

Jairus, His Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman (Mk 5.21-43; Mt. 9.18-26; Lk. 8.40-56): Research Survey of a Gospel Story about People in Distress

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Abstract

This article examines the history of interpretation of the pericope of the healing of the haemorrhaging woman and the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5.21-43; Mt. 9.18-26; Lk. 8.40-56). It starts with the earliest attempts to harmonize the synoptic accounts, and reviews medieval allegorical interpretations, historical-critical theories, including the apparent death (coma) theory, D.F. Strauss and mythical interpretation, form-criticism, the question of sources, literary and narrative approaches, socio-critical (feminist) interpretation, psychoanalytical criticism, and contextual (poststructural) readings.

Keywords

allegorical interpretation, feminist criticism, haemorrhaging woman, historical criticism, Jairus' daughter, miracle story, mythical interpretation, narrative criticism, psychoanalytical interpretation, poststructuralism, source- and redaction criticism, structuralism

Introduction

In the synoptic tradition, the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of a haemorrhaging woman belongs to the so-called 'triple tradition', the

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common material found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The episode is found in Mt. 9.18-26, Mk 5.21-43 and Lk. 8.40-56. It has no parallel in the Fourth Gospel, although Schmidt (1919: 73-74) long ago surmised a connection with the healing of the royal official's son in Jn 4.46-53. Some other scholars are still impressed by some points of correspondence with the episode of the raising of Lazarus in Jn 11.1-54, in particular the death of both characters before the delayed arrival of Jesus (Jn 11.6, 17; Mk 5.35 par.) and the misunderstood outlook on death as 'sleep' (Jn 11.11-13; Mk 5.39 par.) (cf. Schnackenburg 1971: 2.428-29). All in all, however, in their present Gospel setting they are entirely different and unrelated stories, according to most biblical scholars to date.

Brief surveys of (predominantly German) historical-critical scholarship on the pericopes have been given by Oppel (1995: 21-46), with a discussion of actualizations by patristic writers from the fourth to the sixth century (pp. 185-255, 261-63) and Selvidge (1990: 17-30), a brief survey of scholarship on the pericope of the haemorrhaging woman in Mk 5.24-34, focusing in particular on the positive (the early church writers and contemporary scholarship, including feminist scholars) and negative (from Luther and Calvin onwards) treatment of the woman. See on both episodes further the discussion in Meier 1994: 708-10, 755-56 (the haemorrhaging woman), 777-88, 841-50 (Jairus' daughter).

The differences between the three synoptic versions are well known and do not need to be recapitulated in much detail. While in Matthew the petitioner is an unnamed ruler (ἄρχων εἷς, Mt. 9.18), both Mark and Luke assert that his name was Jairus and that he served as a synagogue leader (εἷς τῶν ἀρχισυναγωγῶν ὀνόματι Ἰαῖρος, Mk 5.22; ἀνὴρ ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰαῖρος . . . ἀρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς, Lk. 8.41). According to Matthew, on the first meeting with Jesus, the father informed Jesus that his daughter had just died (ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν, Mt. 9.18) and made a request for him to come along to raise his daughter from the dead (ζήσεται, Mt. 9.18; cf. the similar translation, 'dann wird sie wieder lebendig', *Einheitsübersetzung*). According to Mark and Luke, the child was on the verge of death but still alive when the father came to Jesus (ἐσχάτως ἔχει, Mk 5.23; αὐτὴ ἀπέθνησκεν 'she was dying', Lk. 8.42): his request was for the *healing* of his daughter, not for her resuscitation. In comparison to Mark and Luke some features are strikingly absent from Matthew, such as the accompanying crowd (Mk 5.21, 24, 27, 30-31; Lk. 8.40, 42, 45; cf. 8.47). There is, in fact, a reference to 'the crowd' (ὁ ὄχλος) in Mt. 9.23, 25, but that crowd corresponds to the θόρυβος before the house of Jairus in Mk 5.38, not to the crowd that accompanied Jesus and Jairus from the start (cf. Cousland 2002: 40). Further points include the haemorrhaging woman's address to Jesus (Mk 5.33; Lk. 8.47), the dramatic report of the messengers from the ruler's house evoking Jesus' words of comfort (Mk 5.35-36; Lk. 8.49-50), and the information about the girl's age, which happens to correspond to the duration of the haemorrhaging woman's illness (Mk 5.42; Lk. 8.42). Furthermore, at the climax of the episode Matthew

allows no bystanders to witness Jesus performing the resurrection miracle (Mt. 9.25), while in Mark and Luke the room where the miracle takes place tends to become somewhat overcrowded with Jesus, Jairus, his daughter, his wife and three of the disciples, Peter, James and John (Mk 5.37, 40; Lk. 8.51). In addition, the narrative context of the Matthaean version, notably its spatial setting, differs from Mark and Luke: Jesus and his disciples seem to be in a house in the company of 'many tax collectors and sinners' and visited by disciples of John the Baptist (Mt. 9.9-13, 14-17), while according to Mark and Luke Jesus had just disembarked from the boat that had brought him back from the country of the Gerasenes and was now by the lakeside surrounded by a large crowd, presumably in open space (Mk 5.21; Lk. 8.40). Further discrepancies can be added to these few examples, but those listed here are the most prominent and have been subjected to much painstaking research from an early period.

In the history of interpretation a number of explanations have been offered to account for these differences, with differing degrees of complexity, ingenuity and plausibility. In what follows I will map the major historical positions to find out where present-day scholarship stands and clear the ground for further investigation of the texts involved.

Harmonizing Attempts

In pre-critical times the obvious discrepancies between the various versions of the story have not gone unobserved and were sometimes given ample treatment in commentaries, homilies and handbooks, not infrequently for dogmatic and apologetic purposes. Under the influence of a strong conviction of the unity of Scripture, it was simply held impossible that Scripture would contradict itself or contain any error in what it affirmed. For this reason harmonization has always been a popular and attractive device to tackle the so-called 'alleged discrepancies' in our pericopes, although not all expositors and commentators felt the urge to advance a solution or even to give their opinion on the matter. For example, in his *Diatessaron* Tatian seems to have willingly passed over (or ignored) the discrepancies between the various versions by simply conflating the more elaborate versions of Mark and Luke, allowing little or no influence from Matthew at this point (cf. ANF 9: 62-63; Wunsch 1982: 629). If, however, the whole problem was not passed over in silence (as does, e.g., Farrar 1874: 1.353-58, whose retelling of the story amounts to no more than a conflation of the three synoptic versions into a new harmonized version), the solution was usually sought in psychological, literary and/or historical terms.

Psychologizing Explanations

First, in the fourth century John Chrysostom (350-407 CE) neatly wove the three synoptic accounts into one coherent (conflated) narrative (*Hom. Matt.* 31.1; all

references from patristic and mediaeval sources have been taken from *LLT*. Observing the obvious difference with Luke, who mentions the arrival of the men saying that Jairus' daughter had died, he suggested in a homily on Mt. 9.18 that the expression ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν 'was that of one (*sc.* Jairus) conjecturing from the time of his journeying, or exaggerating his affliction' (στοχαζομένου ἦν ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ τῆς ὀδοπορίας, ἢ αὐξοντος τὴν συμφορὰν), a reaction Chrysostom thought was fully understandable in the light of such a great distress. Obviously, the ruler simply *thought* that by now his daughter had died and was only confirmed of it when the messengers from his house came to tell him so. Chrysostom's solution was taken up by Theophylact, Luther, Grotius, Bengel, Lange, and many more (see the references in Weiss 1883: 188 n.).

