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WEEPING WITH THE LAND: AN ECOLOGICAL-CULTURAL (SAMOAN) READING OF HOSEA 4:1 – 3

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by

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the thesis is reflected in its title: *Weeping with the Land: An Ecological-Cultural (Samoan) Reading of Hosea 4: 1 – 3.*

Most Samoans I have talked to, tend to presume that the "Land Mourns" in Hosea 4:1-3 have nothing to do with "weeping with the land" in our Samoan proverbial saying, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*. In other words, the religious world of the Bible is incompatible with the Samoan culture and customs. However, the object of this paper is to demonstrate that, although there are many differences, there is also a lot in common in terms of culture and ecology.

The focus of this paper is to identify any similarities or parallelism, in terms of ecological and cultural implications, in the "Land Mourns" narrative found in Hosea 4:1-3 with the weeping of the land from the Samoan context. The main purpose of such an exercise is to see how a proverb and the biblical text might be linked to a common understanding of cultures and ecology here in Samoa and the biblical world.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment materials that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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"MALO LE TAPUAI FAAFETAI TATALO"

List of Abbreviations

Ed.	Editor
Eds.	Editors
JOTS	Journals for Old Testament Study
JTS	Journals for Theological Study
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Vol.	Volume

Introduction

The title of this thesis **"Weeping with the Land: An Ecological-Cultural (Samoan) Reading of Hosea 4: 1 – 3"** indicates my intentions for this project. That is, reading the "Land Mourns" narratives in Hosea 4:1-3 with prejudiced eyes and preconceived ideas in mind. This would be the greatest sin for any exegete and critic of the Bible because the idea behind any biblical analysis is exegesis, letting the text speak to us, rather than eisegesis, reading meaning into the text. Therefore, the title is a catch-phrase intended not only to capture the reader's attention but also to present the thesis this study seeks to show. This study attempts to confirm whether the weeping with the land in the Samoan proverb, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"* parallels the land mourns in Hosea 4:1-3.

All readers and interpreters come from different backgrounds and it is difficult to remove oneself from one's background, history, culture, and gender to an entirely different system of attitudes, beliefs and ways of thinking. As a result, these differences in opinions and backgrounds create a set of prejudices and biases which moulds a reader's hermeneutical reflection when engaging a text. Hans-Georg Gadamer refers to this engagement as a 'fusion of horizon' whereby the reader finds a way to articulate the text with his/her own background.[1] As suggested by Werner Jeanrond, it would be promising to combine Gadamer's hermeneutical concept with other critical theories.[2]

In saying so, my reference to the fusion of horizons in this paper follows the fusing of the ecological and cross-cultural approaches into an ecological-cultural

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[1] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 271-273.

[2] Werner Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1994), 69.

reading approach. This involves interpreting the text from the ecological and cross-cultural perspective using the Samoan proverb, *ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*, as a lens of reading. The aim of this encounter is to identify any similarities or parallelism in terms of ecological and cultural implications of the land mourns found in Hosea 4:1-3 with the weeping of the land from the Samoan context.

Chapter one outlines the development of the method of interpretation for this study: the so-called ecological-cultural (Samoan) reading. An ecological-cultural reading is the fusion of ecological reading and cross-cultural reading. This reading as used in this study is a two strand methodology aiming at unravelling the *ecological content* and the *cultural context* of the text. Developing and defining the chosen methodology is a crucial step, since the methodology dictates the remaining part of the study.

In Chapter two, a critical survey of the Samoan myths and legends from which stems the Samoan proverbial saying *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*. This analysis is vital, because this is where my intended perspective for reading the selected text will be defined and constructed.

In Chapter three, a survey of the selected literature regarding the interpretation of Hosea 4:1-3 is given. The review will identify the methodologies and the perspective of reading employed by the selected commentators to read the studied text. This survey will enable us to trace the development of interpretation concerning Hosea 4:1-3.

Finally, chapter four synthesises the results of the Samoan reading of the legendary stories that formulated the proverb, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*, and biblical reading of the land mourns in Hosea 4:1-3. In here, I will put an ecological-cultural (Samoan) interpretation of Hosea 4:1-3 with the existing interpretations of

biblical scholars. Doing so, I hope, will highlight the Samoan ecological reading of the studied text.

