesus’ last appearance to his previous two. After Jesus’ conversation with the disciples about their missions (vv. 15–18), the narrator again introduces a time transitional phrase μετὰ τὸ λαλῆσαι αὐτοῖς (after he had spoken to them) to complete the successive order of the story of the risen Jesus. Therefore, the story should be read as a whole cloth, not as pieces cut from other sources. The writer of the LE is not a cut-and-paste editor but an author with control over the story he narrated.

For the spatial setting, there are two particular places worth noting. The first one is where the disciples mourned and wept (πενθοῦσι καὶ κλαίουσιν). They probably were gathering in a house at that time. The present form of κλαίω also occurs in

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70 Here, the author of the LE may imitate Mark 16:2 about the time: πρωὶ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων (very early in the first day of the Sabbath). See also Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission, 68.
71 Kelhoffer thinks the LE’s author based some part of his structure (πρωτον... μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ... ὑστερος) on some other Christian tradition. However, even though there are possibilities that the LE may come from certain sources, the author of the LE reorganizes them to form a unified story about the risen Jesus which fits in well with the whole story of Mark 1:1–16:8. Kelhoffer argues that ὑστερος does not come from any traditional material, but it comes from the hand of the LE’s author. So we can assume that the author of the LE constructs the whole story of the risen Jesus and integrates it into Mark.
5:38–39. When Jesus came to Jairus’ house, the people there were κλαίοντας καὶ ἀλαλάζοντας πολλά (weeping and wailing loudly) as they thought the child had died. So did the disciples. They thought Jesus had died and did not believe that he had risen. At this point, the narrator depicts the weeping disciples as “thinking the things of human.” The reader is guided by the narrator to judge the disciples negatively. The second place is where the eleven disciples were eating at the table (ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐνδεκά), which bears some correspondence with ἀνακειμένων in Mark 14:18.73 In Mark 14:17–25, Jesus pointed out that one of the twelve disciples would betray him; the implicit claim is that the remaining eleven disciples would follow Jesus. Now he appeared to these eleven disciples at this particular time—a turning point for the disciples—when they reclined at the table again, and they began to believe and really follow Jesus’ instruction.

After the two spatial settings mentioned above, the narrator finally moves the space to a wide-ranging scope (vv. 19–20). Jesus sends the disciples to “all the world.” He was taken up into “heaven,” and sat down at “the right hand of God” while the disciples went forth and preached “everywhere.” This may imply that the narrator not only hopes to invite his reader to an encounter with Jesus Christ, but also invites readers from all over the world to experience the resurrected life of Jesus Christ.

2. The “How” : The Discourse of the LE

The “how” of the narrative is the discourse, or the way an

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73 Kelhoffer has also noted the similarities between these two passages: “In both Mark 14:17–25 and 16:14–18 the disciples are reclining at table before they receive some important final instructions. Mark 14 anticipates the arrest and crucifixion, while the LE offers words to the disciples before Jesus’ ascension and the beginning of the mission (16:19–20)” (Kelhoffer, Miracle and Mission, 93).
author tells the story. An author uses certain rhetorical techniques, consciously or unconsciously, to impose his or her story-world upon the reader.\textsuperscript{74} In this paper, the narrator, implied author, implied reader and rhetorical techniques will be employed in the narrative analysis of the LE.

i. The Narrator, Implied Author and Implied Reader

Narrative criticism adopts an author-text-reader framework to approach texts.\textsuperscript{75} For narrative critics, the relationships between a real author, a real reader, an implied author, an implied reader and a narrator could be illustrated in the following way, according to Malbon:

A real author writes a text for a real reader. An implied author, a creation of the real author that is implied in his or her text, presents a narrative to an implied reader, a parallel creation of the real author that is embedded in the text, and a narrator tells a story to a narratee.\textsuperscript{76}

Diagram 1 shows the relationships between them.