Second, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) also clearly acknowledged the differences between Matthew and the other two versions (*Cons.* 2.28.66). Like Chrysostom, he opted for a psychological explanation but with a somewhat different twist: Luke and Mark had reported what Jairus *said* on the occasion (*viz.* that his daughter was on the verge of death), Matthew what he *wished* and *thought* (*viz.* that his daughter who he thought dead by now would be raised from the death—'duo itaque posuerunt, quid dixerit Iairus, Matthaheus autem, quid voluerit atque cogitaverit').

Third, in a similar vein Hendriksen argued in more recent times for some sort of editorial conflation: 'According to Mark and Luke, Jairus had *first* asked Jesus to heal the child; *then*, when informed about her death, had been urged by the Lord not to despair but to believe. *So he now renews his request* in modified form, namely, that Jesus may lay his hand upon the dead girl' (1973: 430, italics original).

Two Different Events?

While these attempts tried to harmonize two or three *reports* of what presumably had been one and the same event, others felt uncomfortable with these ingenious solutions and tried to alleviate the tensions by claiming that Matthew and Mark-Luke were simply reporting different *incidents*. Pride of place for this line of interpretation goes to the sixteenth-century Lutheran scholar Osiander, who was otherwise notorious for his fantastic harmonizations (Wünsch 1982: 631-33; 1983: 84-179). He held that Matthew reported the raising of the daughter of an unnamed leader or government official (ἄρχων, *i.e.* 'magistratus rei publicae gubernandae praefectus'), whereas Mark and Luke related the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the synagogue leader (ἀρχισυναγωγός, *i.e.* 'ceremoniarum magister') (Osiander 1537; Wünsch 1983: 141). In Osiander's opinion, the intervening incident with the haemorrhaging woman reported by both traditions also related to two different historical events, one reported by Matthew, the other by Mark and Luke. Given the undeniable differences between the Matthaean and the other versions, the eighteenth-century scholar Storr, the founder of the Old

Tübingen School, also argued for two different occasions on which Jesus *both* raised a girl back to life *and* healed a haemorrhaging woman (1786: 351-55).

A Translation Error?

Given the close agreements of Mark and Luke against Matthew, a number of interpreters have tried to explain Matthew's disagreement in terms of a translation issue. Already in the early eighteenth century Olearius wished to translate the request of the Matthaean ruler as *est morti proxima*, 'she is near death' rather than 'she has just died', thereby conforming Matthew to the others (1713: 269-72). Almost a century later he was followed by the theologian and classical philologist Kühnöl with the same explanation (1807: 263). Recently this harmonizing translation of Mt. 9.18 has been adopted in the Holman Christian Standard Bible, 'My daughter is near death' (CSB), the MacDonald Idiomatic Translation of the New Testament, 'My daughter right now is on the verge of death' (MIT), and in the 1973 NIV New Testament, 'My daughter is at the point of death' (see for the latter the critique of Omanson 1991). Compare the somewhat ambivalent interpretation of Van Bruggen (1990: 160-61): 'the girl has entered the terminal phase'.

Allegorical Interpretation

A more subtle strategy to read the pericopes was the interpretation of the story in terms of allegory, a strategy applied not only to alleviate discrepancies and contradictions, but also to enhance the relevance of the story for contemporary readers (De Lubac 2000; Whitman 2000; Zwiep 2009: 36-260). A widely attested line of interpretation beginning with Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome likes to see Jairus as a type or allegory of the Jewish people ('the Synagogue') and, exploiting the contrast with Jairus and the fact that the woman's national identity and her religious background are left unstated, understand the haemorrhaging woman as a type of the Gentiles ('the Church') having come to faith *before* Israel received salvation. See for example: Hilary of Poitiers, *Exp. Matt.* 9.6-7; Augustine, *Serm.* 77.8; Ambrose, *Exp. Luc.* 6.54-64; Petrus Chrysologus, *Coll. serm.* 33; 36.6; Anon. (from *Scriptores Celtigenae*), *Exp. Marc.* 5; Christianus Druthmari, *Exp. Matt.* 33; Anon. (from *Scriptores Hiberniae minores*), *Comm. Luc.* 8; Thomas Aquinas, *Catena aurea in Marc.* 5.2.

A fairly representative example of how early mediaeval interpreters applied the allegorical method to their reading of the pericope of Jairus' daughter and the haemorrhaging woman can be found in the work of the Venerable Bede (673-735 CE). Bede combined a keen eye for exegetical detail with an allegorical elaboration in the tradition of Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome:

In this reading the ruler of the synagogue begs for the salvation of his daughter, but while the Lord is coming to his house a woman who has a flow of blood catches his

attention first and anticipates the healing [*praeripit sanitatem*]. Then the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue reaches the desired healing, being recalled indeed from death to life. In this reading the salvation of the human race is displayed, which was dispensed when the Lord came in the flesh in such a way that first some people out of Israel came to faith, then ‘the full number of the Gentiles came in, and so all Israel might be saved’ (Rom. 11.25-26). As for the ruler of the synagogue, and why he came to the Lord to ask on behalf of his daughter, who is he understood to be better than Moses himself? For this reason he is aptly named Jairus, i.e. one who enlightens, or who is enlightened [*id est inluminans sive inluminatus*], because he received words of life to give to us. Thus through them he enlightens others, and was himself enlightened by the Holy Spirit, whereby he was able to write or teach the life-giving precepts . . . The careful reader [*diligens lector*] will ask why the evangelist, in explaining the words of the Saviour [i.e. ‘Talitha cumi’, Mk 5.41], inserted on his own initiative ‘I say to you’. For in the Syriac [i.e. Aramaic] saying which he has quoted no more is said than ‘Little girl, arise’. Perhaps he thought that this ought to be done so as to express the force of the Lord’s command. He was thus taking care to convey to his readers the meaning of the speaker rather than the actual words [*magis sensum loquentis quam ipsa verba suis*]. For it is also customary in references to the Old Testament testimonies for evangelists and apostles to take care to give the meaning of the prophecy rather than the words. So, then, taking the little girl by the hand, the Lord revived her, because, unless the hands of the Jews, defiled with blood, are first washed, their synagogue is dead and will not arise [*synagoga eorum mortua non consurgit*]. (Bede, *Exp. Marc.* 2.5.22-41; trans. Lindars 1988: 277-78)

Once on the track of allegory, many details in the story received new significance. For example, the alleged meaning of the name Jairus, ‘enlightening’ or ‘enlightened’, an interpretation which can be traced back to Jerome (*Nom. hebr.* ‘Iairus inluminans vel inluminatus’), often led to statements about the enlightening function of the Mosaic Law and the indispensable enlightenment by the Holy Spirit: Christianus Stabulensis (ninth century), *Matt.* 33; anon. (from *Scriptores Celtigenae*) (seventh century), *Exp. Marc.* 5; Heiricus Autissiodorensis (ninth century), *Homiliae per circulum anni. Pars aestivalis, Hom* 45; Hrabanus Maurus (eighth/ninth century), *Exp. Matt.* 3; also Sedulius Scotus (mid-ninth century), *Matt.* 1.1.9; Paschasius Radbertus (eight/ninth century), *Exp. Matt.* 12.5; Thomas Aquinas, *In Marc.* 5.2; *In Luc.* 8.7; *In Matt.* 9.4 (quoting Rabanus). An exception is an anonymous eighth-century writer (from *Scriptores Hiberniae minores*), who suggests the name Jairus means ‘Helper’ (‘Iairus adiutor interpretatur’) (*Comm. Luc.* 8). According to Hilary of Poitiers (fourth century), the tassels of Jesus’ garment stood for the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Exp. Matt* 9.6), or (so Augustine) for the apostle Paul (*Serm.* 77.8). Christianus Stabulensis, writing in the second half of the ninth century, was convinced that Jairus’ prostration at the feet of Jesus was an act of acknowledging (lit. ‘venerating’) the incarnation (‘ad pedes ejus cadere, est incarnationem ejus venerari’) (*Matt.* 33), an interpretation also taken up by Thomas Aquinas (*In Marc.* 5.2). And predictably, the command of Jesus

to give the girl something to eat has been understood in eucharistic terms from early times (e.g. Ambrose, *Exp. Luc.* 6.63).

