

Ideological Manifesto by the Act of Woman who Anoints Jesus in the Markan Narrative: *Anti-colonial Rhetoric*

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I . Introduction

Literature in the meaning of the word, as Terry Eagleton argues, is an ideology that has the most intimate relations to the questions of social power.¹ If we see literature in *functional* rather than *ontological* terms, the criteria of what counted as literature would be ideological expression, in which the literary work represents one's own concerns and values of the society one lives in. The ideology here is not so much about a physical means of enslavement but "a mental one, operating in terms of ideas, beliefs, cultural practices and religion,"² which reveals some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power or a vision of socialization. So, one could see power dynamics and conflicts of ideologies between classes, even genders in the literature. Actually, on the ground of certain ideology and its dynamics, not only people can identify one's social location and status, but also people endeavor to keep one's position and power or to resist the dominating power. While hegemony continually pursue to maintain the structure of knowledge and value, the other lower class probably resists to the false ideology through representing alternative ideology for the equal distribution of power. All these social and mental phenomena appear in literature, even in biblical literature.

In this perspective, the Gospel of Mark as a literature reveals its ideological force in power struggles of the colonial world beyond its theological message. Markan narratives clearly exhibit the dynamic struggles in Jewish society for having *power* and legitimating *authority* under the Roman Imperialism; and a certain narrative presents the antagonistic relationships among Jewish religious leaders, ruling elites, and Jesus, based on the matter of ideology. Within these power struggles, Markan narrator expresses an alternative ideological vision as anti-colonial rhetoric, which indirectly reveals Mark's resistance to the Roman Empire and Jewish socio-religious hegemony. Especially, Mark 14:1-11, the narrative of the unnamed woman's anointing of Jesus distinctly reveals Mark's ideological vision which criticizes the false dominating power of colonial and imperialistic ideology; and it re-defines the concept of power, abused by the imperial hegemony and its ideology. Here the narrative of the woman's anointing of Jesus, as literature would be functions to issue an ideological manifesto.

In this article, I am going to focus on Mark 14:1-11, specifically concentrating on the literary-rhetorical function of the narrative in terms of *ideology* with the postcolonial hermeneutic lens. So this article will present another way of interpretation of Markan narrative. Firstly, I will analyze Mark's narrative strategy, technique and its effects, particularly in 14:1-11. Here one recognizes that the narrator's sandwich technique, which makes a contrast between the woman and Jesus' opponents,

¹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Second Edition; Minnesota: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 19-20.

² Roland Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 15.

intensifies the meaning of the woman's action and Jesus' messianic identity. Then I will investigate Mark's ideological vision, reflected by Jesus' messianic identity. In this part, one can see how Markan narrator represents its ideology and understands real power and authority. Then I am going to consider what the woman's role is and how the woman's action and Jesus' identity re-define the concepts of power and authority. Here one can realize the way of Mark's resistance to the Roman imperial hegemony and its representation of ideological manifesto.

II. Structure of Narrative and Its Literary Function

1. Presenting Power Struggles

The narrative of the anointing woman in Mark's Gospel (14:1-11) begins with presenting the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and Jewish ruling class. In v. 1, the narrator explains, "the chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him." This intriguing plan and the antagonistic relationship appear not just in this narrative, but are already referred to in 3:6; 8:31; 10:33-34; 11:18 and 12:12. Now it is just reaching its climax. So the reader is not surprised by the fact that Jesus' opponents are seeking to kill Jesus, but rather v. 1 reminds the reader of all previous antagonistic tensions in the Gospel of Mark before the Passion narrative. Especially, the narrator used the imperfect verb *evzh,toun*, which shows the plot of the chief priests and scribes as a continuing process in tension. At this point, the beginning of this narrative itself stimulates the reader's curiosity about the conclusion of the conflict among them. Here the reader realizes that the antagonistic conflict between Jesus and the ruling class is one of the main streams of Mark's narrative, which can be a central axis to interpret the Mark's Gospel as a whole, and this conflict now comes to the climax in this narrative.³

The antagonistic relationship of Mark reveals some different aspects of hostile conflicts among Jewish ruling class, Roman Empire, Jews, and Jesus. First of all, the narrative of the anointing woman presents a conflict between Jewish religious leaders and Jesus. The chief priests and scribes as Jesus' major opponent appear most frequently in the Gospel of Mark (8:31; 10:33). They can be regarded as the hegemony, which have the privileged power in Jewish territory. During the reign of the Hasmonean dynasty Israel was a theocracy, and Jewish priest had a ruling power and authority in God's name.⁴ So the chief priests were holding special "positions of privileged power over the temple and its treasury."⁵ The scribes as religious elites ordinarily worked under the authoritative power of the chief priests by cultivating Jewish tradition,⁶ especially as "professional and authoritative interpreters of scripture,"

³ Robert H. Stein, *Mark* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 631.

⁴ John R. Donahue, S.J. and Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Mark* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 384.

⁵ Even there were many priests and grades of the priesthood in hierarchical order. The priests in the top place of hierarchy usually have special power and authority. *Ibid.*, 385.

⁶ Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 125. The Scribes were the experts trained in the Law of Moses or the Torah. Some Scribes were associated with Pharisees.

based on the Law of Moses.⁷ Thus, Jewish religious authority and their leading position not only show their prestige and dignity as an authoritative religious leader but also reveal the reality of their socio-political power and authority; so that one assumes that they were mostly concerned to hold a ruling position and continue the status over the Jews. In fact, the hegemony always had a concern for holding power and authority and maintaining their ideology for status quo. In this respect, when Jesus appears as a direct alternative power and authority, and when Jesus criticizes the religious leader's interpretation of law and challenges to the ruling class with alternative ideological force, the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and the chief priest is clearly exposed and reinforced in Mark's Gospel (3:6; 8:31; 10:33-34; 11:18; 12:12).

