

found both types of parables in his tradition: parables which had remained true parables, i.e., in which the story conveys one basic point which it is up to the hearers themselves to grasp, and parables which had already been converted into allegories. The evangelist has preserved both types of parables. The allegorized parables admirably suited the catechetical purpose of his gospel. The secret, allegorical explanations served the same function as the other secret instructions given to the disciples.<sup>63</sup>

Both types of parables have a punitive character (see Mark 4:11b-12). But God's judgment against his unbelieving people and its leaders is inflicted differently in each case. When Jesus' opponents hear his kerygmatic parables, their evil dispositions prevent them from acknowledging and responding to the truth which the parables contain. In the case of the didactic parables, God's judgment is executed by excluding all but the disciples from the allegorical interpretation which reveals the parables' true meaning.

This paper has been primarily concerned with this second category of parables, and it has been our contention that the parables contained in Mark 4 are of this didactic variety. Consequently, "the secret of the kingdom of God" (4:11) must be understood to refer to secret instruction confined to the circle of the disciples who, in the post-Easter period, will have the responsibility of instructing the community, even as Jesus had instructed them.

<sup>63</sup> Gnlika suggests (*Vorstellung*, 79) that the reason why Mark retained the allegorical interpretation which he found in his source was because it resembled the secret instructions to the disciples which play so important a part in his gospel. However, this insight does not lead him to admit a differentiated understanding of parables on the part of the evangelist.

QUALITATIVE ANARTHROUS PREDICATE NOUNS:  
MARK 15:39 AND JOHN 1:1

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THE purpose of this study is to examine the type of clause in which an anarthrous predicate noun precedes the copulative verb. Two examples of this word-order are especially important in NT interpretation. In Mark 15:39 the centurion standing before Jesus' cross says, ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. And John writes in his prologue, θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (1:1). These of course are not the only examples of this word-order in Mark or John, or elsewhere, but we shall focus on them and try to interpret them in relation to the stylistic characteristics that Mark and John exhibit throughout their gospels. This study will suggest that anarthrous predicate nouns preceding the verb may function primarily to express the nature or character of the subject, and this qualitative significance may be more important than the question whether the predicate noun itself should be regarded as definite or indefinite.

We may begin by referring to the two general principles concerning predicate nouns that are usually accepted as axiomatic in NT study. The first is that a predicate noun in Greek is anarthrous when it indicates the category or class of which the subject is a particular example. Thus when Mark, for instance, writes, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἦν Ἑλληνίς (7:26), he means that this particular woman was a Greek, although other women would also belong to this category. The second principle is that a predicate noun is arthrous when it is interchangeable with the subject in a given context. It may be identical with the subject, the only one of its kind, or something well-known or prominent. In the parable of the vineyard, for instance, Mark represents the tenants as saying to one another, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κληρονόμος (12:7). He means that in this context there is only one heir under consideration, and this man alone is that heir.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For these two principles cf. F. W. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (tr. and ed. R. W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) §252, 273; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923) 767-68; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953) 115-16; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Vol. III, Syntax* (by Nigel Turner; Edinburgh: Clark, 1963) 182-84. For a general summary of the use of the article with substantives, see Robert W. Funk, *The Syntax of the Greek Article: Its Importance for Critical Pauline Problems* (Nashville: Vanderbilt

These two principles seem to be valid criteria for interpreting a writer's meaning when a sentence follows the usual word-order — i.e., when the copulative verb precedes the predicate noun. But they may need to be refined further in those instances when the predicate noun precedes the verb. In an article some years ago E. C. Colwell examined this type of word-order and reached the tentative conclusion that "definite predicate nouns which precede the verb usually lack the article."<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this rule he regarded it as probable that the predicate nouns in both Mark 15:39 and John 1:1 should be interpreted as definite.<sup>3</sup> Colwell was almost entirely concerned with the question whether anarthrous predicate nouns were definite or indefinite, and he did not discuss at any length the problem of their qualitative significance.<sup>4</sup> This problem, however, needs to be examined as a distinct issue. We shall look at it as it appears first in Mark and then in John.

It is clear that Mark is familiar with the usual word-order in which the verb is followed by an anarthrous predicate noun, for he uses this sequence nineteen times.<sup>5</sup> According to the general rule we would expect these nouns to be indefinite, and in most instances we may judge that this is the case. These passages are of the type, "for they were fishermen" (1:16), or "whoever wishes to be first among you will be a slave of all" (10:44). In a few instances the nouns are not indefinite, but in these cases there is some reason why the nouns have a specific reference even though they are anarthrous.<sup>6</sup> The important point is that Mark uses quite frequently the word-order in which the verb precedes an anarthrous predicate noun.