Historical-Critical Theories

Since the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these harmonizing attempts and allegorical interpretations gradually lost their attractiveness and their credibility, and this can be said to be true up to the present. Few biblical scholars would nowadays be content to harmonize the stories and smooth over the differences so easily. However, the textual phenomena and claims still require clarification. Changed perspectives and new methods of interpretation allowed biblical interpreters to approach the whole issue from new angles (Zwiep 2009: 334-97).

Especially under the influence of post-Cartesian empiricist thinkers such as Locke and Hume, biblical scholars since the Enlightenment have increasingly felt an unease with the naive cosmology that seems to undergird the story, especially with regard to the claim that a dead person had been raised from the dead and that 'magical powers' were supposed to be involved in the healing of the haemorrhaging woman. Since the Enlightenment the problem is not so much a discrepancy between two or three different *reports* or between one or more different *incidents*, as it was the case in the pre-critical age, but a full-blown clash between two competing *worldviews*: the biblical (mythical) cosmology that took supernatural intervention in human affairs for granted and the enlightened worldview of the Age of Reason that allowed no divine intervention in the human course of events (Kee 1983: 1-41).

Schleiermacher and the Apparent Death (Coma) Theory

According to Schleiermacher, the girl had not really died but had slipped into a coma (*Scheintod*), as Jesus had intimated himself when he said to the bystanders that 'the girl is not dead but asleep' and explicitly addressed the girl, thereby showing that not all her faculties had ceased to function: 'In the case of Jairus' daughter Christ expressly says that she is not dead but asleep. Hence, this cannot be taken as a real raising from the dead without coming into conflict with his own words' (1864: 233). In opposition to this view, see Van Oosterzee (1849: 2.413-16).

The theory of a coma or apparent death has attracted a number of scholars both before and after Schleiermacher (e.g. K.F. Bahrđt, K.H. Venturini, H.E.G. Paulus, J.L. Hug, K.A. Hase, Olshausen; see the relevant sections in Schweitzer 1906). The famous German rationalist scholar H.E.G. Paulus argued in his *Leben Jesu* that the real miracle was that the girl was prevented from a premature burial

(‘Rettung von zu früh Begrabenwerden’) (1828: 1.244-48). He held that the girl had been struck by a sudden breakdown of her nervous system, as was not untypical of girls of her age (p. 246). A century later, Fenner commented in a 1928 dissertation that in the cases of Jairus’ daughter, the son of the widow at Nain (Lk. 7.11-17) and Tabitha (Acts 9.36-43) we should reckon with the possibility of ‘a death-like condition’ caused by hysteria (Fenner 1930: 64), an interpretation more recently adopted by Drewermann (see below).

A variation has been put forward by Taylor (1966). He made a distinction between fact and report to make sense of the conflicting data. He believed that the evangelists themselves, Mark included, considered the incident with Jairus’ daughter clearly as a case of resurrection from the dead, but he was less sure about the historical reality behind their descriptions: ‘ἀνέστη may mean no more than that she arose from a trance-like sleep’ (Taylor 1966: 143; see also pp. 285-86, 295).

The coma or apparent death theory was also defended by Turner, who thought that the actual miracle was that Jesus knew that the girl was not dead and saved her from a burial (1928: 30; see also Haenchen 1968: 209, and Wilcox 1982: 469, following Haenchen, p. 476). From an entirely different theological position, the dispensationalist scholar Armerding insisted on taking the words ‘She is not dead, but sleepeth’ (Lk. 8.52) seriously (i.e. literally). Contrasting the terminology used with reference to the daughter of Jairus to that of Lazarus, he took Lazarus as a sample of the (future) resurrection from the dead (and as an illustration of the national resurrection of Israel), and Jairus’ daughter as a sample of those who are spiritually asleep (Armerding 1948: 56-58).

Strauss and the Mythical Interpretation

In the second volume of his (in)famous study on the life of Jesus, Strauss classified the story of the healing of the haemorrhaging woman under the category of the ‘involuntary cures’ or ‘spontaneous healings’ (*unwillkührliche Heilungen*) that had been attributed to Jesus in the Gospel tradition (Mt. 14.36; Mk 3.10; 6.56; Lk. 6.19) (Strauss 1836: 2.93-103; 1860: 505-11; see also the popularized account in 1864: 2.71-75; 1879: 192-204). (On the various editions of Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*, see Harris 1973: 41-57 [first edition], 117-22 [third edition], 200-12 [for the German people].)

Against the critical consensus of the time, Strauss defended the priority of Matthew’s version (‘the earlier and more simple, that of the second and third as a later and more embellished formation of the legend’, 1836: 2.97; 1860: 508) and argued that the other two versions were free elaborations of the first Gospel’s account, Mark’s account being the latest version of the three. Typical of his larger project, Strauss not only firmly rejected the supernatural interpretation of the orthodox, who felt an unease with the spontaneous and unwilling discharge of energy from Jesus’ body, ‘like a charged electric battery, which a mere

touch will discharge' (1836: 2.97; 1860: 508), but he also criticized the attempts of the rationalists to undo the story of its obvious miraculous features, thereby downgrading Jesus to a mere magician or mesmerizer (in 1864: 2.72; 1879: 196, Strauss uses the term *thierischer Magnetismus* [animal magnetism]). According to Paulus, for instance, the healing of the woman had been accomplished by her state of exaltation. 'When she touched the hem of Jesus she was seized with a violent shuddering in her whole nervous system, which probably caused a sudden contraction of the relaxed vessels' (Paulus 1830: 1.524-25, 530, quoted by Strauss 1836: 2.99; 1860: 509). However, in the light of similar anecdotes in the New Testament and the early Christian tradition—Strauss thinks of the miracle-working handkerchiefs and aprons of Paul in Acts 19.11-12, Peter's healing shadow in Acts 5.15 and comparable phenomena in the apocryphal gospels such as the Arabic Infancy Gospel—Strauss claimed that its miraculous claims should not be put in question. He saw no essential difference between the early Christian legendary tales and what we find in the story of the haemorrhaging woman (1836: 2.100; 1860: 510). While he did not entirely rule out a psychological explanation, he thought it equally possible (in fact, more likely) that stories such as these had come into existence long after the events, when later generations retrospectively ascribed such miracles to their holy men. He held that the story contained so many incredible, mythical elements that no historical basis could be detected and accordingly had to be classified as a myth (*Sage*), originating from the popular desire to materialize faith (1836: 2.102-103; 1860: 510-11).

Not surprisingly, Strauss was even more sceptical about the historicity of the raising of Jairus' daughter, since a resurrection from the dead was even more unthinkable than a healing (Strauss 1836: 2.133-73; 1864: 2.75-87, where he pays by far the most attention to the raising of Lazarus). Rejecting the rationalist (and Schleiermacher's) interpretation of the girl's condition as *Scheintod* (1836: 2.138-40; 1860: 532-33), he observed that the story of Jairus' daughter was the first in a climactic sequence of three resurrection stories in the Gospel tradition with an increasing degree of complexity (1836: 2.154; 1860: 542): while Jairus' daughter was still laying on her bed when she was restored to life, the widow's son at Nain (Lk. 7.11-17) was already on his way to the grave carried off on a bier, whereas Lazarus (Jn 11.1-44) had already been in the grave for four days before he was raised from the dead. 'With this gradation, there is a corresponding increase in the difficulty of rendering the three events conceivable' (1836: 2.153: 'Dieser Klimax des Wunderbaren ist zugleich eine Stufenreihe des Undenkbaren'; 1860: 542). The discrepancies between the various accounts—especially Matthew's version takes a special place—raise serious suspicions regarding the authenticity of the stories (1836: 2.133-34; 1860: 529-30). It is against their historicity that only the first one has been related by three evangelists, while the other two, so Strauss argues, are instanced each by one (later) evangelist only. Starting from Matthew's priority, Strauss considered it most

likely that the naming of the father, his position as a synagogue leader, the mentioning of the girl being his only daughter (μονογενής), the use of Aramaic and other such details as well as the request for healing instead of resurrection were elaborations typical of myth-building (1836: 2.135-37; 1860: 530-33).