Second, the narrative reveals tensional conflict between Jews (people) and the ruling class. Especially, here one can realize Israel's struggles under the colonialism of the Roman Empire. In the beginning of the narrative, the narrator clearly explains that the religious leaders were trying to arrest Jesus *in secret*, “evn do,lw|” (v. 1). But they decide not to do anything “during the festival” (v. 2) because “there may be a riot(qo,ruboj) among the people” (v. 2). Namely, arresting Jesus openly can cause a big problem to control over the people (tou/ laou/) and their leadership. In Jesus' day, the overarching dominating power was the Roman Empire, so the Jewish rulers were subjected to imperial power. As most colonized countries did, the rulers and elites in Israel were “maintained in their positions of power and privilege as instrumental to the overall imperial system of domination.”⁸ Jewish leaders' group does not want to make any problem for keeping their status quo. According to Marxist theory, ideology and power are never certain, so one of the ways to hold one's status is to support a particular hegemony over those who are ruled.⁹ Here Mark's narrator indirectly exhibits an ideological conflict between the people (lao,j) and the rulers.

Third, the reader can easily recognize the overarching relationship between Jewish people and Roman Empire, the colonized and the colonizer. The narrator sets the narrative “two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread” (v. 1). The narrator also refers to the possibility of the riot among people (v. 2). Josephus expressed that the Passover was a dangerous time for the possibility of people's riots in the city.¹⁰ During the festival, people's minds were obviously filled with nationalistic feelings, and most of them hoped for the deliverance from the bondage of the Romans,¹¹ based on the historical experience of the Exodus. Probably Roman officials were extremely strained to avoid anything that could ignite a riot.

⁷ James S. Hanson, *The Endangered Promises Conflict in Mark* (SBL Dissertation Series 171; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 163. See also John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 385.

⁸ Ibid., 112-113. The Jerusalem high priests and elites were responsible for enforcing and collecting the tributes. Actually, the Roman maintained the high priests in power in Jerusalem and Herodian rulers in order to collect the tribute and maintain the local social control. So, the relationship between the Jewish ruler and Roman Empire is reciprocal.

⁹ Roland Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible*, 52.

¹⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 17.9.3 #213-215. Harrington states that “it was so volatile a time that the Roman prefect moved from Caesarea Maritima to Jerusalem, [so] civil disturbance was greatly feared.” See also, John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 385.

¹¹ Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, 62.

Fourth, another interesting conflict the reader can recognize is the Pharisees opposition against Jesus. In the series of controversy stories in 2:1-3:6, Pharisees had a significant role to dispute against Jesus about Jewish law and to conspire with the Herodians to destroy Jesus (3:6). The Pharisees as religious elites are also linked with the chief priestly rulers,¹² as scribes were. Mark's narrator clearly shows that the rulers sent some Pharisees and some Herodians to Jesus for trapping him (12:13). Interestingly, the Pharisees' concern seems different from the other ruling class in Mark's Gospel. They not only appear most frequently in the Galilean section of the Gospel, but they also are concerned primarily with Jesus' interpretation of the law and his ministry against the "tradition of the elders" (7:3-5).¹³ This seems that their concern is not about authoritative ruling power, political and social power, or maintaining the position but about just their religious authority of interpretation of the law.

However, according to Horsely, their concern is not just about religious authority, but it is also involved in the matter of political-economic ruling power.¹⁴ Since the Hasmonean regime took over Galilee, the Torah of Jerusalem and its tradition were introduced into Galilee. At the time of Jesus, not only there was no standardized conception of the Jewish Torah, but there also were struggles between Galilean tradition and the Torah of Jerusalem in the formative Judaism.¹⁵ During those times of struggle, as most colonial cultures shown, socio-political ideology and economic matters¹⁶ were intervened into the mediation of two different traditions. As Mark's narrator exhibits the conflict between Jesus and Pharisee in Galilee area, it is not simply the matter of keeping purity laws or its interpretation issues, but it also is fundamentally involved in political-economic matters and the matters of ideology in terms of hegemony.¹⁷ This shows Jesus' and the native of Galileans' resistance toward the great tradition of Jerusalem.

In this regard, one realizes that Mark's antagonistic relationship between Jesus and Jewish ruling class is not only based on the issue of religious authority but also the matter of holding the authoritative ruling power, the matter of the status quo, and keeping social ideology and its structure. Interestingly, Mark's narrator develops the narrative strategy with these antagonistic confrontations, based on the struggles for hegemony: *Authority and ruling power*. The reader can recognize various conflicts in the narrative setting: *Jesus' authority vs. Pharisee's authority, Jesus' power vs. the Chief priests and scribes, and the kingdom of God vs. the Roman Empire*.

¹² The Pharisees operate all along as representatives of the Jerusalem rulers, closely linked with the high priests. In the Gospel of Mark, they mostly appear with scribe. Refer to Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: the Politics a plot in Mark's Gospel*, 161

¹³ James S. Hanson, *The Engendered Promises Conflict in Mark*, 162.

¹⁴ Based on the historical picture of the ancient Judean and Galilean context of Jesus, he deals with the matter of struggling of peasant cultivator, subjecting to the political-economic demands of the states or ruling power, in light of the relationship between Jerusalem Torah and Galilean tradition. Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel*, 149-176.

¹⁵ Ibid., 156-162.

¹⁶ The cultural distance between great tradition as elite's culture and peasantry's culture can be discerned in matters such as residence, income, consumption, language, religious practice, education juridical status and ethnicity beyond the mediation of two religious tradition. Ibid., 158-159.

¹⁷ Ibid., 162.

In Mark 14:1-11, the narrator leads the reader into the climax of these conflict relationships by referring to the ruling elite's intrigue for killing Jesus intensively before Jesus' Passion narrative. In this moment, the beginning of the woman's anointing narrative in 14:1-11 not only makes the reader recollect all the antagonistic relationships in the previous chapters, but it also stimulates the reader's curiosity about the result of these confrontations and its meaning.