In a similar way it is clear that Mark is familiar with the type of clause in

University Diss., 1953) 31-71, esp. pp. 43-44, 61-63. The two principles discussed above are also descriptive of classical Greek usage; see H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. G. M. Messing; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1959) §1150, 1152.

<sup>2</sup>E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 52 (1933) 12-21; the quotation is from p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Colwell, "A Definite Rule," 21.

<sup>4</sup>Colwell, "A Definite Rule," 17, and esp. n. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Mark 1:16, 17; 3:17; 6:34, 44; 7:11, 26; 9:35; 10:8, 43, 44; 12:25, 27, 37, 42; 13:19; 15:16, 22, 42. In some of these passages the subject precedes the verb, in some it follows the verb, and in some it is not expressed. These variations do not seem to affect the meaning of the predicate noun.

For this list and others throughout the study I have counted only clauses in which the verb is expressed and the predicate is a noun or an arthrous participle. I have excluded clauses in which the predicate is an adjective, anarthrous participle, adverb, prepositional phrase, proper noun, or relative clause. The text is E. Nestle, *Novum Testamentum graece* (rev. E. Nestle and K. Aland; 25th ed.; London: United Bible Societies, 1969).

<sup>6</sup>Thus in 6:44 and 10:8 the predicate noun is modified by a numeral. In 12:27 the predicate is *theos*, which, like *kyrios*, often comes close to being a personal name and as such may omit the article; cf. Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, §254, 260; Moulton-Turner, *Syntax*, pp. 165-66, 174. Note also the v. l. *ho* before *theos* in *McL. ad.* In 15:16, 22 the predicate noun occurs in a relative clause explaining the meaning of an arthrous noun, and Mark evidently thought it unnecessary to repeat the article.

which the verb is followed by an arthrous predicate noun or other substantive expression. He uses this sequence twenty times.<sup>7</sup> The general rule for predicate nouns would indicate that these predicates should be definite, and in every instance we may judge that this is the case. The force of the article is evident, and the predicate substantives all refer to some specific person or group, thing or idea. A number of times Mark uses this word-order in statements of a confessional type referring to Jesus, such as "you are the son of God" (3:11) and "you are the Christ" (8:29). The presence of the article with these predicate nouns indicates that Mark was thinking of only one son of God or only one Christ, so that the subject and the predicate were equivalent and interchangeable.

Our analysis so far suggests that Mark was a careful writer who always had some reason to leave out or insert the article in predicate expressions. When the verb preceded the predicate, he used an anarthrous predicate to indicate a general class and an arthrous predicate to state a convertible proposition. The fact that Mark uses these two types of construction so carefully makes it all the more important to ask why he occasionally uses the third type of clause, in which an anarthrous predicate precedes the verb.

Mark uses this type of clause eight times throughout his gospel.<sup>8</sup> Because of the importance of these passages we shall discuss each one briefly. In each case we shall ask not only whether the predicate noun is definite or indefinite, but also whether it has a qualitative force in indicating the nature or character of the subject.

In a debate concerning sabbath observance Mark reports Jesus as saying, *ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου* (2:28). Mark certainly does not mean that the Son of Man is "a lord" of the sabbath, one lord among others. Possibly he means that the Son of Man is "the lord" of the sabbath. But this translation would shift the emphasis of the whole passage dealing with sabbath observance (2:23-28). The question is not who the lord of the sabbath is, but what the nature or authority of the Son of Man is. Thus it appears more appropriate to say that the Son of Man is simply "lord" of the sabbath. The predicate noun has a distinct qualitative force, which is more prominent in this context than its definiteness or indefiniteness.

The second example occurs in the passage in which Jesus' mother and brothers are looking for him (Mark 3:31-35). When Jesus learns of this, he comments, *τίς ἐστιν ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί* (3:33). The predicate nouns are definite here, but the question implies that Jesus is using them in a figurative sense. Then

<sup>7</sup>Mark 1:11; 3:11, 33; 4:15, 16, 18 (*bis*), 20; 5:14; 6:3; 7:15; 8:29; 9:7, 10; 12:7; 13:11; 14:22, 24, 61; 15:2.

<sup>8</sup>Mark 2:28; 3:35; 6:49; 11:17, 32; 12:35; 14:70; 15:39. These clauses do not appear to have any common characteristics apart from the fact that an anarthrous predicate precedes the verb. Four of them are substantive clauses introduced by *ὅτι*; but so are 3:11 and 12:7, which have the verb preceding an arthrous predicate. The *ὅτι* clause, that is, does not require that the predicate precede the verb.

at the close of the passage he says that whoever does the will of God, *εἷς ἐστιν ἀδελφός σου καὶ ἀδελφὴ καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν* (3:35). Here it is especially clear that Jesus is using the words brother, sister, and mother in a figurative sense. Colwell's rule would require that we interpret these nouns as definite, especially since they have just been used with the article in vs. 33. But the development of thought in this passage, from literal to figurative meanings, suggests that the emphasis at this joint lies on the nature or character of the person who does the will of God. Such a person shows what it means to be "brother" of Jesus. Again the question of definiteness or indefiniteness appears to be less important than the qualitative significance of the noun.