Setting out a number of discrepancies and untenable beliefs underlying a historical interpretation of the three resurrection stories and concluding that these resurrections never took place in reality, Strauss explained their origin in terms of primitive Christian myth-building. The myth (*Sage*) of Jesus raising people from the dead could arise because of the rabbinic and early Christian belief that when the Messiah would come he would raise the dead. While the early Christians expected the general resurrection to take place at the Parousia at the end of time, Jesus' earthly career was widely held to be its anticipation. Accordingly, given the Old Testament stories about the prophets Elijah and Elisha restoring people to life (1 Kgs 17.17-24; 2 Kgs 4.18-37), it must have been only a matter of time before these powers would also be attributed to Jesus, the Messiah (2.171-73; 1860: 552-53).

Form-Critical Perspectives

Strauss had sought his way out of the orthodox–rationalist controversy by focusing his attention on the literary features of the text and so in a way anticipated the twentieth-century form-critical investigation of the texts. Form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) studies the typical patterns of similar stories in a particular genre ('form' understood here as a subcategory of genre) (Bailey and Vander Broek 1992; Berger 2005).

According to Dibelius, one of the first practitioners of form criticism in the field of New Testament studies, Mark 5.21-43 belonged to the category of tales (*Novellen*), of which miracle stories were a subcategory (1917: 66-100). A tale is a more or less complete story in itself, with an elaboration of the situation, with less emphasis on the words of Jesus than in the case of paradigms, and culminating in the description of the result of the story and the response by the audience. This type of story functioned in particular among early Christian teachers, who wished to inform their (Christian) audience of who Jesus was. These stories were not formed for the purpose of illustrating sermons but as proof that the miracle-worker was a divine epiphany.

In his influential and ground-breaking study on the formation of the synoptic tradition, R. Bultmann followed Dibelius's judgment of the two stories as miracle stories (1921: 228-30). These stories, he argued, consisted of the record of the sickness, emphasized the fruitless treatment and the greatness of the miracle and recorded some physical contact. They were meant to prove the messianic claims of Jesus and promoted faith in Jesus as divine miracle-worker (*Wunderglaube*).

The third representative of classic form criticism, next to Dibelius and Bultmann, is Taylor, to whom reference has already been made. He introduced the principles of form criticism to the English-speaking world (Taylor 1933). With Bultmann and Dibelius he classified the stories of the daughter of Jairus and ‘the woman with the issue’ as miracle stories (1933: 24-25; 1966: 79-80), but he did not believe that they were intended to be told as proofs of Jesus’ messianic power and divine might and thus to promote faith in Jesus as a miracle-worker, as Bultmann had argued, but he took them as illustrations of the power and beneficent activity of Jesus: ‘The miracles are primarily works of compassion and of power’ (1933: 133).

While Dibelius and Bultmann had argued that the function of the pericope had to do with a christological claim and Taylor had suggested a more pastoral concern, Held pointed to the central significance of the word of Jesus in Mk 5.34 (1960: 155-287). He noticed that the first practitioners of form criticism had devoted their attention almost exclusively to the Gospel of Mark and had tacitly assumed that their conclusions applied with equal force to Matthew. This raised the methodical question about determining the form of the parallel sections. Would the criteria equally well apply to these? Held did not think so. Mark’s miracle story had been reworked by Matthew into a paradigm or example story (*Beispielergählung*) in which the notion of conversation (*Gespräch*) takes a central place. The actual miracle finds its climax in the authoritative word of Jesus about faith; the miracle is just an illustration (Held 1960: 230). These paradigms had an illustrative purpose in early Christian preaching.

In her doctoral dissertation on the historical formation of the theme of revival of the dead, Fischbach argued that the New Testament resuscitation stories employ elements of the ancient medical profession, for example the triad of anamnesis–diagnosis–prognosis, and represent a distinct literary genre, the revival of the dead genre (*Totenerweckung*). This genre is found in the Old Testament and in early Judaism in 1 Kgs 17.17-24 (Fischbach 1992: 39-61), 2 Kgs 4.18-37 (pp. 62-84), 2 Kgs 13.20–21 (pp. 85-88), 4 Ezra 9.38–10.4 (pp. 89-92), and rabbinic literature (pp. 93-97), as well as in Graeco-Roman texts (Iamblichus, Philostratus, Apuleius, the magical papyri etc.) (pp. 113-54). She discussed the New Testament examples of this genre: the daughter of Jairus (Mk 5.21-43 parr.) (pp. 156-219), the son of the widow at Nain (Lk. 7.11-17) (pp. 220-36), Lazarus (Jn 11.1-44) (pp. 237-68), Tabitha (Acts 9.36-43) (pp. 269-88), and Eutychus (Acts 20.7-12) (pp. 289-301), and concluded her investigation with questions about the historicity of Jesus raising the dead (302-304).

On the form and function of miracles in general, see also Theissen 1974; Theissen and Merz 2001: 256-84; and Kollmann 2002: 57-67. As a practitioner of the so-called New Form Criticism (*Neue Formgeschichte*), Berger (1984, 2005) classified the three synoptic versions of the pericope as ‘wunderhafte Erzählungen’ (miraculous stories) as a subcategory of the Hellenistic *deesis/petitio* (2005: 370-71).

The Question of Sources

While older scholarship in general believed that the canonical version of the Jairus pericope was not an invention of the evangelists but had been informed by eyewitnesses or at least had some basis in the pre-synoptic tradition—often recourse was taken to the use of Aramaic words in Mk 5.41 as a sure indication that Mark used source material that may have had its roots in the public ministry of Jesus (Meier 1994: 785; Casey 2010)—attempts to be more specific as to the nature, content and form of this traditional material were seldom undertaken. Dibelius, for example, had surmised without much argument that the connection of the story of Jairus and his daughter with the pericope of the haemorrhaging woman was already made before the author of Mark incorporated the material in his Gospel, simply because of the strong interconnectedness of the two pericopes. Against Meyer (1927: 40), he argued that ‘The union is so close here, that we cannot regard it as originating in the evangelist as editor’ (Dibelius 1917: 220; ET 219). That the union (with Dibelius) was pre-Markan was also defended by Lohmeyer (1937: 101) and Grundmann (1973: 113). Bultmann took over this argument and, noticing that the entire context was dominated by episodes around the sea, argued that ‘the whole complex Mk 4.35-5.43 has been organized around the sea already in its pre-Markan editorial stage’ (Bultmann 1921: 257). Taylor believed that the sometimes quite realistic description of details in miracle stories forbade the supposition that they were community buildings and that they might stand nearer to the records of eyewitnesses than was usually conceded (1933: 123-25). Later in his commentary on Mark he expressed his opinion that the story might derive from the recollections of Peter (1966 [1952]: 95, 102; ‘a record based on personal testimony’, p. 285).

A number of authors have been satisfied with the assumption that the intertwining of the episodes is an accurate reflection of historical reality: it simply happened that way (Bacon 1925: 60; Schmidt 1919: 148; Van der Loos 1965: 509-19; Meyer 1927: 40; Taylor 1966: 289; Cranfield 1963: 182; Gundry 1993: 268). But the obvious literary artistry and the stylistic differences between the two episodes encouraged others to consider the influence of editorial work either by Mark or his sources.