2. Sandwich Structure

Based on the antagonistic relationships, the narrator reveals Mark's familiar sandwiching technique in the structure of Mark 14:1-11.¹⁸ The actual story of the anointing woman in vv. 3-9 is framed between the mutually related scenes: Jewish ruling class' planning for arresting and killing Jesus in vv. 1-2 and Judas' betrayal to Jesus vv. 10-11.

A1: 14:1-2	Jewish leaders' plotting to kill Jesus
B: 14:3-9	Woman's anointing on Jesus' head during a meal
A2: 14:10-11	Judas' plans to betray Jesus to death

A1 represents the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and Jewish ruling class with the imperfect verb *evzh,toun* which shows the conflict ongoing toward its climax. The intriguing plan of the Jewish ruling class in vv. 1-2 is directly connected to Judas Iscariot who went to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus in vv. 10-11. The scene that one of Jesus' disciples is involved in antagonistic confrontations indirectly informs the reader that the narrative reaches its climax, and this scene naturally leads the reader into Jesus' interrogation and Passion narrative. Interestingly, these two mutually related scenes, **A1** and **A2**, have no direct connections to the anointing narrative in vv. 3-9. It means that **B**, as it stands, is an apparent insertion or interpolation into the description of the climax of antagonistic relationships before the Passion narrative. The narrative structure formed is like a sandwich.

As the sandwich technique in Mark's narrative usually functions,¹⁹ the sandwich structure in Mark 14 serves to create suspense in conflict and to contrast between Jesus and Jewish ruling class and between the woman and Judas. **A1** and **A2** present that the chief priests and scribes, even one of Jesus' disciples, plan to capture Jesus secretly (vv. 1-2; 10-11). The narrative of **A1** is clearly identified with **A2** in light of their action and its verb, *zhte,w*: Jewish ruling elites seek to arrest Jesus (*evzh,toun*, v. 1), and Judas seeks to betray Jesus (*evzh,tei*, v. 11) because of the money that is a symbol of power in the imperial world. However, between **A1** and **A2**, **B** presents an anonymous woman who anoints Jesus with

¹⁸ In the Markan narrative, the narrator uses sandwich literary technique many times. e.g., 3:20-21 [22-30], 31-35; 5:21-24 [25-34] 35-43; 6:7-13 [14-29] 30-32; 1:12-14 [15-19] 20-26; 14:54 [55-65] 66-72.

¹⁹ In the sandwich structure, two accounts reflect and develop the significance of one another and reveal the intention of the narrator. In addition, it functions to create suspense and to contrast one narrative with another. Also one narrative could be interpreted by the others. See James. R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," *Novum Testamentum*, vol. 31. (1981), 193-216.

precious ointment, and the woman's action is proclaimed as a part of the good news, euvangelion (v. 9) by Jesus. Here the reader can recognize that there are different characters and different actions to pursue different values and ideological vision.

Based on the context of Mark's narrative, **A1** and **A2** clearly represent Jesus' opponents who pursue the hegemony, their status quo, or the money. In other words, **A1** and **2** symbolically presents the Jewish ruling class not only seek (zhete,w) for Jesus' death, but they seek (zhete,w) for the way to maintain current ideology in order to get the power, authority, and status quo.²⁰ However, in **B**, the woman's anointing action seems to represent Jesus' special authority, responding to the intrigues of his opponents. The literal effect of the sandwich framing is intensified by posing a striking contrast among characters and their power dynamics. Up to this point, the reader is mainly concerned about the real one who finally has power to win this game and about its ideology. Now Mark's sandwich technique effectively leads the readers to find some hints and answers of their concerns about the final winner: Who is going to have a real power and authority? Particularly, here the reader can recognize in advance that Jesus has a special power and authority, differentiated from the ideology of Jewish ruling class and Roman Empire. Actually, in Mark's narrative strategy, the middle story nearly always provides the key to the theological purpose of sandwich.²¹ This means that **B**, the story of the anonymous woman's anointing Jesus, presents the answer and Markan ideological vision.

III. The Story of Woman's Anointing: *Jesus' Messianic Identity in Paradox*

1. Anointing of Jesus' Head

The woman's anointing scene exhibits Jesus' identity which Mark presents in Jesus' public life before the Passion: *Christ* and *King*. In v. 3, the unnamed woman appears with "an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard" and poured the ointment on Jesus' head. The interesting point is that the social act of anointing was directed to a guest's feet not one's head at Jesus' time.²² Actually, the Gospel of Luke and John describe the woman's anointing on Jesus' feet, not on Jesus' head (Luke 7:38; John 12:3).²³ However, Mark's narrator clearly narrates that the woman "poured the ointment on his head" (kate,ceen auvtou/ th/j kefalh/j, v. 3). At this point, the reader recognizes that the woman's action is the definite and symbolic act of acknowledging a King's consecration. Jewish history shows that the king and the priests were anointed on the head (1 Samuel 9:15-10:1; 16:12-13; 1 Kings 1:38-40; 2 Kings 9:3-6).²⁴ So the woman's anointing action can be regarded as the revelation of Jesus' kingship as it exposes the fact that Jesus clearly is being anointed as king and as messiah.

²⁰ A1 and A2 literally function to epitomize all previous conflicts, while presenting the ideological vision that Jesus' opponents pursued. (e.g., 3:6; 8:31; 10:33-34; 11:18; 12:12).

²¹ James R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," 196.

²² J. K. Elliott, "The Anointing of Jesus," *Expository Times*, vol. 85. (1974/January), 105.

²³ The anointment on one's feet is a sign of respect for guest at Jesus' time (e.g., Luke 7:46). So the anointment on feet can present totally different meaning from the anointing on one's head.