The third example occurs in the account of Jesus' walking on the water (Mark 6:45-52). When the disciples see Jesus, they think *ὅτι φάντασμα ἐστίν* (6:49). Mark's meaning here probably is that they think Jesus is "a ghost" or an apparition of some kind. There is no basis in the context, at any rate, for regarding the noun as definite. The qualitative significance appears to be secondary in this clause, since it is concerned with the identification of a figure who is dimly perceived by the disciples rather than some attribute or quality of Jesus himself.

The next example is more complicated because it is a quotation from the LXX. After Jesus had expelled the money changers from the temple, Mark reports that he said, "Is it not written that *ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν;*" (11:17). These words are an accurate quotation from the LXX of Isa 6:7.<sup>9</sup> The LXX in turn translates the Hebrew text accurately and even follows its word-order. The predicate expression "house of prayer" is indeterminate in Hebrew.<sup>10</sup> The fact that it precedes the verb in Greek may be due only to slavish imitation of word-order on the part of the LXX translators. The only inference we can make with any degree of certainty is that the LXX translators did not feel they were making the predicate definite by placing it before the verb. Although we cannot be certain, it is likely that Mark understood the predicate in the same way. His meaning, that is, seems to be that the Jerusalem temple should have the function or nature of being a house of prayer for all the nations.

The next example illustrates the difficulty of deciding whether a predicate noun is simply indefinite or is used primarily in a qualitative sense. In the course of a discussion about Jesus' authority Mark adds an explanatory note about the people's attitude toward John the Baptist: *ἅπαντες γὰρ εἶχον τὸν Ἰωάννην ὅπως ὅτι προφήτης ἦν* (11:32). The predicate here may be regarded as indefinite in the sense that the people regarded John as a prophet. But it also has a qualitative force, since the context indicates that this view of John as "prophet" made the Jewish leaders reluctant to speak disparagingly of the baptism that he administered. There is no basis for regarding the predicate as definite, for the passage does not deal with any particular figure who is to be identified as "the prophet"

In the next example the predicate noun could be interpreted as definite, indefinite, or qualitative, depending on the particular meaning or emphasis which we understand the passage to have. Jesus raises the question how the scribes can say *ὅτι ὁ χριστὸς υἱὸς Δαυὶδ ἐστίν* (12:35). The predicate would be definite if it signified "the son of David" as some well-known figure of Jewish expectation. It would be indefinite if it simply meant someone descended from David. It would be qualitative if it emphasized Davidic descent as an aspect or condition of messiahship. The first or the second possibility, of course, does not preclude the third. The primary emphasis of the passage as a whole (12:35-37) seems to lie in the question of Davidic descent. The passage gives no further clues, on the other hand, whether Mark was thinking of "the" son or "a" son of David.<sup>11</sup> Again the qualitative force of the predicate noun seems to be more prominent than its definiteness or indefiniteness.

Mark's seventh example of an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb occurs in the account of Peter's denial of Jesus. The bystanders outside the courtyard of the high priest say to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; *καὶ γὰρ Γαλιλαῖος εἶ*" (14:70). It is uncertain here whether we should regard the predicate "Galilean" as a noun or an adjective. If it is the latter, it would fall outside the scope of the present study. The RSV regards it as a noun, giving the translation "for you are a Galilean." In any event the word has some qualitative force in this context because it suggests that Peter, being from Galilee, must be one of Jesus' disciples. There is no basis, we should note, for regarding the predicate as a definite noun.

In the light of our discussion so far we turn again to Mark 15:39, in which the centurion standing before Jesus' cross says *ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν*. Although the exact meaning of the passage still remains uncertain, we may raise some questions and make several observations about it on the basis of Mark's syntactical usage throughout his gospel.

(1) We may ask whether Mark wanted to represent the centurion as saying, "Truly this man was a son of God." If this was Mark's meaning, then possibly he was influenced at this point by the hellenistic and Roman practice of deifying a great leader or wise man of the past.<sup>12</sup> The fact that these words appear as the statement of a Roman soldier could give some support to this interpretation. Mark, then, would be intentionally drawing upon hellenistic forms of thought at this point as an appropriate way of presenting Jesus to Gentile-Christian readers.