Diagram 1: Real Author, Real Reader, Implied Author, Implied Reader and Narrator

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) {Real author};
\node [right of=a] (b) {Implied author};
\node [right of=b] (c) {Narrative};
\node [right of=c] (d) {Implied reader};
\node [right of=d] (e) {Real reader};
\node [below of=b, yshift=-1cm] (f) {Narrator};
\node [right of=f] (g) {Story & Discourse};
\node [right of=g] (h) {Narratee};
\path [->] (a) edge (b)
(b) edge (c)
(c) edge (d)
(d) edge (e)
(f) edge (g)
(g) edge (h);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{74} Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 14.
\textsuperscript{75} Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 32.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 32–33.
It is worth noting that

the narrator and the narratee are not identical with the implied author and the implied reader. They are rhetorical devices, created by the implied author. They are part of the narrative itself, part of the discourse through which the story is told.\textsuperscript{77}

However, many narrative critics observe that there is little or no difference (or distance) between the implied author and the narrator or between the narratee and implied reader of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.\textsuperscript{78}

The narrator in the LE holds an omniscient observer status throughout, as in Mark 1:1–16:8. At first, the narrator invisibly presents or follows the different witnesses to “report” Jesus’ resurrection. The “report” culminates in Jesus’ encounter with the eleven disciples. Then the narrator shifts to a global perspective “to see Christ ascend into heaven and the disciples go out everywhere.”\textsuperscript{79} Therefore, the LE, in Thomas Shepherd’s words, “begins in a rather close-up view of witnesses and expands outward to eventually encompass the broad perspective of all heaven and earth.”\textsuperscript{80}

Three loci can be detected in the narrator’s way of telling the story. First, the narrator stresses the disciples’ unbelief through a close-up view of the witnesses. Second, as the confrontation between Jesus and his disciples escalates, the narrator guides the reader to understand that the resolution to the disciples’ unbelief is not only the fact of Jesus’ resurrection, but also their encounter with Jesus after his resurrection. Finally, the result of the encounter

\textsuperscript{77} Powell, \textit{What is Narrative Criticism?}, 27.
\textsuperscript{78} See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 18; Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” 33.
\textsuperscript{79} Shepherd, ”Narrative Analysis,” 88.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
is the fulfillment of Jesus’ predictions—“they [the disciples] went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it.” (v. 20)

The implied reader in the LE is expected to know a number of ideas, such as, “the first day of Sabbath,” “baptized,” “saved,” and “condemned” etc. In vv. 9–14, the implied reader is expected to know more than the disciples do; while he/she knows about the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples do not. After v. 15, however, there is a shift in perspective, as the disciples now see and know along with the implied reader.

ii. The Rhetoric Device

The rhetorical techniques refer to “how” the story is told. They affect the reader’s experience of a story.\(^{81}\) One salient rhetorical characteristic throughout the Gospel of Mark is the three-part structure.\(^{82}\) Vernon K. Robbins has rightly observed that one of the most well-known features of Mark is the three-fold repetition of the prediction of the passion by Jesus in Mark.\(^{83}\) Here is Robbins’ excellent description about the feature of a three-step

\(^{81}\) Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 20.

\(^{82}\) Vernon K. Robbins argues in his paper that the three-step progression is present in scenes throughout the Gospel of Mark where Jesus calls the disciples. There are different forms of three-part structure in Mark. One form is in words or phrases (three people, three things, or three phrases etc. occurring in a series), e.g., 5:37; 9:2; 14:33 (Peter, James, and John); 6:4, 21; 8:31; 11:27; 14:43, 53; 15:1 etc. Another form brings out contrasts between the parts, e.g., 6:14–16 (others said ... and others said ... but when Herod heard of it, he said ... ); 8:28 (John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets). A third form tells of a whole scene in a three-part progression, e.g., Peter’s three times of denial (14:66–71); Jesus three predictions of his suffering-dying-rising sayings (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34) and so on. For a more detailed analysis, see Vernon K. Robbins, “Summons and Outline in Mark: The Three-Step Progression,” \textit{NovT} 23 (1981): 97–114.