²⁴ John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 386. Priests also were anointed (Exodus 19:4-7).

This scene reminds the readers of their understanding of Jesus' identity, which is based on the preface of Mark, "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the son of God" (Cristou/ ui`ou/ qeou, 1:1). Jesus is the Christ, Israel's anointed King, the long-awaited messiah. Here Jesus' *authority* seems to be proven, and his power is to be superior to that of Jesus' opponents. Furthermore, as the anointing scene reveals Jesus' royal image, it also reminds the reader of Peter's confession, Jesus as the Messiah (8:29), and Bartimaeus' appeal, "the Son of David" (10:47-48), which are based on people's expectation of Jesus' political power as a king and supernatural power as a miracle-worker. The narrative seems to present Jesus' ultimate power that rules over the other intriguers. At this point, the reader may regard Jesus as the final winner who holds a true power and authority in light of Jesus' Davidic royal identity.

However, the narrative expresses further that these understandings of Jesus' identity are insufficient. While the woman does not say anything, Jesus interprets the woman's anointing action as "for his burial" (to.n evntafiasmo,n, 14:8). Namely, the anointment is preparing and alluding to Jesus' final destination: *death*. Jesus' disciples did not understand what the woman did to Jesus and what Jesus talked about (14:4-5). In the Gospel of Mark, throughout 1:14-8:26 the disciples and other characters appeared with no insight into Jesus' identity. They just followed Jesus, believed in him as a royal messianic figure who has a special authority and power, dominating over the other. In the latter part of Mark, 8:27-16:8, the disciples are continuously described as negative characters who have insufficient understanding of Jesus' real identity, reflected in Jesus' Passion and death. This is because their understandings are based on the royal messianic expectation and its image of political authority and power, not on the suffering and death.

Obviously, one can see a clear designation of Jesus as a royal messianic figure in Mark 1:1, "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the son of God" and even "son of David" (10:47-48). However, the Gospel of Mark criticizes the disciple's understanding of Jesus' identity as expressed by Peter, "the Messiah" (8:29), which is identified with Mark's designation of Jesus in the preface (1:1). This is because the disciples rejected and misunderstood Jesus' destiny of suffering and death (8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34), which seems to lose power and authority. It means that Peter's confession is derived from misunderstanding about Jesus' suffering and death,²⁵ and it also means that Jesus' real identity, which is not completed by one, is beyond the royal messianic figure.

2. Anointing for Jesus' Burial

By anointing Jesus' head, the reader recognizes Jesus' royal messianic identity through reflecting on the ancient ritual of royal consecration. However, this narrative immediately represents a reversal of all aspects of the reader's understandings about Jesus' identity, by the fact that the anointing is for preparing Jesus' burial (v. 8). The woman's action in vv. 3-9 paradoxically represents Jesus' other identity through foreshadowing Jesus' suffering and death. As the woman's anointing action on Jesus'

²⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 94-97.

head alludes to the consecration of kings and priests in Jewish history, such an anointing has to involve oil; *e;laion* (1 Samuel 10:1; 2 Kings 9:1-13), not perfume or ointment (*mur,on*, v. 3).²⁶ However, ironically the narrator makes the woman use *mur,on* in v. 3; and the ointment is usually used for burial purposes on body, not just on head; but the narrative presents the woman “poured the ointment on his head,” not on the body (v. 3). The narrator intentionally describes the woman’s action in irony, in order to exhibit Jesus’ paradoxical identity. Furthermore, a woman “broke (*suntri,yasa*) open the jar” for pouring on Jesus’ head (v. 3). Her action and the term *suntri,bw* symbolically exhibit Jesus’ death because the common Hellenistic practice placed the broken jars used for anointing the dead body in the grave with the corpses.²⁷ For the purpose of the consecration, there is no reason to break the oil jar. Even in v. 8, Jesus directly points out the woman’s anointing as the anointing of a corpse. In this regard, one can realize that the ironical expression of the woman’s anointing action represents not only Jesus’ royal messianic identity but also Jesus’ suffering and death.

By acknowledging Jesus’ royal messianic identity, the woman’s anointing is symbolically performing Jesus’ funeral in advance of his actual death, which represents Jesus’ another identity. Jesus points out that the woman’s anointing is the anticipatory anointing of his body for burial in v. 8. Actually, the anointment of Jesus’ dead body does not occur after Jesus’ death and burial because Jesus’ tomb is empty (16:1-6). In this regard, the woman’s anointing action foreshadows even Jesus’ resurrection, having no chance to anoint the dead body. The narrative also exhibits the urgency of Jesus’ suffering and death.²⁸ When the people were angry about the woman’s anointing because of wasting money, Jesus said, “for you always have the poor with you, ... but you will not always have me” (v. 7). Giving to the poor is obviously a good thing, but the woman’s anointing is more urgent and important because Jesus’ absence is approaching quickly. Here the narrative reveals the urgency of Jesus’ death before the Passion narrative. At the same time, this narrative reminds the readers of Jesus’ death predictions in earlier narratives (8:31-32; 9:30-32; 10:32-34).

From this perspective, one can realize that the woman’s anointing represents another identity beyond Jesus’ royal messianic identity: *Suffering servant*. This identity can make up the disciples’ misunderstanding of Jesus’ identity for sufficient comprehension about messianic secrecy. The servant title is never used in the Gospel of Mark. Nevertheless, the Markan narrative symbolically reveals servant imagery in its Christological portrait, corresponds to Isaiah 53. Especially, when the reader recognizes Jesus’ final destiny as death just before the Passover, the reader recalls Jesus’ previous proclamation about the soteriological feature of his death in being “to give his life a ransom for many” (10:45). The description of Jesus’ suffering and death in Mark exhibits linguistic, imaginative, and

²⁶ Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, 635. See also Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 813. In Septuagint, 1 Samuel 10:1 uses the term, *e;laion*, which means an anointing oil.