In terms of our present study the chief objection to this interpretation is that Mark could have expressed this idea differently. If he meant that Jesus was "a son of God," he could have said so unambiguously by placing the verb before

<sup>9</sup> Mark's other references to "son of David" are equally ambiguous in this respect (10:47, 48). Matthew alone of the gospel writers speaks explicitly of "the" son of David (12:23; 21:9, 15).

<sup>12</sup> For a recent discussion of H. C. Kee, *Jesus in History: An Approach to the Study of the Gospels* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1970) 134. Kee recognizes some Gentile background at this point in Mark, although he believes that Mark's primary purpose was to present Jesus as the bringer of eschatological salvation.

<sup>9</sup> Only *gar* is omitted, the second word in the clause in the LXX.

<sup>10</sup> The word "house" necessarily lacks the article because it is in the construct state. But the whole expression is indeterminate because the word "prayer" also lacks the article.

the anarthrous predicate noun. He could have used, that is, a word-order that he uses nineteen times elsewhere in his gospel. The word-order that he chooses to use in 15:39, with the anarthrous predicate before the verb, does not preclude the possibility that the noun is indefinite. But our examination of this type of word-order in Mark has shown that in most instances the question of definiteness or indefiniteness is secondary to the qualitative significance of the predicate. If Mark wanted to say that Jesus was a son of God, one divine being among others, it is puzzling that he did not simply put the verb before the predicate noun.

(2) The question then arises whether Mark wanted to represent the centurion as saying, "Truly this man was the son of God." In this sense Mark would be making a statement of Christian faith about the unique relationship of Jesus to God the Father. Possibly he intended this statement to be a parallel to the opening words of his gospel, which designated Jesus, according to some ancient manuscripts, as the son of God (1:1).<sup>23</sup> Possibly he intended it as an affirmation of what the high priest had regarded as blasphemous (14:61).<sup>24</sup> Possibly he was referring, as in 1:11 and 9:7, to the phrase "you are my son" in Ps 2:7 and applying it to Jesus as the eschatological king who inaugurates the era of salvation. In any event, in 15:39 Mark would be emphasizing especially that Jesus, as the son of God, brings salvation to Gentiles as well as Jews.

In terms of Mark's syntactical usage, however, there are two problems with his interpretation of the verse. The first is that he could have used a different word-order to state unambiguously that Jesus was "the son of God." He could have placed the verb before an arthrous predicate to make his meaning completely clear. As we have seen, he uses this type of word-order twenty times elsewhere in his gospel. In particular, he uses it with "my son" in 1:11 and 9:7 and with "the son of God" in 3:11. It would have been natural for Mark to use this word-order again in 15:39 if he had wanted to state a convertible proposition defining Jesus as the son of God. The fact that he did not use this word-order in 15:39 suggests that he had another intention at this point.

The second problem with the translation "the son of God" in 15:39 is that the word-order of this verse emphasizes the qualitative significance of the predicate rather than its definiteness or indefiniteness. This does not actually preclude the possibility that Mark regarded the predicate as definite at this point. In this sense we must keep this translation in mind as one of the possible aspects of the meaning of the verse. But the word-order suggests that Mark was primarily concerned to say something about the meaning of Jesus' sonship rather than simply to designate or define him as the son of God at this point.

As we have seen, there are seven other verses in which Mark uses this word-order, with an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb. In most of these passages the predicate serves primarily to express the nature or character of the subject. In

<sup>23</sup> This is the reading of B and D, as well as the Krine recension.

<sup>24</sup> So E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Meyer 1/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1939) 347.

three of the passages there is no basis whatever for regarding the predicate as definite (6:49; 11:32; 14:70). In the remaining passages the predicate could be definite, but there is no specific reason for regarding it as definite (2:28; 3:35; 11:17; 12:35). Mark's usage, that is, gives little if any support to the idea that an anarthrous predicate noun preceding the verb is necessarily definite.

We should notice that it is not a question at this point whether Mark actually regarded Jesus as "the son of God." It is clear from other passages that he did (1:11; 9:7; 3:11). The problem is to understand what Mark means in 15:39. The translation "the son of God" is somewhat misleading in the sense that it emphasizes the definiteness of the predicate noun. The word-order that Mark uses in 15:39, in contrast, calls attention to the qualitative significance of the predicate rather than its definiteness or indefiniteness.

(3) The question remains what Mark sought to express in 15:39. The word-order of the verse suggests that he was primarily concerned to say something about the meaning of Jesus' sonship rather than designate him as "a" son or "the" son of God at this point. In this sense it is significant that Mark represents the centurion as saying these words at the moment of Jesus' death. Mark may wish to emphasize, that is, that Jesus' sonship to God involves suffering and death. It underwent these experiences, expressed itself through them, and revealed itself to men in this way. Thus the centurion is the first human being whom Mark represents as perceiving and affirming Jesus' sonship. It is only at this point, Mark is suggesting, that men can understand the nature and meaning of this kind of sonship.