\(^{83}\) Robbins, “Summons and Outline in Mark,” 97.
progression in Mark.\textsuperscript{84}

The basic actions of Jesus unfold in three steps, and the final step—an expanded form of the series of three—introduces the dramatic conclusion to Jesus’ action in the form of emphatic speech that summons and commands.\textsuperscript{85}

As in the case of the rhetoric structure of Mark, the most salient rhetoric device of the LE is the three-step progression: Jesus’ three appearances, the three-fold structure within each scene of Jesus’ appearance, and the three factors in Jesus’ summoning speech (vv. 15–17).

The LE is constituted by a three-step rhetorical sequence of Jesus’ appearance, reaching its culmination in emphatic speech of Jesus’ summons of the disciples to the great mission. The structure of the three-part repetition is demonstrated as follows: \textsuperscript{86}

(1) ‘\textit{Αναστὰς δὲ πρώτη σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρώτον Μαρία τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ... / ἐκείνη πορευθείσα ἀπήγγειλεν τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ... / κάκεινοι ἄκούσαντες ὃτι ζῇ καὶ θεάθη ὑπ’ αὐτῆς ἡπίστησαν.} (vv. 9–11)

(2) \textit{Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δύσιν ἔξ ἄυτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ... / κάκεινοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς: οὐδὲ ἐκείνοις ἐπίστευσαν.} (vv. 12–13)

\textsuperscript{84} Rhoads classifies this kind of repetition as “repetition of similar episodes in series of three.” See Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” 21.

\textsuperscript{85} Robbins, “Summons and Outline in Mark,” 101.

\textsuperscript{86} Single underlines denote Jesus’ three appearances. Double underlines show the disciples’ responses to the message of Jesus’ resurrection. Bold Greek letters indicate the messengers’ actions after their encounter with the risen Jesus.
The three-step progression begins with Jesus’ first appearance to Mary: He ἐφανερώθη (appeared) to Mary, and Mary πορευόμενη (went to report) to the disciples, but they all Ἰστήσαν (disbelieved). Thus this first scene of appearance involves a three-fold structure: Jesus’ appearance—the messenger (s)’s action—the disciples’ response with unbelief.

The second step, when Jesus himself, though in a different form, encountered two of the disciples: He ἐφανερώθη (appeared) to them, and they ἀπελθόντες ἀπῆγγείλαν (went back and reported) to the remaining disciples. Again they οὐδὲ ἔκεινοι ἐπίστευσαν (they [the rest of the disciples] did not believe them).

The three-fold structure is analogous to the structure of the first scene of appearance. But the messengers in the second scene are the two disciples, who did not believe Mary’s message, but they became the messengers of Jesus’ resurrection after they met with him.

In the third part, Jesus ἐφανερώθη (appeared) to all the disciples and then ὠνείδισεν τὴν ἀπίστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν (upbraided their unbelief and hardness of heart). The disciples’ unbelief was emphasized again with a causal clause—οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν (they did not believe). Moreover, this final step reach its highpoint as Jesus commissioned the disciples with the emphatic speech εἶπεν αὐτοῖς. The three-fold structure is a little different from the first two: Jesus’ appearance—Jesus’
saying—disciples’ responding by preaching everywhere. At least two observations can be made from the chart and discussions above. First, after Jesus’ saying replaces the messengers’ message, the disciples’ responses have been totally transformed from unbelief to preaching zealously everywhere. Second, Jesus’ saying is again delivered in a three-fold manner: the commissioning—the people who can be saved—the signs that will accompany believers. As with other three-part progressions in Mark, this third part (the signs) is in an expanded form, as a serials of signs demonstrated in vv. 17–18.