The search for source material underlying Mark’s story received new impetus in the early 1970s when a number of source-critical studies were devoted to Mark’s Gospel. Observing a parallelism in the Gospel of Mark beginning with two accounts of miracles associated with the sea (Mk 4.35-41; 6.45-52), Achtemeier (1970, 1972) argued for the existence of a pre-Markan cycle of miracles that circulated in the form of two connected series of episodes (*catenae*), that were identical in arrangement (sea miracle, three healing miracles, and a feeding miracle) but not in content (Table 1).

Similar redaction- and tradition-critical investigations were undertaken by Kertelge (1970: 110-20), Kuhn (1971: 191-213), and Benoit and Boismard

Table I.

<i>Catena I</i>	<i>Catena II</i>
stilling of the storm (4.35-41)	Jesus walks on the sea (6.45-51)
the Gerasene demoniac (5.1-20)	the blind man of Bethsaida (8.22-26)
the woman with the haemorrhage (5.25-34)	the Syro-Phoenician woman (7.24b-30)
Jairus' daughter (5.21-23, 35-42)	the deaf mute (7.32-37)
the feeding of the 5,000 (6.34-44, 53)	the feeding of the 4,000 (8.1-10)

(1972: 2.208-11). Kuhn, for one, argued for the existence of a pre-Markan collection in Mk 4.35–6.52 (he finished his dissertation when Kertelge's book had not yet been published, p. 242) and held Mark responsible for combining the pericope of the daughter of Jairus and the haemorrhaging woman (pp. 200-201).

Another reconstruction in the mid-1970s of the Markan pericope has been undertaken by Pesch (1976: 1.312-14) in his two-volume commentary on Mark. According to Pesch, the original (pre-Markan) version was a healing story of a 12-year-old daughter of a synagogue leader by the name of Jairus (a symbolic name, 'he will enlighten' or 'he will awaken'), which had only secondarily been transformed into a resurrection story, under the influence of biblical (Elijah and Elisha) traditions and what he called the *Überbietungsmotiv* ('more than Elijah and Elisha is here'). This conclusion was strongly contested by Meier (1994: 781-84), who claimed that already in the pre-Markan tradition the Jairus episode had been connected with the story of the haemorrhaging woman.

A substantial monograph on the New Testament accounts of raising people from the dead was written by the Canadian scholar Rochais. The book was published in 1981 although it was already accepted as a doctoral thesis in 1973 and therefore represents the state of scholarship of the early 1970s. The section on Jairus (there is no discussion of the pericope of the haemorrhaging woman) is part of a larger study on formation, historicity and theology of the four narratives in the New Testament in which a resuscitation of a dead person is related (that is, apart from the resurrection of Jesus), namely, the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Lk. 7.11-17), the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mk 5.21-24a, 35-43 parr.), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11.1-46) and the raising of Tabitha (Acts 9.36-43). He concludes (and starts from the premise!) that none of them is historical in the sense that a resuscitation of a dead person actually had taken place ('Il nous a semblé plus probable que ni Jésus ni Pierre n'avaient resuscité des morts', p. 2), which raises the question of their formation and provenance. Rochais made an inventory of the analogies between the various resuscitation stories, especially in comparison to the Old Testament traditions of Elijah reviving the widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17.10, 17-24) and Elisha raising the son of the Shunammite (2 Kgs 4.18-37). He arrived at the conclusion that there is no common pattern or literary genre between these texts, that some of the healing narratives have characteristics in common with the resurrection accounts and some with the miracle accounts, and that the Hellenistic

resurrection accounts disclose the pattern of ‘healing or resurrection-on-the-way’ (‘guérison ou résurrection en chemin’), a known genre that Luke employed in the Nain story (Rochais 1981: 19-21). The Nain story originated in an Aramaic source strongly influenced by a Christology which regarded Jesus as Elijah *redivivus* and which came to Luke as a Hellenistic miracle story (pp. 18-38). By far the most attention was given by Rochais to the raising of Jairus’ daughter. He believed that the Jairus story was originally a healing story (with a sure historical kernel), which in the course of transmission had been transformed into a resuscitation story (pp. 39-112). The raising of Lazarus originated in a homily or a theological discourse in which Jesus was compared to the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 49.9 (pp. 113-46). Tabitha’s story derives from oral tradition and was intended to show that Jesus’ ministry was carried on in the ministry of the disciples (pp. 147-65). The final three chapters of his book (pp. 166-210) are devoted to the biblical-theological and hermeneutical questions surrounding the NT resurrection stories.

To date, the source-critical theories that dominated the 1970s have been complicated by the emergence of debates about orality and performance criticism. According to Dunn (2003, 2013), modern attempts to solve the synoptic problem have been focused too much on the issue of literary relationship. There has emerged a picture of the evangelists writing in a closed room, with one or two Gospel texts in front of them and with no awareness of the outside world. This, according to Dunn, is surely a caricature of how things must have been in reality. The authors were real people, living in the real world, and as followers of Jesus part of the Christian community. Now, according to Dunn, it is most unlikely that by the time that they were composing their Gospels, there were no stories about Jesus at hand. From the beginning new converts would have wanted to know about the founder of Christianity, and the importance of remembering Jesus and his teachings reaches back into the earliest stages of the early church.

Regardless of the indisputable role of literary tradition, the transmission of the Jesus tradition was also a matter of oral tradition. Building on the work of Kelber and Bailey, Dunn argues that oral transmission is characterized by a mix of *stable themes* and *flexibility* (2013: 41-79). Variations between the various Gospel accounts are not necessarily the result of a linear or cumulative development (one Gospel writer expanding and/or revising the work of the other), but are often typical expressions of the variation of oral performance. According to Dunn, this oral stream of tradition has influenced the wording of the Gospels, even if there was a literary dependency as well. Evidently, this requires a new methodology and a different type of argument, although it is somewhat surprising to see that Dunn tackles the question of sources of the Jairus pericope by using the more or less traditional arguments. He argues,

The fact that one of those involved is remembered by name (‘Jairus’) is hardly surprising, since he was leader of the village assembly ([Mk.] 5.22); an episode

involving such a prominent local figure would inevitably create a stir. In the interwoven episode, the seriousness of the woman's condition in a society where blood and a woman's bleeding was so defiling is simply assumed rather than stated; the story took its shape in a Palestinian context where an explanation was unnecessary. Not to be missed are the Aramaic words of Jesus preserved in 5.41 (*'talitha koum'*) and 7.34 (*'ephphata'*). It may well be the case that later tradents retained the words in Aramaic because they gave an appropriate sense of magic and mystery in a Greek-speaking context. But these are not non-sense words, such as we find in the magical papyri. On the contrary, they probably belonged to the tradition from the first, as the words which the first Aramaic-speaking tradents recalled Jesus as speaking. (Dunn 2003: 682-83)

From a Catholic perspective, Trummer (1991) discusses the healing activity of Jesus against the background of ancient medicine and in the light of the biblical anthropological view on body and gender. Arguing that in antiquity there is a causal connection between sin and suffering and depicting ancient (Jewish) views on purity and ritual, he discusses the pericope of the haemorrhaging woman from an exegetical (pp. 79-109), historical (pp. 109-17) and theological perspective (pp. 118-35), and concludes with what he calls an allegorical perspective, drawing on pastoral theory (pp. 135-53). On the background of the ancient medical world, see also Klauck 2006.

Literary and Narrative Approaches

Literary and narrative approaches try to understand the episodes by studying the mechanics of the storytelling, as much as possible without recourse to the world outside the text and taking the episodes as unified narratives (Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie 1982; Resseguie 2005).