If this understanding of the verse is correct, it has two implications concerning Mark's purpose in writing and the audience that he was addressing. In a general sense it indicates that he was concerned to present an *apologia crucis*, an explanation why Jesus suffered and died on the cross. The nature of Jesus' sonship, Mark suggests, was such that it involved suffering and death and can be perceived by men only in this context. More specifically, this understanding of the verse supports the view that Mark was writing to a church facing persecution, reminding his readers that suffering and even death were a part of Jesus' own role as God's son.

It is doubtful whether any English translation can adequately represent the qualitative emphasis that Mark expresses in 15:39 by placing an anarthrous predicate before the verb. Perhaps the verse could best be translated, "Truly this man was God's son." This has the advantage of calling attention to Jesus' role or nature as son of God. It minimizes the question whether the word "son" should be understood as indefinite or definite. At the same time it leaves open the possibility that Mark was thinking of Jesus at this point as "a" son of God in the hellenistic sense, or "the" son of God in a specifically Christian sense, or possibly both.<sup>25</sup> In all of these ways the translation "God's son" would reflect the various shades of meaning that may be present in Mark's word-order.

<sup>25</sup> Some commentators resolve this ambiguity of the phrase by suggesting that it means

We may turn now to the Fourth Gospel and look at John's use of predicate nouns, with special attention to anarthrous predicates preceding the verb. John has nearly three times as many predicate expressions as Mark, although his gospel is only about one-fourth longer. In particular, he has 53 anarthrous predicates before the verb, in contrast to Mark's eight. For this reason we must limit our discussion to representative examples of John's usage.

It is clear that John, like Mark, is familiar with the type of clause in which the verb precedes an anarthrous predicate. He uses this construction eighteen times.<sup>16</sup> According to the general rule we would expect these predicates to be indefinite, and in most instances we may judge that this is the case.<sup>17</sup> In a similar way it is clear that John is familiar with the type of clause in which the verb precedes an anarthrous predicate. He uses this construction 66 times.<sup>18</sup> As in Mark, the force of the article is evident, and we may regard all of these predicate expressions as definite. John's usage, that is, is consistent with the two general principles for interpreting predicate nouns when they follow the verb.

John has 53 examples of an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb.<sup>19</sup> In analyzing these expressions we are most interested in asking whether the qualita-

Mark; see Lohmeyer, *Markus*, 347; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (2d ed.; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966) 597; F. C. Grant, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (J.B. 7; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1951) 908-9. For an argument in favor of the translation "the Son of God," see R. G. Bratcher, "A Note on  $\alpha\theta\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\theta$  (Mark vi. 39)," *ExpT* 68 (1963-57) 27-28. Bratcher supports this translation partly by referring to Colwell's principle, which he accepts without raising the question of the qualitative meaning of this type of clause. He also argues that this translation alone correctly represents Mark's intention, especially in the passion narrative.

The objection has been raised that with the 1 sg. *εἰμι* and the 2 sg. *εἶ*, a definite predicate noun precedes the verb and loses the article unless the subject pronoun is expressed; and that the same transformation is obligatory with the imperfect, with or without the subject expressed. But the Greek NT also has a number of examples of such clauses in which the anarthrous predicate is indefinite. The anarthrous predicate preceding *εἰμι* (without *εἶ*) is indefinite in Luke 5:8; Rom 1:14; Rev 18:7; 19:10; 22:9; perhaps also in John 18:37. The anarthrous predicate preceding *εἶ* (without *συ*) is indefinite in Matt 16:23; Mark 14:70; Luke 19:21. Similarly, the anarthrous predicate preceding an imperfect form of *εἰμι* is indefinite in Matt 25:35, 43; Mark 11:32; John 8:44; 9:8; 12:6; Rom 6:20; 1 Cor 12:2; Gal 1:10; Jas 5:17. Thus a clause such as *ἄνθρωπος ἦν ἡμῶν θεοῦ ἐν* could be a transform of *ἄνθρωπος ἐν ἡμῶν θεοῦ* as well as *ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἡμῶν τῶν θεοῦ*. The question of definiteness and qualitative significance must be decided in each individual case when an anarthrous predicate precedes the verb.

<sup>16</sup> John 1:41; 4:14, 18, 25; 6:55 (*ὅτι*); 8:55; 9:28; 10:12; 11:38; 15:8; 18:13 (*ὅτι*), 15, 38, 40; 19:12, 38.

<sup>17</sup> The only exceptions appear to be *πενθηρον* and *αρχιερον* in 18:13, which refer to specific individuals without necessarily taking the article.