From the above discussions, it can be concluded that the LE is filled with the structures of three-part progression. By means of this structural repetition, the narrator of the LE guides the reader to pay attention to the unified structure in the story. Second, this three-part progression structure is allied with the main feature of structures in Mark. Third, the third part emphasizes Jesus’ summon to the disciples, which invites the reader to encounter Jesus, and to go everywhere preaching the Gospel of Jesus as his followers.

IV. The Integration of the LE into Mark

We have mentioned that the author of the LE intentionally imitates Mark 1:1–16:8, in order to integrate the LE into the main body. The LE is allied with, and cannot be separated from, Mark. This can be demonstrated by several significant parallels between them.

1. The Structures

The structures of LE and Mark are similar to each other. First, the LE is organized in a framework of three-part progression. The overall structure is constituted by a three-step progression of Jesus’ appearances with an emphasis on Jesus’ summon to the disciples in the third step. This echoes the three-step progression of the passion predictions which is located in a central position in the theology
of Mark.  

The repetition of the suffering–dying–rising sayings in Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33–34, especially Jesus’ rising, have been realized in his three-time appearances to the disciples. Each progression reaches its highpoint in the long and dramatic form of the saying in 10:33–34 and 16:15–18 respectively. Both emphasize the disciples’ unbelief.

Second, Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples can be constituted into a three-part structure only if the LE is incorporated into Mark. When the disciples’ first, subsequent, and final commissions are listed in parallel, similar structural elements can be detected. See Table 1 in Appendix.

Moreover, the three-part repetition is also demonstrated in the characters of Jesus, the disciples and Mary.

Fourth, the narrator consistently echoes the previous scenes in Mark through using some recurrent key terms. For instances, the term κλαίω (v. 10) is probably used to echo the resurrection scene of Jairus’ daughter in 5:35–43. By referring to her regaining life, the disciples’ upset and unbelief are made prominent. Also, the term ἀνάκειμαι in v. 14, speaking of the eleven disciples’ eating at the table (ἀνακείμενοι αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐνδέκα), bears some correspondence with ἀνακείμενον in Mark 14:18. The scene of the Last Supper (14:17–25) shows one disciple’s betrayal of Jesus’ instruction; by contrast, the eleven disciples are called to fulfill Jesus’ command of preaching the Gospel everywhere. Through this contrast, the invitation to encounter and believe in Jesus, and thus to get involved in his ministry, has been emphasized. In sum, the narrator of the LE frequently echoes the scenes in Mark in order to integrate the LE into Mark.

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87 Robbins, “Summons and Outline in Mark,” 97.
88 Detailed analysis is given in section III. 1. ii. under “The Characters of the LE” in this paper.
2. The Theme

Through our narrative analysis of the LE, it can be seen that one of the salient themes of the LE is unbelief, which also occurs throughout Mark. For instances: unbelief in Capernaum (2:1–12), unbelief in the storm at sea (4:35–41); unbelief at Nazareth (6:1–6a); unbelief in exorcism (9:14–29), unbelief in Jerusalem (11:27–33), unbelief before the cross (15:27–32). 89

3. The Linguistic Parallel 90

First, a few observations about the vocabulary of the LE indicates the linguistic similarities between the LE and Mark. This is delineated in Tables 2 and 3 in Appendix. According to Maurice A. Robinson, “the supposed non-Markan words of the LE are rare even within the remaining three Gospels. At most, the general rarity of these particular words is as appropriate to Mark as to any other Gospel.” 91

Second, there are linguistic and thematic parallels between the commencement and the conclusion of Jesus’ public ministry as shown in Mark 1:32–39 and the LE. See the comparison in Table 4 in Appendix.

In sum, the author of the LE intentionally imitates Mark and well integrates the LE into Mark as a whole through the structures, the theme, the usages of the linguistics.

V. Conclusion

The narrative of the LE is a well-designed story of the risen

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90 My discussion of linguistic parallel is indebted to Robinson’s research. Most of the tables come from his article “The Long Ending of Mark as Canonical Verity.”