The conclusion is a brief critical analysis of wrestling with an ecological-cultural (Samoan) reading methodology and a brief restatement of Hosea 4:1-3 from the designed methodology.

Chapter 1

The Development of an Ecological-Cultural (Samoan) Reading

This chapter is an attempt to establish and define the reading strategy that will be employed to read Hosea 4:1-3. The methodology is a hybrid, integrating elements from the ecological and the cross-cultural methodological perspectives to formulate what this paper calls an ecological-cultural (Samoan) reading methodology. In doing so, this chapter will firstly attempt to provide a brief background of the development of the ecological theory and how it was introduced into the reading and interpretation of biblical texts. Secondly, it will trace the development of cross-cultural theory and how it was employed in reading biblical texts. And lastly, an attempt will be made to fuse together the two reading methodologies into one reading strategy for the purpose stated above. One may claim that there is no real need of trying to fuse the two reading methodologies together, since cross-cultural method to a certain extent can also involve ecological methodologies. In many ways, the two are already fused. However, there is still an obligation here to do so because careful fusion is required, in case the cultural side of things is overemphasised thus producing an excessively anthropocentric reading which in large is detested by ecological readers.

1.1 The Development of Ecological Theory

The term ecology appears to have first been used in the middle of the 19th century. It has been translated from two Greek words *oikos*, refers to house or place and *logos* refers to as the word or basically it means to say, to gather or to count. The term

ecology was originally used by a German biologist Ernst Haeckel[3] in 1869 to label "the scientific relations of animal to both its organic and inorganic environment."[4] However, the term can be simplified as "understanding ourselves and our environment as part of nature."[5] In other words, ecology is seeing us and the environment as collaborative and interdependent parts of a bigger whole.

Unfortunately, this relationship between humans and the environment has been tarnished by the natural forces that contribute to the ecological crisis. This includes natural disasters that have been deadly and frequent because of climate change. These disasters take their toll throughout the world almost daily as human beings and their actions are blamed for such depleted developments in our ecosystem. Lynn White[6] for example specifically points the finger to Jewish and Christian religions for the ecological crisis. White accused Judeo-Christian beliefs for their misinterpretation of the Creation story in Genesis 1 – 2. For him, Judaism and Christianity fostered the view that humans are superior to the rest of creation. This superiority gave humans the power to have dominion over the created world. He believed that this idea of superiority and domination gave humans too much priority to their own interest and thus led to the overexploitation of the rest of creation.[7] There is much merit in White's claim but blaming the ecological problem solely on Jews and Christians could be superficial.

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[3] Ernst Haeckel, *The Evolution of Man*, (France: Webster French Press, 1874), 17. He was an eminent German biologist, naturalist, philosopher, physician, professor and artist who discovered, described and named thousands of new species, mapped a genealogical tree relating all life forms, coined many terms in biology including ecology.

[4] Haeckel, (1874), 17.

[5] Steve Bishop, Green Theology and Deep Ecology: New Age or New Creation, Website: www.theologicalstudies.org.uk. Access (10 April 2010, 3.30pm).

[6] Lynn White accused Christians as the cause of ecological crisis. He believed that Christians misinterpreted Genesis 1, where man gave name to each animal, this highlighted that man had dominion over animals and other members of the creation. *See* Lynn White, "The Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" Science 155 (1967), 1203-1207, in Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Handbook in Theology and Ecology*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996), 18.

[7] Drummond, (1996), 19.

Especially if we consider the fact that there are scientific theories and philosophies of nature that sees humankind as superior. For example, Immanuel Kant sees nature as a dead mechanism only knowable in relation to humans. Kant here sees humans as being superior to nature; therefore it is something to be governed and utilised by humans.[8] In this crisis therefore, Christianity alone is not to be blamed but there are a few other contributing beliefs and philosophies that see nature as inferior to humans, thus encouraging human exploitation of the environment.