<sup>18</sup> John 1:4, 8, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, 49; 3:10, 19, 28; 4:10, 29, 37, 42; 5:12, 15, 32, 35, 39, 45; 6:14, 29, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41, 48, 50, 51, 58, 63, 64 (*ὅτι*), 69; 7:26, 36, 40, 41; 8:12, 16, 54; 9:8, 19, 20; 10:7, 9, 11, 14, 24; 11:2, 25, 27; 12:34; 14:6, 21; 15:1, 5, 12; 17:3; 18:14, 33; 20:31; 21:12, 24.

<sup>19</sup> John 1:1, 12, 14, 49; 2:9; 3:4, 6 (*ὅτι*); 29; 4:9, 19; 5:27; 6:63, 70; 7:12; 8:31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 42, 44 (*ὅτι*), 48, 54; 9:5, 8, 17, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31; 10:1, 2, 8, 13, 33, 34, 36;

tive aspect is prominent and whether the predicates are definite. Some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable in dealing with these questions, and the interpretation of some examples is uncertain. But I would judge that in 40 of these cases the qualitative force of the predicate is more prominent than its definiteness or indefiniteness.<sup>20</sup> In 26 of the 53, the predicate is clearly not definite, and in 11 it could be definite but there is no clear indication that it is.<sup>21</sup> We may look at several examples from John that illustrate these data.

In 1:14, for example, John writes  $\delta\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ . He means that the Word took on the nature of flesh, and he can hardly be thinking of any specific substance that we would translate as "the" flesh. The qualitative force of the predicate is most prominent, and in this instance it could not be translated as either definite or indefinite. In 8:31 John writes that Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, "If you abide in my word,  $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\alpha\iota\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon$ ." By doing this, that is, the Jews truly assume the character or function of being his disciples. But these Jews are not his only disciples, and thus the predicate cannot be definite. In 9:24 John writes that some Jews said of Jesus, "We know that  $\sigma\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\ \alpha\tilde{\nu}\theta\omega\pi\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\omega\lambda\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$ ." Again the qualitative aspect of the predicate is most prominent; they think that Jesus has the nature or character of one who is "sinner." There is no basis for regarding the predicate as definite, although in this instance we would probably use the indefinite article in English translation.

These illustrations suggest that John uses this type of syntactical construction in essentially the same way as Mark. In interpreting them, that is, we have reason to look for some qualitative significance in the predicate noun, and we cannot assume that the predicate is necessarily definite. These principles will be important when we examine the meaning of John 1:1. First, however, we must look at two other verses in John that pose special problems in interpretation.

In 1:49 John writes that Nathanael said to Jesus,  $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \text{Ἰσραὴλ}$ . With this we may compare the statement that Nathanael has just made in the same verse:  $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\ \epsilon\iota\ \delta\ \omega\delta\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ . And in 9:5 John represents Jesus as saying,  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\mu\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ . With this we may compare his statement in 8:12:  $\epsilon\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \epsilon\iota\mu\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ . In 1:49 and 9:5, that is, we find an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb. But in each case we find a similar or parallel statement that has the

11:49, 51; 12:6, 36, 50; 13:35; 15:14; 17:17; 18:26, 35, 37 (*ὅτι*); 19:21. One of these, 10:34, is a quotation from the LXX. John also has two examples of the type of clause in which an anarthrous predicate precedes the verb: 6:51, 15:1. The fact that John sometimes uses this type of clause supports the view that he did not necessarily regard an anarthrous predicate as definite simply because it precedes the verb.

<sup>20</sup> John 1:12, 14; 2:9; 3:4, 6 (*ὅτι*); 29; 4:9; 6:63, 70; 7:12; 8:31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 42, 44 (*ὅτι*), 48; 9:17, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31; 10:1, 2, 8, 13, 33, 34, 36; 12:6, 36, 50; 13:35; 15:14; 17:17; 18:35.

<sup>21</sup> I would judge that the predicate could not be definite in John 1:14; 2:9; 3:4, 6 (*ὅτι*); 4:9; 6:63; 7:12; 8:31, 44 (*ὅτι*), 48; 9:8, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31; 10:1, 8, 33, 34; 12:6, 36; 18:26, 35. In other cases the predicate could be definite, but there is no clear indication of definiteness: John 1:12; 6:70; 8:33, 34, 37, 39; 9:17; 12:50; 13:35; 15:14; 17:17.

verb preceding an anarthrous predicate, which is clearly definite. Do these parallels mean that the anarthrous predicates in 1:49 and 9:5 must also be regarded as definite?