With regard to our pericopes, Hedrick (1993) analyses the Markan story as a literary composition without making appeal to supposed historical events lying behind the narrative to explain incongruities, gaps and ambiguities in the story: these need to be explained within the narrative confines of Mark itself. Such ambiguities include the role of the eyewitnesses (what is their role if they are to keep the events secret?), the function of Jairus falling at his feet (which looks very much like a Christian act of adoration), the call to (Christian?) faith and especially the ambivalence of the girl's condition: is she dead or merely asleep? Hedrick concludes,

It appears to me that the narrative is either deliberately ambiguous on the issue of the girl's condition or the narrator is simply careless in the showing of the story. The evidence of the story is simply contradictory. Jesus asserts that the girl is not dead but merely asleep—even before he had seen her (5.39). Certain of the mourners, however, who had been with her when she 'died', clearly 'know' she is not just asleep (Mk 5.35, 40a). The narrator allows the contradiction to stand with no resolution: at the

conclusion the girl ‘got up’ (ἀνέστη, 5.42). Hence the ambiguity does appear to be part of the strategy of the narrative, and leads one to the conclusion that the narrator is deliberately contrasting the popular notion in the story that the girl is dead with Jesus’ assertion that the girl is sleeping. Therefore the idea that Mark’s story describes Jesus raising a young girl from the dead would appear to derive from the influential readings of Matthew and Luke, Mark’s literary context for the story, as well as from modern popular Christian imagination and harmonization with the readings of Matthew and Luke. Mark’s narrator simply does not make the story clear. (1993: 230)

Hedrick closes his article with some reflections about a modern reader’s response to the Markan episode and suggests that the ambiguity of Mark’s version may stand closer to a modern perspective than Matthew and Luke, and that Mark’s story may also challenge our own closed worldview:

This story holds open the possibility that even in an apparently closed world, things may be other than they seem. Hence the story contrasts two ways of viewing the world: a closed system in which death is inevitable and always the victor—represented by those mourners who laughed at Jesus. And a system slightly open in which the inevitabilities of the closed system have become mere possibilities—represented by Jesus and Jairus’s daughter. Hence the story, by affirming the mystery of death and holding open the possibility of life, calls all people to the courage of an irrational faith, a faith that holds out for the possibility of new beginnings in spite of the ‘obvious’ inevitability of conclusions that militate against hope. (1993: 233)

Other narrative analyses of the Markan episodes can be found in two articles by Bonneau (2001, 2005).

In her 1993 Munich doctoral dissertation Oppel (1995) set out to determine to what extent a synchronic approach may supplement the diachronic approach so typical of historical criticism. Building upon the results of predominantly German historical-critical scholarship, she applied the insights of the structuralist semantics of Greimas (1995: 47-120) and North American narrative criticism (pp. 121-84) to the Markan pericope of Jairus’ daughter and the haemorrhaging woman and concluded her research with a study of Patristic homilies from the fourth to the sixth century (pp. 185-255).

From an application of the ‘actantial model’ of Greimas, which is in fact a refinement of the work of the Russian formalist Propp (1928 [1978]; cf. Patte 1990; Zwiep 2013: 238-43), Oppel concluded that Mk 5.21-43 is a unified narrative that matches the category of quest (*Suche*), a basic structural component of narrative in Greimas’s model:

These two miracle stories can . . . be explained with the help of Greimas’ model as a movement from searching to finding. In this approach it was positively confirmed that the language and world of a known text can be discovered anew, that the relationship between narrative and speech can come clearly into view, and that the model offers an identification of the reader with one or more of the roles that belong to it. (p. 257)

The contract model helps to differentiate the various roles within the narrative program and to highlight the basic semantic category of conflict:

In the case of the woman the semantic structure retrospectively aims at converting the deficiency that stands behind the successful pragmatic implementation of her program at the cognitive level of the will into a successful communication with Jesus, who can assure her faith of complete integration at both levels. After the initial conflict of social disintegration on the one hand and the monological action on the other, the overcoming of the monologue as the next conflict provoked by Jesus is necessary. In responding to this challenge, semantically speaking, the woman is integrated into the narrative program of Jesus, which must be understood as the realization of the values of the kingdom of God, the realization of which has been entrusted to him by his actual Destinator/Gott. Semantically speaking, /salvation/ and its physical confirmation in the event are taken here as a communicative action towards life [*kommunikatives Tun zum Leben hin*]. (pp. 257-58)

Through her healing the woman enters a new world of possibilities, which she could only do by giving up all her known possibilities. The same goes for the leader of the synagogue:

At the outset, by kneeling down he [= the synagogue leader] acknowledges in principle the superiority of Jesus. Nevertheless, his request for the salvation and life rescue for his daughter turns into a test [*Bewährungsprobe*] in the conflict: After receiving the news of her death, he must give up all prior expectations. He is completely dependent on faith, which constitutes *the space* of Jesus' possibilities per se, as the only possibility left. As much as the sick woman, he is no longer in control of how salvation works out in actual practice. This predicament is exacerbated by the unsettling word of Jesus at the resuscitation. His silent command reinforces the impression of the paradox that all the previous boundaries of life and death have been crossed. (p. 258, her italics)

Faith means 'to embark upon the unknown program of Jesus, unbelief [*Nichtglaube*] is denial' (pp. 258-59). From a narrative perspective the Markan intercalation technique brings to light a christological focus: 'Each time [including the present instance] a decided stance towards Jesus is demanded' (p. 260). The pericope in the centre focuses on a statement of Jesus that provokes a strong reaction and disorientation. The notion of conflict, already unearthed by structuralist analysis, is brought home to the reader by means of narrative analysis. The conflict is unresolved and forces the implied reader to take a position. Hence narrative criticism supplements structural analysis (p. 260).

The study of Mk 5.21-43 in patristic literature from the fourth to the sixth century is heavily indebted to typological interpretation, in which the narrative material of the Gospels serves to illustrate the theology of Paul and John with an appeal to the analogy of faith (Opiel discusses Hilary of Poitiers, Ephrem the Syriac, Ambrose, Augustine, Petrus Chrysologus, Cyrill of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Jakob of Sarug, St. Romanos the Melodist). A sparkling example

of this is Augustine's remark in a sermon on Rom. 9-11, where the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles is said to be prefigured in the story of Jairus' daughter and the haemorrhaging woman ('Habes hoc et in evangelio sacratissime figuratum') (Augustine, *Serm.* 77.5; Latin text in Oppel 1995: 246-48).

From a different (socio-historical) perspective the notion of conflict is also discussed by Vledder (1997). He focuses on the conflict about group boundaries between the Matthaean community after 70 CE and contemporary Jewish leaders (Mt. 9.18-26 is discussed on pp. 215-18).

While Hedrick's article remains within the boundaries of classical literary criticism and Oppel's book focuses on its structuralist potential, Kotansky (2001: 77-120) offers a more thoroughgoing rereading of the episode in the light of ancient mythology, looking for a deeper, symbolic meaning of the story. Heavily relying on a source-critical reconstruction of the pre-Markan miracle catena, Kotansky argues that the episode is part of an original straightforward miracle story overlaid (by Mark or his source) by mythological motifs reminding of the cosmic battle with Ocean, descents into the netherworld, and a cosmological marriage (*hieros gamos*), 'to win over Mark's universal Gentile audience' (p. 78). Jesus' journeying to the other side (τὸ Πέραν, the Beyond) stands for the transition from the real world to the mysterious beyond, where cosmic conflicts are fought. In the story, Jesus figures as a divine hero conquering death; the haemorrhaging woman as a mythic, archetypal figure whose intervention paves the way for the raising of Jairus' daughter. The intricate connection between the woman and the daughter reveals that their fates are inextricably connected:

As a fabled 'Sleeping Beauty', the spell of death over the Little Girl (κοράσιον, vv. 41, 42) has been broken with the disappearance from the narrative of the Hemorrhaging Woman (γυνὴ οὐσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος, v. 25). It seems that by some strange law of proxy the healing of the hemorrhaging woman has kept the little girl's chances alive; the woman's position somehow serves as a surrogate restitution that enables the daughter, in the end, to be won back to life'. (p. 81)