In response to this crisis, the ecological movement came into being and it focuses on the self-preservation of our environment. The movement originated in 1962 subsequent to the publication of Rachel Carson's book the Silent Spring[9]. Here she voiced her concern over the use of chemicals and pesticides. Her intention was to warn her readers of the dangers associated with pesticides and to lobby for actions in the usage and management of pesticides and harmful chemicals. As a result, her study influenced the United States government to ban the production and use of some pesticides and toxic chemicals in the agricultural industry.[10]

Furthermore, Carson's book also stimulated interest in and awareness of the need to preserve and conserve our environment. From then onwards, the ecological and environmentalist movements gained momentum worldwide with increased involvement and many organisations committing to the cause of finding ways to control the

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[8] Michael W. Petty, *Faith that Loves the Earth: The Ecological Theology of Karl Rahner*, (Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), 4.

[9] Rachel Carson was a biologist who wrote *Silent Spring,* which became a controversial book in the eyes of conservatists and scientists. Carson discussed the consequences of using chemicals. In regards to this, she demanded not only the protection of the environment from using pesticides and toxic chemicals, but argued to impose a ban on these chemicals. This book also influenced the birth of many environmentalist movements throughout the world. See Rachael Carson, *Silent Spring*, (London: The Trinity Press, 1962), 2.

[10] Carson, (1962), 6-7.

ecological crisis.[11] This commitment and emphasis on preserving the environment can also be seen in nearly every sphere of life: from the arena of politicians to that of the law and policy makers, from the business community to the academic world and from the entertainment world to the sporting fields.

Similarly, theological and biblical scholarship has been no exception. There is now a recognised effort by theologians and biblical scholars to incorporate an ecological emphasis in theological formulations and in the interpretation of the Bible, so that the ecological crisis can be understood from a biblical or a theological perspective.

1.1.1 Introduction of Ecological Theory into Biblical Studies

One of the most recent developments in biblical studies is the incorporation of the ecological theory into biblical interpretation, as biblical scholars and theologians could no longer turn a blind eye to the negative impacts of the ecological crisis. The ecological crisis challenges how we read, interpret and understand the Bible and it also influences our theological constructions. In other words, the ecological crisis challenges us to reassess our interpretation of scripture so that we can take seriously the environment.

This challenge and task was taken up by the Earth Bible Team.[12] These theologians and biblical scholars in collaboration with ecologists have integrated

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[11] Organisations such as: World Wildlife Funding, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, United Nations Industrial development Organisation, United Nations Population Fund, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and so forth. *See* Simeamativa Leota, *"Global Strategy for Sustainable Living"*, *Unpublished Paper*, (Apia: South Pacific Environment Programme Conference, 2010).

[12] The Earth Bible Team is a group of interested biblical scholars who attempt to interpret the biblical tradition from an ecological perspective as no ecological hermeneutics had been developed. The team was able to develop a set of guidelines for all writers to consider as they approached the text from

ecological theory into biblical studies, so that Christians could interpret and understand texts from the perspective of the Earth or "listening to the Earth as a subject in the text"[13] as Norman Habel puts it. This simply means that interpreters must no longer marginalise the Earth in the interpretive process and no longer see the Earth as a voiceless entity in the texts.

The Earth Bible Team in the process formulated an ecological hermeneutics along the lines of the hermeneutics of suspicion, recovery and resistance.[14] These hermeneutical strategies involve the distrust of human biblical authors and interpreters, the refutation of texts and interpretations that are harmful to the earth, and the recuperation of texts that sustain the earth. In practice the application of ecological hermeneutic to the interpretation of biblical texts is governed by six ecojustice principles.

First is the principle of intrinsic worth, which suggests that the universe, earth and all its components have intrinsic value.[15] In other words, the earth and its components have not only valued themselves to humans and the reflection of God's handiwork, but are also valuable to a non-human community that dwells and resides on it. According to Drummond this principle states that "the worth of the creatures is not just a simple fact of moral value rather it arises out of God's word."[16] This principle shows that the universe, earth and all its components have equal value and no part is more equal than the other. This opposes the traditional interpretation of the Genesis 1

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the perspective of the Earth. This was evident in the development of six ecojustice principles including: the principle of intrinsic worth, principle of interconnectedness, principle of voice, principle of purpose, principle of mutual custodianship and principle of resistance. *See*, Norman C. Habel, Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics, in Norman C. Habel (ed.), *Reading from the Perspective of the Earth*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 2000), 2-3.

[13] Habel, (2000), 7.

[14] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton Longmann and Todd Ltd, 2008), 88.