²⁷ J. K. Elliott, “The Anointing Jesus,” 106. Jars used for anointing corpses were often shattered and left in the coffin. John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 386; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark*, 812.

²⁸ Edwin K. Broadhead, *Prophet, Son, Messiah: Narrative Form and Function in Mark 14-16* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 33-38.

conceptual parallels with the portrait of suffering servant in Isaiah 53. Particularly, Mark's soteriological term, *lu,tron* (10:45) corresponds to the sense of the Hebrew word *mva* ((*asham*) in Isaiah 53:10, which means "trespass-offering," "offering for sin," or an atonement offering.²⁹ Here the function of Jesus' death in Mark is identified with the role of the suffering servant of God in Isaiah. Furthermore, Jesus' proclamation can correspond to the work of God's suffering servant in Isaiah 53:12, and the story of Jesus' death in Mark is significantly based on the Isaianic portrait of the suffering servant (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12).³⁰ At this point, the reader can easily realize not only that Mark's Jesus' death is not meaningless or normal death but the sacrificial death for ransom but also recognizes that Jesus' death is identified with the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 in terms of "ransom for many" (10:45). Even the vineyard parable (12:1-12) takes up the identity of the Beloved son (1:11) and presents the imagery of obedience in suffering and death.³¹ Thus the woman's action here symbolically proclaims that Jesus' messianic identity is essentially related to his death. At this moment, the reader may think that Jesus fails to hold his authority and power, or he may willingly give it up and submit himself to his opponents' power and authority.

However, the narrative emphasizes Jesus' suffering and death as the good news (v. 9), which reveals alternative ideological vision and redefines the conception of authority. In the last part of the anointing narrative, Jesus said, "whenever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (v. 9). The memorial, "in remembrance of her," indicates not only the woman's bold anointing action itself but also its symbolic meaning, which reveals Jesus' messianic identity(ies): *suffering servant and death*. This is because the woman's act must be accompanied by Jesus' messianic identity as a suffering servant and his death. So, whenever the good news is proclaimed, Jesus' suffering and death also will be told in remembrance.

3. Paradox of Jesus' Messianic Identity

In the Gospel of Mark, the narrative of the woman's anointing symbolically presents two aspects of anointing in irony: an anointing like King's consecration and an anointing body for preparation of burial. Based on this, Mark's narrative reveals its dual points of view about Jesus' identity: *the royal messiah* and the *suffering servant*. Through the woman's anointing, Mark proclaims Jesus' royal messianic identity as king, and it immediately foreshadows Jesus' suffering and death as God's servant. Namely, Jesus as a messianic king who was anointed by God, can save Israel and rule over the world with heavenly authority and power. At the same time, Jesus as the suffering servant of God is going to suffer and die in order to give his life a "ransom for many." Two ironical descriptions do not seem to be compatible. However, Jesus' two identities are not separated but are paradoxically compatible as one

²⁹ Wilfrid J. Harrington, O.P., *Mark, Realistic Theologian: the Jesus of Mark* (Blackrock: The Columbia Press, 2002), 117.

³⁰ The silence of Jesus in the scene of Jesus' interrogation before the religious leaders (14:53-65) recalls Isaiah 53:7. Many other detailed descriptions of Jesus' Passion correspond to the image of Suffering Servant in Old Testament. See, Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 101-108.

³¹ Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, 107.

perspective in the Gospel of Mark, especially in the narrative of the woman's anointing at Bethany. Markan narrative represents the messianic secret identity(ies) in paradox.

In Mark 14:1-11, between two intriguing plans by Jesus' opponents, paradoxical expression in woman's anointing action seems to lead the reader into confusion of the result about power struggles. However, the ironical narrative expression as a narrative strategic device, which reveals Jesus' paradoxical identity, leads "the reader to see beneath the surface of the text to deeper significances,"³² which Jesus' disciples did not recognize within the narrative. The paradox of Mark reaches the climax at the mockery of soldiers(15:16-20) and the confession of Centurion right after Jesus' death(15:39). When Pilate interrogates Jesus' title, "King of the Jews" is reiterated three times. (15:2, 9, 12). Then, the soldiers lead Jesus into the courtyard and begin to mock, "Hail, King of the Jews!"(v. 18). At this moment, the reader recognizes that Jesus, the royal messiah who achieves his end by suffering at the hands of a Roman procurator is a powerful expression: he is in fact "the King of the Jews."³³ Furthermore, the narrator places the confession of Centurion right after Jesus' death, not after Jesus' resurrection: "Truly this man was God's son" (a;lhqw/j ou-toj o` a;nqrwpoj ui`o.j qeou/ h=n, 15:39).

In this regard, the woman's anointing represents that Jesus is anointed as the royal messiah, the Son of God (1:1) who rules and reveals his authority only through suffering and death. With the paradoxical view, the anointing woman leads the reader into the climax of the Gospel and Mark's theological-ideological vision, which shows what the beginning of good news is (1:1) and what it means to be "Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Jesus willingly accepts his death because he is God's perfectly obedient son (14:36). And God will reestablish the covenant, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins to all humankind through Jesus' suffering and death (14:36).³⁴ The reader can realize that to see Jesus' identity without understanding the reality of his suffering and death, is to follow Peter's insufficient confession and understanding (8:29). Jesus' real messianic identity and his true power and authority are paradoxically accomplished by the fact that he is enthroned as the Son of God, the messianic King through giving his life to others on the cross.

IV. Alternative Ideological Vision of Mark

1. Contrary to the Ideology of Roman Empire

The narrative of the woman's anointing of Jesus not only presents Jesus' paradoxical identity, but it also clearly expresses Mark's ideological vision, which penetrates the Gospel of Mark as a whole. Mark's theological theme and ideological vision are deeply associated with Jesus' paradoxical teaching in 10:43-44; "whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant (u`mw/n dia,konoj), and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all (e;stai pa,ntwn dou/loj)." The Greek terms,

³² Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1.