Jesus as the divine hero and the haemorrhaging woman as a Lady of the Abyss are united in a sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*) that produces life, suggestive of the restoration of universal salvation in eschatological time. The whole scenery (the sea-setting) is reminiscent of the ancient cosmic battles (theomachies) of Enlil and Ninlil, Inanna and Dumuzi, Tiamat and Apsu, Baal and Yam, Moses and the Red Sea, and from Greek mythology and magic. The woman's intervention reveals a crux:

The woman's role is to initiate Jesus' hidden *dynamis* in the male/female conjunction that results from the meeting of the two figures. . . . As a primordial restorative Eve, the woman is meant to inaugurate a new paradisiacal epoch as she encounters Jesus in the liminal, abyssal region of the Sea. Her meeting with Jesus ensures that

a re-enactment of creation will indeed transpire. Her contribution, as the female counterpart of Jesus, is that of a divine Sophia participating, through her own healing and that of the girl, in the very act of procreation itself. She, with her oceanic womb of life-giving blood, will, in conjunction with Jesus, become a female creatrix to his male creator. (p. 101, italics original)

According to Kotansky, the Woman serves as an archetypal figure who represents the taming of the primordial Sea (which stands for the ‘uncontrolled’ female forces of creation) and a sacred wedding (which is representative of procreation in the eschatological life of the pre-Markan community). At the same time, she also acts as a mythological ‘anti-type’ to the girl. Her ‘touch’ creates a cessation, a kind of death, the typological inverse of the Little Girl (p. 118).

Feminist and Socio-Critical Approaches

In 2001, Dewey signalled ‘an explosion of work on the hemorrhaging woman’ from a feminist-critical perspective (p. 27), and the same can be said of the episode of Jairus’ daughter (Levine and Blickenstaff 2001a, 2001b). For obvious reasons the stories about the daughter of Jairus and the haemorrhaging woman have attracted the attention of feminist scholars from an early period. After all, three female characters make their presence known, albeit with varying degrees of success and visibility (or non-visibility): the 12-year-old girl, the haemorrhaging woman and the child’s mother. Like other liberationist hermeneutics, feminist biblical interpretation takes its starting point in the experience of oppression and seeks to liberate women who are oppressed because of their sex and gender roles, by revealing sexist and misogynist (expressing hatred against females) attitudes and behaviours and criticizing male normativity (Aichele 1995: 225-71; Schneiders 1999: 180-99). It seeks to discover the biases of the narrator’s point of view and offers a ‘resistant reading’. The focus of feminist interpreters is not on authorial intention or on textual meaning as such, but on the liberating experience of personal conversion and societal transformation (see Zwiep 2013: 397-403, and the literature cited there). For a general appreciation of the role of women in the Gospel of Mark, see Malbon 1983. She tries to determine how the female characters in Mark shed light on what it means to follow Jesus and why they are especially appropriate for the role of illuminating followership (rather than discipleship in the strict sense). She concludes that the women characters contribute to the composite portrayal of following Jesus, both positively and negatively (‘Women can be villains and well as heroes in the Gospel of Mark’, p. 46). The author of Mark communicates a twofold message to his audience: ‘Anyone can be a follower, no one finds it easy’ (p. 47). See, for similar conclusions, also Dewey 1994: 2.470-509; 2001: 23-29.

Typical questions to be asked (and answered!) from a feminist-critical perspective in the pericopes include the following: How do male–female relationships in the story contribute to (or distort) its meaning? Why are the two women featuring in the story unnamed, in contrast to their male counterparts, Jesus, Jairus, Peter, James and John, James’s brother? What does it say about their identity? What, if any, is the role of purity regulations in the story? To what extent is the moral shaped by matters of purity and impurity, and by matters of honour and shame? Does the appellation ‘daughter’ in Mark re-encapsulate the woman in patriarchal structures and thus affirm male normativity? To what extent does the story promote a liberating view on women? To what extent does it maintain the status quo and/or support male domination?

According to Selvidge, the story of the haemorrhaging woman has been preserved ‘because it remembers an early Christian community’s break with the Jewish purity system, which restricted and excluded women from cult and society’ (1984: 619). The terms Mark uses to describe the woman’s condition are directly drawn from the purity laws in Leviticus 15, to which the story of the haemorrhaging woman stands in stark contrast. In her 1990 monograph *Woman, Cult, and Miracle Recital*, Selvidge elaborated this theme and defended the thesis that the Markan Jesus stands opposed to the Jewish law that marginalized women and advocates a liberal, egalitarian view that eschews social exclusion on the basis of gender. Following Scroggs’s sociological analysis of the earliest Christian community as a sectarian movement (1975: 2.1-23), she described it as a dissenting group, a protest movement that rejects the establishment view of reality, an egalitarian group that offers love and acceptance within the community. It was a voluntary association demanding a total commitment of its members and advocated an adventist (imminent-eschatological) interpretation of its situation (Selvidge 1990: 31-46). Mark’s Gospel shows a hostile attitude toward the Twelve as representing the Jerusalem (mother church) establishment and has a cosmopolitan outlook:

The communal situation of Mark was certainly varied. It denied the exclusivism of Judaism, and as it found itself in conflict it began a transition to a more Gentile-oriented community. This is the period that is evidenced in the Gospel of Mark. It is a time of transition and reconstruction. It is a time of fear and persecution, but it is also a time when the community is demonstrating that it is socially aware, open-ended, and certainly tending toward antiritualism, as viewed by Mark’s negative attitudes toward purity laws restricting food consumption and associations with non-Jews. They are in the midst of building a counterculture. (Selvidge 1990: 45-46)

Accordingly, the pericope of the haemorrhaging woman in Mk 5.24-34 is ‘a tradition centered in dissension . . . The miracle story of the hemorrhaging woman stands preserved because it stood as a definitive answer to the purity laws that historically had attempted to control women in their cultic and social expression

within the community' (p. 47). The point of the story is not to legitimize the person of Jesus, as traditional form critics maintained, but it is a message to the worshipping community: 'Mark 5.24-34 . . . served the needs of its communities by presenting a miracle story that freed women from restrictive cultic and social roles within society, and freed her to a new, demanding, creative, and healing role, within the worshipping communities' (p. 83).

Whereas, according to the interpretation of Selvidge, matters of purity and impurity dominated the episode, this conclusion was disputed by Fonrobert (1997) and D'Angelo (1999), who denied that these issues played a role in the story of Mark. Both Fonrobert and Kahl (1996) pointed to potential anti-Jewish rhetoric that could guide the reading of the story in terms of restrictive purity regulations, or, as Kahl put it, 'within the framework of an *Ekklesia-versus-Synagogue-dichotomy*' (1996: 61-78). According to Fonrobert, the haemorrhaging woman did not commit a transgression of biblical or Mishnaic law when she touched the garments of Jesus (p. 134). In a similar vein, Rosenblatt questioned the naturalness with which it is taken for granted that Mark's haemorrhaging woman was Jewish (2000: 137-61). She argued that if the woman were understood as Gentile, it would make much more sense to the mixed Markan community:

The ethnic ambiguity in the case of the haemorrhaging woman both represents and resolves tensions between gentile and Jewish Christians . . . Her alliance with a young Jewish girl, Jairus' daughter, represented a sisterhood among women, no matter what their identity. Their stories were intertwined because they represented the hope of a united community. (p. 161)

Cotter claimed the woman was not ashamed because she had violated Torah (there is no indication that she did), but that her shyness had to be understood in the context of the honour–shame culture of Graeco-Roman antiquity, in which it was inappropriate for a woman to show indiscretion and in which a woman's modesty was seen as a virtue (2001: 134). In her view, the Jewish traditions of Elijah and Elisha were of secondary importance, if at all. Rather, parallels from the Graeco-Roman antiquity of gods and (to a lesser extent) heroes raising the dead were far more significant analogies (pp. 60-72):