[15] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 42–43.

and 2 creation stories where human beings were created as the crown of creation and therefore considered more valuable than the rest of the created order. Challenging this ecological injustice are readings by Habel,[17] Mark G. Brett,[18] Carol A. Newsom,[19] Howard N. Wallace[20] to name a few. For example, Carol A. Newsom in her article establishes a common ground between the elements of creation, an attempt which expresses the fact that the components of the earth have similar worth and values.[21]

The second is the principle of interconnectedness, where earth is considered as a community of interconnected living things, dependent on each other for life and survival.[22] This means that human and non-human communities depend mainly on the earth for survival, shelter and nourishment and in return, the earth expected these communities to conserve and sustain it. This principle reflected the fact that the earth is an ecosystem of interdependent components. For example, humans depended on animals and the earth for food while at the same time the earth and animals both depended on humans for their sustainability. The problem here is the hierarchy of rights within the earth community where some elements are considered to have more potency than others. This hierarchy is apparent in the food chain with animals at the top and plants at the bottom. However, the Earth Bible Team considered such depiction of the interrelationship between the components of the earth community as inadequate and

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[16] Drummond, (2008), 89.

[17] Norman C. Habel, Geophany: The Earth Story in Genesis 1, in Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wrust, (eds.), *The Earth Story in Genesis*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 34.

[18] Mark G. Brett, "Earthing the Human in Genesis 1 – 3," in Habel and Wrust, (2000), 73.

[19] Carol A. Newsom, Common Ground: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 2 – 3, in Habel and Wurst (eds.), (2000), 60.

[20] Howard N. Wallace, Rest for the Earth? Another Look at Genesis 2:1 -- 3, in Habel and Wrust (eds.), (2000), 49.

[21] Newsom, (2000), 62.

[22] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 45-46.

therefore rejects it.[23] The interconnectedness of the components of the earth community was highlighted by Laurie J. Braaten's study of the earth community in Hosea 2. In this study, Braaten listed the components of the earth community to include Yahweh, the earth/land, animals, people and the produce of the land (which include wine, grain and oil). These components are all interdependent; the people rely on the land for survival and for receiving Yahweh's grace, and in return the earth depended on the way the people respond to Yahweh for its sustainability. If the people respond with violence and idolatry then consequently the earth will bear the cost.[24]

Third is the principle of voice, here the earth is considered capable of raising its voice in celebration and against discrimination. The voice of the earth is regarded as a mode of self-expression or communication by the earth and non-human members reflecting their distinctive natures. Just as humans communicate through body language, the various components of earth may communicate their presence and intent through alternative forms of language.[25] The earth's body language, against injustice, clearly shows when the land dried up, in drought and/or infertility. That form indicates that the earth mourns or weeps. Therefore, it is very important for humans to pay attention to what the earth might have to say.[26] William J Urbrock in his article 'The Earth Song in Psalms 90-92,' highlighted this principle. The title of the article clearly suggests the earth to be vocal and singing a lament and a hymn of thanksgiving.[27]

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[23] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 46.

[24] Laurie J. Braaten, 'Earth Community in Hosea 2', in Norman C. Habel (ed.), *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 195.

[25] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 46-47.

[26] There are numerous articles that depicts the Earth to be vocal: see Wali Fejo, 'The Voice of the Earth: An Indigenous Reading of Genesis 9', in Habel and Wrust (eds.), (2000), 73.; Kalinda Rose Stevenson, 'If Earth Could Speak: The Case of the Mountains against YHWH in Ezekiel 6: 35-36' in Habel (ed.), *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, (2001), 158.

[27] William J Urbrock, "The Earth Song in Psalms 90 – 92", in Habel (ed.), *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, (2001), 65.

Fourth is the principle of purpose, where the universe, earth and all its components are part of a dynamic cosmic design within which each element has a place in the overall goal of that design.[28] In other words every part has a function in the larger whole or in the grand design. As Drummond suggested, this design is taken to be theocentric in orientation. That is, the God-given purpose to which the cosmos is called is one of renewal rather than replacement.[29] In other words, the purpose for the entire creation is for the earth and its components and members of the earth community to share its benefit equally. However, humans took advantage of it, as they claimed the lion's share of these benefits compared to any other member of the earth community. In his article, 'Air, The First Sacred Thing: The Conception of רוח in the Hebrew Bible,' Theodore Hiebert made this clear by claiming that it is part of the larger natural environment rather than a species of a different order.[30] This view differs from the traditional view on the purpose of humanity in creation and certainly placed humanity as part of the larger natural environment rather than being a separable entity.