³³ Ibid., 174.

³⁴ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The significance of the Cross within Mark's Story," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (1993/October), 376.

dia,konoj and pa,ntwn dou/loj correspond to Jesus' identity as a suffering servant, paradoxically reflecting a model of true power and authority. In addition, the Markan paradox reminds the reader of Jesus' radical teachings in previous chapters; "if any want to become by followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (8:34); "whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (9:35); and "many who are first will be last, and the last will be first" (10:31). The ideological vision is accentuated by the woman's anointing action and ultimately highlighted by Jesus' death on the cross. It means that the narrative of the woman's anointing is not isolated just for expressing Jesus' identity, but it rather integrates all of Jesus' teachings and declares the ideological vision of Mark just before Jesus' death.³⁵

The ideological vision in Mark is quiet contrary to common sense of value and world-view. Especially, it cannot be compatible with the power-oriented ideology of Jewish ruling class and imperial ideology of Rome in the first century. Through the divine benefits mediated by the Emperor, the Romans sustained subjugation of other nations, justifying their military and political domination of other peoples.³⁶ In fact, the Roman Empire claimed that Rome was chosen and sanctioned by gods, especially Jupiter, to rule over the world without end and to manifest the god's blessing and abundance.³⁷ Based on this, Rome also claimed the emperor as the agent of the god's sovereignty, and his sanctioned authority would bring well-being, blessings of peace, fertility, harmony, security, safety and the lid to the world.³⁸ Even the elites and leaders of Empire "represented and institutionalized imperial power in traditional indigenous religious forms."³⁹ Under the Roman imperialism, inhabitants must have submitted to and cooperated with this imperial ideology, as the means of participating in the will of gods and its blessing, for the appropriate ways of living to survive; various groups and people within Jewish society maneuvered for power and strived to legitimate their authoritative status. In this imperial world-view the power and authority can be defined by controlling over others, subjugation, and political, material, economic domination.

However, Mark presents a reversed sense of value and opposite understanding of power and authority. While the narrative seems to present the portrait of Jesus as a messiah, another layer of the narrative reveals Mark's ideological vision. Mark's anointing scene thoroughly denies the Roman imperial ideology and exposes it as false claims; instead Mark presents an alternate sovereign power that is newly anointed as royal-king who would serve people by his death. Here Mark claims that the true

³⁵ The narrative of the anointing woman like a synopsis epitomizes Mark's various themes that appeared in Mark's earlier narratives, such as messianic secrecy, insider and outsider, and hostility and rejection. Especially, the sandwich structure clearly epitomizes the dynamic-antagonistic relationships and keeps the reader eyes on power dynamics and power struggles, while reminding of all Jesus' teachings and action.

³⁶ Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: the Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 15-34. See also, his book, *Jesus and the Power: Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 17-42.

³⁷ One of the dominant ways of Roman rule in the first century is so-called "Pax Romana," the establishment of Roman Peace. Peace is a convenient way to control the empire for the elites' benefit and it is easy way to make religious claims to justify their ideological vision. See, Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2001), 1-34.

³⁸ Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 1-26.

³⁹ Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Power*, 37-41.

blessings and peace do not come through the power-oriented Emperor the agent of gods, but through Jesus who willingly put himself to death for serving other. Jesus' death is not a simple death that most humans experience, but a special death to take his authoritative role as the son of God who has true power and authority. This is the moment that the power and authority, which were defined by the Roman emperor and its ideology, is re-defined by Jesus' paradoxical identity and his teachings in the Gospel of Mark. In this regard, the narrative of woman's anointing of Jesus functions as a "hidden transcript,"⁴⁰ which indirectly or metaphorically represents a critique of power and challenges the dominant imperial theology and ideological vision, and it presents counter-ideology to negate the elites' dominant ideology. So when the unnamed woman anoints Jesus, Mark's ideological vision represents its anti-imperial/colonial ideology, challenging that of the Roman Empire and subverting all human false minds to pursue dominating power, hegemony, and its ideology.

2. Anti-colonial Rhetoric: *Re-defining the Concept of Power*

Within the sandwich structure, presenting the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and Jewish ruling class in light of power dynamics, the narrative of the woman's anointing leads the reader into alternative ideological concept in terms of power. Namely, the woman's action and Jesus' paradoxical identity symbolically express the re-definition of power and authority, manifesting Mark's anti-colonial claims and its ideological vision.

1) *Not Power over, But Power to serve and Power to give*

In the narrative of anointing woman, particularly in the antagonistic relationships, Jesus and his opponents seem to compete for proving and holding power and authority. The readers have concerns to find the final winner, who has the real power and authority. However, at the climax, the woman exhibits Jesus' paradoxical identity and leads the reader into Jesus' suffering and death. The narrative seems to reveal that Jesus' opponents win and have the power and authority, and Jesus' kingdom and power is end. However, the narrator ironically proclaims Jesus is "the King of Jews" (15:26) and "the son of God" (15:39) through the mouth of soldiers and the confession of centurion. Reflecting on Jesus' teaching and Mark's theological vision, the reader realizes that Jesus is the ultimate winner and has the real power and authority, which is different from the worldly sense of value defined by colonial and imperial ideology.