In his study of this type of construction Colwell argued that the anarthrous predicates in these two verses should be regarded as definite.<sup>22</sup> The parallels are indeed persuasive, and it is quite possible that Colwell is right at this point. An anarthrous predicate preceding the verb, that is, may be definite if there is some specific reason for regarding it as definite. But the present study would indicate that the nouns in these two verses are exceptional cases. The majority of such predicates in the Fourth Gospel are like 1:14; 8:31, and 9:24, which were discussed above. There is no basis for regarding such predicates as definite, and it would be incorrect to translate them as definite.<sup>23</sup>

In light of this examination of John's usage we may turn to the verse in which we are especially interested, 1:1. Our study so far suggests that the anarthrous predicate in this verse has primarily a qualitative significance and that it would be definite only if there is some specific indication of definiteness in the meaning or context. As an aid in understanding the verse it will be helpful to ask what John might have written as well as what he did write. In terms of the types of word-order and vocabulary available to him, it would appear that John could have written any of the following:

- A. ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός
- B. θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
- C. ὁ λόγος θεὸς ἦν
- D. ὁ λόγος ἦν θεός
- E. ὁ λόγος ἦν θεός<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Colwell, "A Definite Rule," 13-14.

<sup>23</sup> Variant readings for predicate expressions in John represent four types of modification: (1) inversion of the anarthrous predicate—verb sequence, with addition of the article (1:49; 10:2); (2) addition of the article to an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb (8:54; 10:36; 17:17); (3) inversion of the anarthrous predicate—verb sequence, without addition of the article (13:35); (4) inversion of the verb—anarthrous predicate sequence (18:15). The first two types of modification make the predicate noun unambiguously definite. Colwell discussed only the first type, with reference to John 1:49; Matt 23:10; and Jas 2:19. These indicated, he believed, that "the scribes felt that a definite predicate *must* did not need the article before the verb and did need it after the verb" ("A Definite Rule," 16). But the first two types of modification listed above could also mean that the scribes believed that the definiteness of an anarthrous predicate was not sufficiently explicit before the verb, and so they modified the clause to make the noun unambiguously definite.

<sup>24</sup> The word *theios* appears only a few times in the NT: Acts 17:27 (v. 1), 29; Tit 1:9 v. 1; 2 Pet 1:3, 4. It is not used in the Fourth Gospel. But presumably John could have used it, or some other word meaning "divine," if he had wished to do so.

Clause A, with an anarthrous predicate, would mean that *logos* and *theos* are equivalent and interchangeable. There would be no *ho theos* which is not also *ho logos*. But this equation of the two would contradict the preceding clause of 1:1, in which John writes that ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν. This clause suggests relationship, and thus some form of "personal" differentiation, between the two.

Clause D, with the verb preceding an anarthrous predicate, would probably mean that the *logos* was "a god" or a divine being of some kind, belonging to the general category of *theos* but as a distinct being from *ho theos*. Clause E would be an attenuated form of D. It would mean that the *logos* was "divine," without specifying further in what way or to what extent it was divine. It could also imply that the *logos*, being only *theios*, was subordinate to *theos*.

John evidently wished to say something about the *logos* that was other than A and more than D and E. Clauses B and C, with an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb, are primarily qualitative in meaning. They indicate that the *logos* has the nature of *theos*. There is no basis for regarding the predicate *theos* as definite. This would make B and C equivalent to A, and like A they would then contradict the preceding clause of 1:1.

As John has just spoken in terms of relationship and differentiation between *ho logos* and *ho theos*, he would imply in B or C that they share the same nature as belonging to the reality *theos*. Clauses B and C are identical in meaning but differ slightly in emphasis. C would mean that the *logos* (rather than something else) had the nature of *theos*. B means that the *logos* has the nature of *theos* (rather than something else). In this clause, the form that John actually uses, the word *theos* is placed at the beginning for emphasis.

Commentators on the Fourth Gospel, as far as I know, have not specifically approached the meaning of this clause from the standpoint of the qualitative force of *theos* as an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb. In many cases their interpretations agree with the explanation that is given above. But consideration of the qualitative meaning of *theos* would lend further clarification and support to their understanding of the clause. J. H. Bernard, for example, points out that Codex L reads *ho theos* instead of *theos*. "But this," he continues, "would identify the Logos with the totality of divine existence, and would contradict the preceding clause."<sup>25</sup> In a similar way W. F. Howard writes that *theos* and *ho logos* are not interchangeable. Otherwise, he continues, "the writer could not say 'the Word was with God.'"<sup>26</sup> Both writers, in effect, are arguing that the predicate *theos* cannot be regarded as definite in this clause. In terms of our analysis above this would mean that clause B should not be assimilated to clause A.

Bruce Vawter explains the meaning of the clause succinctly and lucidly: "The

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Scribner, 1929) 1, 2.

<sup>26</sup> W. F. Howard, *The Gospel according to St. John* (18; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952) 464.