Jesus with his disciples. It begins with the summary account of Jesus’ appearances to Mary Magdalene and the two disciples, and then it quickly moves to Jesus’ encounter with the eleven disciples. The author utilizes the three-step progression of Jesus’ appearance, with its culmination in summoning the disciples into the great mission to unify the whole story of the risen Jesus. The conflicts (in the plot) between Jesus and his disciples are escalated through the disciples’ unbelief in Jesus’ resurrection and are mitigated by Jesus’ summons of the disciples into preaching. The conflicts eventually are resolved by the disciples’ fulfillment of Jesus’ summons. The central character is Jesus, who is consistently depicted as the Son of Man, a divine being as well as a common human being, while the disciples are characterized as “round” characters, whose traits experience changes. The temporal setting of the LE unifies the whole story of the risen Jesus; and the spatial setting underscores the disciples’ unbelief as well as the power of encounter with the risen Jesus. The rhetoric devise of the three-part structure is imbedded in the LE as is in Mark. In sum, through narrative analysis, the LE can be integrated into Mark like parts of a whole cloth, though the LE may be written by someone other than Mark.
Table 1: Structural and Thematic Similarities among the Three Commissions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:14 Christ appoints the Twelve</td>
<td>6:7 Christ calls toward him the Twelve</td>
<td>16:14 Christ appears to the Eleven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14 that he might send them out to proclaim</td>
<td>6:7 and he begins to send them out</td>
<td>16:15 he tells them to go and proclaim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 he gives them authority to heal diseases</td>
<td>6:7 he gives them authority over unclean spirits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 and to cast out demons</td>
<td>6:13 they cast out many demons</td>
<td>16:17 they cast out demons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:13 they anoint with oil many infirm</td>
<td>16:18 they shall place hands upon the infirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:13 and they shall recover</td>
<td>16:18 And they shall become well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Linguistic Similarities between the LE and Mark**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total words in the LE:</th>
<th>166</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LE words occurring elsewhere in Mark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– in an identical form:</td>
<td>106 (63.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– in parallel parsing or declensional forms:</td>
<td>39 (23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– in parallel compounded or non-compounded forms:</td>
<td>9 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words in LE with some related parallels elsewhere in Mark:</td>
<td>154 (92.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Words Not Paralleled within Mark**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>πεβέω</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θεάσομαι(2x)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἔτερος</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4: Linguistic and Thematic Parallels between Mark 1:32–39 and Mark 16:9–20**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 1:32–39</td>
<td>Mark 16:9–20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:32 narrative setting: as the sun went down</td>
<td>16:9 narrative setting: when the sun rose early</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:33 many people</td>
<td>16:9 one only (Mary Magdalene)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:33 people appeared at the door of the house where Jesus was staying</td>
<td>16:9 Jesus appeared to Mary outside the door of the tomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:34 healing many having diseases</td>
<td>16:18 laying hands on the sick for healing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:34 casting out many demons</td>
<td>16:17 casting out demons</td>
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<td>1:34 no speaking by the demons</td>
<td>16:17 disciples to speak in various languages</td>
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<td>1:35 having risen very early he went forth</td>
<td>16:9 having risen early he appeared</td>
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<td>1:35 and he departed into a desert place</td>
<td>16:13 having departed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:35 Simon[Peter] and those with him followed</td>
<td>16:10 she reported to those with him</td>
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<td>1:38 and Jesus said to them, let us go into the surrounding towns</td>
<td>16:15 and Jesus said to them, Go into all the world</td>
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<td>1:38 in order that also there I might proclaim</td>
<td>16:15 proclaim the gospel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:39 and he was proclaiming... in the whole of Galilee</td>
<td>16:20 and they went forth proclaiming everywhere</td>
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</table>

* Table 1 is a modified version of Robinson’s work. See his article, “Long Ending of Mark,” 70.
** Tables 2 to 4 are taken from Robinson’s article “Long Ending of Mark,” on pages 60, 61, and 68–69 respectively.