The woman's anointing action and Jesus' identity symbolically re-define the concept of power and authority. The power, to which Jewish ruling class and Roman Empire pursue, is strongly based on the colonial and imperialistic ideology. This power as dominating force is *power over* others, the power to overpower, having more political, economic, physical, social strength than others. This power always pursues to another *power over* and uses its power as the best means for possession and maintaining social order. However, the Gospel of Mark rejects the *power over* and re-defines the power and authority

⁴⁰ As a counter concept of "public transcript (official transcript)," which open to all for seeing and hearing, "hidden transcript" describes the critique of power that goes on offstage which ruling classes cannot hear and recognize it. See, James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

through Jesus' messianic identity, which affirmed by the woman's anointing. Jesus' power is demonstrated by suffering and death. It is not just suffering and death, but a life-giving love. When Jesus was called as "the son of God" and "the King of Jews," which represent Jesus' power and authority, he serves (diakon,ew) the whole world and "gives his life a ransom for many" (10:45) as a suffering servant of God. The power is no longer defined by *power over* as dominating force, but the *power to serve* others and the whole world, recognizing all human dignity. Furthermore, power demonstrates its loftiness through the *power to give* to the other, in which one can deny oneself, take the cross, and willingly share and give one's power, as Jesus' life giving love. This is "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). In this regard, the woman's anointing action and Jesus' paradoxical identity challenges any *power over* and *authority over*, which represent colonial and imperial ideology.

2) Not Power to obtain, But Power to devote

The woman's action for anointing of Jesus presents another re-definition of the power: *power to devote*. The concept of power is usually identified with dominating or obtaining force. Especially, in the Capitalistic world, obtaining many and possession is the symbol of the power. Actually, all colonial and imperial discourses are concerned about obtaining and the possession of the economic power. It is identified with new-colonialism. However, the narrative warns the concept of the power to obtain. In the narrative, the woman boldly interrupts Jesus' dinner table and breaks the jar in her desire to anoint Jesus. She poured out "the very costly ointment of nard" on Jesus' head. The ointment is worth over "three hundred denarii" (v. 5), which is a year's wages for the average worker.⁴¹ The scene itself contrasts with the action of Judas Iscariot, who betrays Jesus and is promised to get money from the chief priests (vv. 10-11). Of course, the Gospel of Mark does not present that the Judas asks for money and mention any amount, contrasting that Matthew specifies the "thirty piece of silver"(Matthew 26:15). However, the narrator of Mark clearly describes that while the unnamed woman devotes a costly gift for Jesus and reveals his identity, Judas wishes to exchange Jesus for money. The woman's action corresponds with Jesus' life-giving love, but Judas' action is identified with Jewish ruling class and their power-oriented attitude and ideology.

In this regard, the woman's anointing action re-defines the conception of real power: *not power to obtain, but power to devote*. The narrator uses the verb, *suntri,yasa*, which means break. The meaning of the verb can implies that the jar is thoroughly shattered so that the ointment is not available to be used again.⁴² This verb exhibits woman's whole devotion to Jesus' death. Furthermore, the verb, *suntri,yasa*, symbolically breaks and shatters any false *power to obtain* like colonial and imperial greed, but rather it acknowledge *the power to devote* for the other. The reader can also remind of Jesus' suffering and death, which reveals a great devotion of his life for redeeming all others. When she breaks the ointment jar for

⁴¹ The wages of a denarius of a day's work in Matthew 20:2.

⁴² Susan Miller, *Woman in Mark's Gospel* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 138.

anointing Jesus, her action is linked with Jesus' death in terms of devotion. The real power, different from the possessing power or obtaining power is revealed by their devotional actions. In this regard, the woman's anointing narrative is a challenge to colonial false ideology *power to obtain*, which is based on the imperialistic greed and ideology, but it presents the re-definition of the concept of power as *power to devote*.

3. Alternative Ideology for Breaking Boundaries

The narrative of the woman's anointing symbolically exposes all socio-cultural boundaries and barriers, falsely constructed by patriarchal and colonial hegemonies. Within the sandwich structure, the narrative presents the woman's anonymous character in a sharp contrast to the Jewish ruling class and disciples. While the woman's unnamed character represents the marginalized and the minority,⁴³ the ruling class and disciples represent the dominator, majority, the superior. The Gospel of Mark is more focused on the woman's bold action than her represented identity. Although the narrator does not allow her to speak out in public and name her, the woman's action shows a quiet unexpected attitude and boldness. She intrudes into a men's festive dinner meal, touches Jesus' body, and outpours the precious ointment, itself could be shocking in a Jewish cultural context.⁴⁴ This scene indirectly present that there are clear boundaries between the woman's character and disciples, even male ruling elites. These boundaries are derived from the patriarchal cultural ideology and the colonial and imperialistic construction of culture. In fact, women in Jewish society suffered under various forms of patriarchy and discrimination because the social system was controlled by male, who protected only the interests of the male and dominated women for the status quo.

However, the unnamed woman's bold action is evaluated as "good work" (kalo.n e;rgon, v. 6) by Jesus, and her character and action symbolically break those boundaries, as Mark's ideological vision reveals. The unnamed woman's overwhelming devotional action is inserted between the chief priests and scribes' plotting (vv. 1-2) and the betrayal of Judas (vv. 10-11). The narrator juxtaposes the woman's action that Jesus admired as "good work" (v. 6) with the Jewish ruling class' hostility and intriguing plan. The woman's remarkable understanding of Jesus' messianic identity is juxtaposed with the disciples' misunderstanding. Furthermore, the narrator exhibits that unlike the woman's faithful action, which boldly enters into the table fellowship, Judas refuses to remain in fellowship with Jesus on his way to betray Jesus. Judas expects to get some money from the chief priest (v. 11), but the woman expends her costly ointment to demonstrate her appreciation of the precious value of Jesus' death (vv. 3-8). These contrasts reflect the Gospel of Mark as a whole and describe Jesus as the one who was rejected by the

⁴³ In the Gospel of Mark, the woman is not described as a sinner as in Luke 7:37. Reflecting on the other unnamed and marginalized characters in Mark, the woman in Mark 14 represents the marginalized, especially here the woman is contrasted with the dominant male characters.