Word is divine, but he is not all of divinity, for he has already been distinguished from another divine Person.<sup>27</sup> But in terms of our analysis it is important that we understand the phrase "the Word is divine" as an attempt to represent the meaning of clause B rather than D or E. Undoubtedly Vawter means that the Word is "divine" in the same sense that *ho theos* is divine. But the English language is not as versatile at this point as Greek, and we can avoid misunderstanding the English phrase only if we are aware of the particular force of the Greek expression that it represents.

In his discussion of this clause R. E. Brown regards the translation "the Word was God" as correct "for a modern Christian reader whose trinitarian background has accustomed him to thinking of 'God' as a larger concept than 'God the Father.'"<sup>28</sup> Yet he also finds it significant that *theos* is anarthrous. Later he adds, "In vs. 1c the Johannine hymn is bordering on the usage of 'God' for the Son, but by omitting the article it avoids any suggestion of personal identification of the Word with the Father. And for Gentile readers the line also avoids any suggestion that the Word was a second God in any Hellenistic sense."<sup>29</sup> In terms of our analysis above, Brown is arguing in effect that clause B should be differentiated from A, on the one hand, and D and E on the other.<sup>30</sup>

Rudolf Bultmann's explanation of the clause also reflects an appreciation of the qualitative force of *theos* without specifically recognizing it as such. The clause means first, he suggests, that the Logos is equated (*gleichgesetzt*) with God; "er war Gott."<sup>31</sup> Bultmann means by this that we must not think in terms of two divine beings, in a polytheistic or gnostic sense.<sup>32</sup> Thus he guards against assimilating clause B to D or E. But he explains further that this equation between the two is not a simple identification (*einfache Identifikation*), because the Logos was *pros ton theon*.<sup>33</sup> In this way he guards against assimilating B to clause A. Bultmann's interpretive instinct at this point is unquestionably sound. In terms of the analysis that we have proposed, a recognition of the qualitative significance of *theos* would remove some ambiguity in his interpretation by differ-

<sup>27</sup> B. Vawter, *The Gospel according to John* (JBC; Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968) 422.

<sup>28</sup> R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John, I-XII* (AB 29; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) 5.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, *John, I-XII*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Brown (*John, I-XII*, 25) also mentions the view of De Ausajo that throughout the prologue the term "Word" means Jesus Christ, the Word-become-flesh. "If this is so," he comments, "then perhaps there is justification for seeing in the use of the anarthrous *theos* something more humble than the use of *ho theos* for the Father." But if *theos* is qualitative in force, it is not contrasted directly with *ho theos*. John evidently wished to say that the Logos was no less than *theos*, just as *ho theos* (by implication) had the nature of *theos*.

<sup>31</sup> R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Meyer 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968) 16.

<sup>32</sup> Bultmann, *Johannes*, 16-17.

<sup>33</sup> Bultmann, *Johannes*, 17.

entiating between *theos*, as the nature that the Logos shared with God, and *ho theos* as the "person" to whom the Logos stood in relation. Only when this distinction is clear can we say of the Logos that "he was God."

These examples illustrate the difficulty of translating the clause accurately into English. The RSV and *The Jerusalem Bible* translate, "the Word was God." *The New English Bible* has, "what God was, the Word was." *Good News for Modern Man* has, "he was the same as God." The problem with all of these translations is that they could represent clause A, in our analysis above, as well as B. This does not mean, of course, that the translators were not aware of the issues involved, nor does it necessarily mean that they regarded the anarthrous *theos* as definite because it precedes the verb. But in all of these cases the English reader might not understand exactly what John was trying to express. Perhaps the clause could be translated, "the Word had the same nature as God." This would be one way of representing John's thought, which is, as I understand it, that *ho logos*, no less than *ho theos*, had the nature of *theos*.

At a number of points in this study we have seen that anarthrous predicate nouns preceding the verb may be primarily qualitative in force yet may also have some connotation of definiteness. The categories of qualitiveness and definiteness, that is, are not mutually exclusive, and frequently it is a delicate exegetical issue for the interpreter to decide which emphasis a Greek writer had in mind. As Colwell called attention to the possibility that such nouns may be definite, the present study has focused on their qualitative force. In Mark 15:39 I would regard the qualitative emphasis as primary, although there may also be some connotation of definiteness. In John 1:1 I think that the qualitative force of the predicate is so prominent that the noun cannot be regarded as definite.

In interpreting clauses of this type it is important to recall that Greek writers also had other types of word-order available. If a writer simply wished to represent the subject as one of a class, he could use an anarthrous predicate noun after the verb. If he wished to emphasize that the predicate noun was definite, he could supply the article. The availability of these other types of word-order strengthens the view that in many instances we may look primarily for a qualitative emphasis in anarthrous predicate nouns that precede the verb.