Jesus has power over life which for the ordinary person of Greco-Roman antiquity, would invite a comparison of Jesus' power with that of Heracles or Asclepius. Of these two deities, it would be Asclepius, the Helper and Healer of all humankind everywhere, who would surely be the most appropriate parallel. (p. 74)

The restrictive influence of Jewish purity regulations is also disputed by Levine, as far as the Gospel of Matthew is concerned (Levine 1996; Levine and Blickenstaff 2001a: 70-87). To diagnose the bleeding of the woman as having

something to do with ‘female troubles’ that ostracized her from Jewish society is not supported by the text itself. It is read into it, so she argues, by students of Christian origins who are obsessed with Levitical purity regulations: ‘It may well be that scholars worry more about such matters, particularly as they concern women, than did many Jewish women in the first century’ (Levine and Blickenstaff 2001a: 72). The woman’s disease may well have been caused by a sore on her leg or breast or nose, and if so, she would have been ill but not impure (p. 75). Nor is the Matthaean Jesus portrayed in this Gospel as someone who overcomes Jewish Law. Levine argues that

Matthew does not abrogate the laws of physical purity any more than the dietary regulations. The woman is healed of her sickness; the girl is raised from the dead. The point is that those who were sick and dead are now alive and healthy, not that Jewish practices have been transgressed or overcome. (p. 77)

The point of the entire episode is about discipleship, especially about Jesus as a model of discipleship and of good serving leadership (note that Jesus ‘follows’ the leader, Mt. 9.19!), a theme which runs through the Gospel of Matthew (pp. 84-87).

Haber (2003) took a middle position. She did not think that the point of the story of the haemorrhaging woman lies in a critique or abrogation of Jewish purity laws, but she did not deny that impurity at least implicitly is an issue. It is a story about the woman’s health rather than about her illness: ‘Her illness is explicit; her impurity implicit’ (p. 173). The point of the episode is a christological one, namely, the supernatural power of Jesus that succeeds when even physicians fail. This concurs with Mark’s rhetorical agenda, according to which faith in Jesus brings healing (pp. 186-89). In the end it is a story specifically addressed to women: ‘The hemorrhaging woman’s ailment is specific to women and has implications with respect to her ability to bear children’ (p. 191), and one that affirms Jesus’ ministry to women.

Further socio-critical (feminist and/or intercultural) interpretations of the episode can be found in Minor 1992; Dewey 1994: 122-31; Kinukawa 1994; Sibeko and Haddad 1997; Wainwright 2000, 2001; Dube 2001, and Frederiks 2003.

Psychoanalytical Criticism

Psychoanalytical criticism is particularly indebted to the work of Freud, Jung, and, in more recent times, to the work of Lacan and Kristeva. In biblical studies it is especially concerned with the analysis of the unconscious substructures of texts, authors, and readers (Drewermann 1987-89, 1992-95, 2009; Aichele 1995: 187-224; Zwiép 2013: 57-62, and the literature cited there).

According to Drewermann, a famous and outspoken representative of psychoanalytical interpretation, such questions as whether the two intertwined pericopes originally belonged together or not—with which so much of historical-critical

scholarship is concerned—and to what extent the typical elements in the story fit the rules of form criticism, are to miss the point of the episode. Such critical questions have only led to scepticism as to its historicity and to a reduction of the text to its theological proclamation about the messianic salvation brought by Jesus and accessible by faith and that the end-time resurrection of the dead had already been anticipated in the ministry of Jesus (1985: 278-79). Drewermann alternately argues that the meaning of the pericope can only be found when these historical-critical concerns are abandoned in favour of a psychoanalytical reading, with a focus on the present-day reader's personal drives and needs. The parallels between the two episodes indicate that the two stories must be read one in the light of the other and vice versa. The twofold mention of the 12 years is significant in that it reveals the crux of the story: in the case of the haemorrhaging woman the 12 years mark the period that it was impossible for her to live as a woman; in the case of Jairus' daughter the 12 years signal the point that she risked to lose her life altogether precisely at the time she would become a woman:

Such a consistently implemented parallelization . . . only makes sense if it is understood as an invitation and interpretative clue to understand the life of the haemorrhaging woman and the life of Jairus' daughter as internally belonging together, that is, psychologically speaking, one must understand the miracle of the haemorrhaging woman as a counterpart (*Pendant*) to the healing of Jairus' daughter and vice versa. Only together and in mutual complement do the two female figures illustrate the facets of one and the same problem: how to live as a woman in the company of men and find a certain level of health and happiness. (1985: 280)

On a more popular level, Grün and Robben (2001) approach the story (Mk 5.21-43) from the perspective of parent-child relationships after the manner of Drewermann (pp. 52-86). They focus on the three roles (coping strategies) identified by psychologist J. Onken that daughters may assume to solve conflicts with their father, namely, to please the father, to impress him by her achievements or to resist him (pp. 54-56). As a synagogue leader ('we would say, he was a minister or a religious teacher', p. 53), Jairus must have been constantly at risk to identify his professional and social roles with his role as a father in the family. He seems to think that he can treat his children the same way he treats his subordinates (p. 53). Perhaps the girl realized that she was overlooked by her father and escaped into one of these roles to attract his attention. When she fell ill and died, the father was incapable of offering help:

The father cannot be his daughter's therapist. Someone else must come and spread his protective hands over the daughter, so that she can breathe again and talk about herself in all freedom. If the father overrules the daughter she will never be cured. She will remain his infected child who cannot grow up. When the father tries to heal his

daughter, he does not realize that he himself is the problem. The daughter is not healed because she is too much tied to the father, in a positive and negative sense. Either she admires him so much that she cannot break away from him, or she is constantly devalued by him and ridiculed in her development as a woman. Either way, there is a bond that cannot be broken by the father by changing his behaviour or showing good intentions. A liberator [*Löser*] from outside is needed, who delivers her from the hand of the father. The fact that the father recognizes his impotence and entrusts his daughter to the hands and care of Jesus, is already the first step in the healing process. (p. 57)

The Dutch pastor Nico ter Linden also falls back on Drewermann's depth-psychological insights in a six-volume retelling of Bible stories entitled *Het verhaal gaat* (*The Story Goes*). For his interpretation of the Jairus story, see 1998: 2.64-68.

Further Developments

Building on poststructuralist and deconstructionist theories, in recent times more experimental approaches to the story have been undertaken, informed by empirical hermeneutics and readings 'from below' as a protest against white, male, Eurocentric readings of the texts. These readings emerge from the life experience of ordinary readers, especially the poor and marginalized, and deconstruct the narratives by exposing the binary oppositions and criticizing seemingly stable meanings. Examples can be found in West 1995: 60-69; Sibeko and Haddad 1997: 83-92 and many more. Postcolonial hermeneutics in particular has shed new light on how interpreters have dealt with the haemorrhaging woman in the light of HIV/AIDS in Africa (MacKenzie 2006; Lefa 2008).

Miscellaneous

On textual criticism see Rochais 1980: 39-53; O'Callaghan 1981; Monferrer Sala 2000; Omanson 2006. Unfortunately, the pericopes are absent from Strutwolf and Wachtel (2011). Partial manuscript evidence can be found in Swanson 1995a: 74-76; 1995b: 72-79; and 1995c: 150-55. On further translation issues see Omanson 1991; Hindley 1961; Horton 1986; Rüger 1984 (on Aramaisms); and Wilcox 1982. On intertextuality see Cummings 1980 (on Zech. 8.23); Beavis 2010 (on Judg. 11.34-40), and the references in the outer margins of NA-28.

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