⁴⁴ John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 390.

male of Jewish society like the chief priests and scribes, but accepted by the woman, the marginalized in Jewish society.

These contrasts reach the climax at the exaltation of woman's action by Jesus. Jesus not only admires her action as "good work"(v. 6), but also proclaims that "wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her"(v. 9). In this regard, one realizes that while the male characters of the disciples and Jewish ruling class become progressively more negative, the descriptions of the marginalized like the unnamed woman progressively improve. Here the Gospel of Mark reveals its ideological vision, which is the inversion of the falsely fixed social orders and boundaries. The women's role and their dignity are no longer subjugated by the male; and the marginalized is no longer marginal.

From this perspective, the woman's anointing action is symbolically breaking all kinds of boundaries and prejudices, which are falsely established by cultural, social, and religious ideology in our lives, such as boundary of genders, race, socio-economic statuses, geography, between purity and impurity, between holiness and un-holiness, and the like. This ideological vision is shown by the leper, sinners like the tax collector, the sick person, and the unmanned epileptic boy in earlier narratives of Mark, and it shows the climax in the woman's anointing narrative. From this perspective, the Gospel of Mark manifests that Markan ideological vision breaks all boundaries formed by imperial ideology and overcomes all false power and authority caused by colonial, imperial, and any ideological hegemony.

V. Conclusion

Representing the paradox of Jesus' identity, the narrative of woman's anointing of Jesus distinctly presents Mark's ideological vision, which is contrary to the ideology of Roman Empire and Jewish hegemony. The Gospel of Mark implicitly criticizes the social value of Jewish ruling class and all other power-oriented attitudes and ideology, formed by the imperialistic world-view. The woman's anointing scene not only refuse all kinds of dominating *power over* to have more political, economic, physical, social strength than other, but also negate all kinds of ideological *power to obtain*. Rather, the anointing scene itself indirectly declares an alternative ideological vision through the re-defined concepts of power: *power to serve, power to give, and power to devote* to the other as Jesus gives his life for the world. In this regard, Markan narrative of the woman's anointing, as a hidden transcript, distinctly represents Mark's ideological claim as the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, challenging to the ideology of Roman Empire and negating all human false mind to pursue dominating power and hegemony. Thus the narrative of the woman's anointing of Jesus, as literature would be, functions to issue an ideological manifesto.

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Abstract

The narrative of the woman's anointing of Jesus in Mark 14:1-11 exhibits Jesus' paradoxical identity(ies): *Royal messiah* and *Suffering Servant of God*, through the woman's contradictory symbolic action, while representing Markan theological-ideological vision. Especially, the narrator uses sandwich technique, which makes a contrast between the woman's action and Jesus' opponents, and criticizes Jewish ruling class and all other power-oriented attitudes and ideology, formed by the Roman imperialist world-view. While the woman's contradictory action symbolically redefines the concepts of power and authority, Mark not only negates the ideology of Roman Empire and all human false minds to pursue dominating power and hegemony but also exhibits an alternative ideological vision. In this regard, the narrative of the woman's anointing of Jesus, placed just before Jesus' Passion stories, functions as an ideological manifesto of Markan community, which distinctively represents anti-imperial and anti-colonial ideological vision.

키워드

Woman who anoints Jesus, Anti-Imperialism, Anti-colonial rhetoric, Breaking of Boundaries, Paradox of Jesus' identity, Roman Empire, Ideology of Mark, Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation,

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국문요약

테리 이글톤(Terry Eagleton)이 주장 했듯이, 모든 문학작품에는 인간 삶의 가치관과 시대적 이데올로기가 담겨져 있다. 마찬가지로 성서의 문학세계도 그러하다. 그러나 오랫동안 성서 해석은 신학적 담론과 역사적 비평에 집중한 나머지 성서를 통해 드러난 이념적 갈등과 비전을 읽어내는데 소홀했다. 본 논문은 마가복음의 이야기를 새로운 관점으로 해석하며, 로마제국의 식민지적 이데올로기에 지배를 받았던 마가 공동체의 이념적 비전을 고찰하며, 그것이 어떻게 마가복음의 내러티브를 통해 표현되는지 살펴볼 것이다.

마가복음 14장의 "예수의 머리에 향유를 부은 여인 이야기"는 다소 모순된 듯한 상징적 행위를 통하여 예수 역설적인 두 정체성 - 왕적 메시아 (Royal messiah) 그리고 고난 받는 하나님의 종 (Suffering Servant) - 을 드러내며 마가복음의 이데올로기적 비전을 제시한다. 특별히 14:1-11은 샌드위치(Sandwich)적 이야기 구조를 드러내며, 로마의 식민통치와 제국주의적 이데올로기의 지배를 받으며 힘과 권력을 쟁취하기 위하여, 또는 현재의 지배권(hegemony)을 유지하기 위하여 암투를 벌이는 각 계층과 그룹의 이데올로기적 관점을 비판하고 부정하며, 새로운 대안을 제시한다. 여기서 마가의 저자는 여인의 상징적 행위와 예수의 역설적 정체성을 통하여 힘과 권력에 대한 새로운 정의(definition)를 내리며, 로마 제국과 식민주의적 이데올로기에 저항하는 마가 공동체의 대안적 비전을 표출한다. 이러한 관점에서 여인의 이야기는, 마가 이야기의 절정인 예수의 수난과 죽음 직전에 위치하며, 반-제국주의적, 반-식민주의적 이념을 표방하는 마가 공동체의 이데올로기적 선언(manifesto)으로 문학적 기능을 한다. 본 연구는 기존의 마가복음 14장의 해석에 있어서 기독교적 관점의 틀을 뛰어넘어 로마제국의 식민통치 정황에 근거하여 제국적 이데올로기에 저항했던 마가 공동체의 이념적 비전을 살펴봄, 새로운 해석학적 프레임을 제공한다.