The fifth principle is mutual custodianship, where earth is a balanced and diverse domain where responsible custodians can function as partners, rather than rulers, to sustain a balanced and diverse earth community.[31] This principle reflects on the role of humans in relation to the earth. Instead of being masters over the earth, humans should think of themselves as guests on it, custodians of their host planet.[32] Accordingly, humans are considered as caregivers of the creation but not dominant over

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[28] Earth Bible Team (2000), 48-49.

[29] Drummond, (2008), 89.

[30] Theodore Hiebert, 'Air, the First Sacred Thing: The Conception of רוח in the Hebrew Scriptures', in Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger, *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 9.

[31] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 50.

[32] Drummond, (2008), 90.

it. In other words, humans have entered into an agreement of partnership with the earth community. In this partnership, the earth and the earth community have been the custodians of human beings and vice versa. Earth has provided food, shelter, beauty and many other riches to sustain the body and the spirit of humanity. In return, humans have to sustain and preserve the earth and its community.

Finally there is the principle of resistance, where the earth and its components not only suffer from human injustices but actively resist them in the struggle for justice. We may suspect that a given text is likely to focus on sins against God and wrongs against other humans, but ignore the injustices committed against earth because earth is viewed as a passive object without feeling or voice. When God sends plagues or curses on earth, earth seems to suffer because of human misdeeds.[33] The principle of resistance can be highlighted in the land lying idle, dried up from drought. This can be seen as a form of resistance from the land because of human action. The resistance can be found in prophets like Jeremiah and Hosea, who hears the land mourning because Israel's sin has made the land desolate.[34]

In summary, these six principles clearly define the ecological perspective. So any reader opting to read texts from this perspective should be mindful of these six basic principles. The prime idea behind these principles is to make one's reading earth centred, make the readers identify with the earth as earth creatures, make the readers to listen with empathy to what the earth has to say, and encourage the readers to voice or act as mouth piece to the earth and the earth community.

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[33] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 52.

[34] NRSV: Jeremiah 12:4; Hosea 4:1-3.

1.2 The Development of Cross-Cultural Theory

The term cross-cultural simply refers to an understanding on how one's culture communicates and interacts with another culture. In other words, when one's cultural values are shared and transmitted with others outside of that culture it could be considered as cross-culture. However, the term can be very confusing due to its numerous definitions and applications.

The origin of cross-culture theory in the 19th century world of colonialism was strongly grounded in the concept of 'cultural evolution,'[35] which claimed that all societies progress through an identical series of distinct evolutionary stages. This period saw the emergence of extensive cross-cultural studies by Western anthropologists such as Englishman Edward Burnett Tylor who studied primitive cultures, early history of mankind and the development of civilisation in 1865[36] and the American Lewis H Morgan who made a comparative kinship study among the American Indians in the 1950s and 1960s.[37]

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[35] Cultural evolution refers to the change in the body of non-genetic information that we human beings have, including what is stored in our brains, what is stored in our books, our buildings, our computer disks, our films, and obviously it is changing at all time. *See* B.P. Leftheris, A.C. Sapounaki, et.al., *Computational Mechanics for Heritage Structure: High Performance Structures and Materials, (Vol.9)*, (Southampton: WIT Press, 2002), 2.

[36] Edward Brunett Tylor was widely considered the founder of anthropology as a scientific discipline. He was the first Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oxford from 1896-1909 and developed a broad definition of culture which is still used by scholars. Tylor's book *Primitive Culture* presents his idea of cultural evolution in relation to anthropology, a social theory which states that human cultures invariably change over time to become more complex. *See* Edward Brunett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy*, (New York: Cambridge University, 1871), 1.

[37] Lewis H. Morgan, an attorney, made a thorough study of Iroquoian tribes (Indian Tribes) and published a book on the subject: "The League of Iroquois". In his study, he discovered that the customs of designated relatives among the Iroquois differed from those in vogue in the society. For example, they called father's brother 'father' and mother's sister 'mother'. *See* Lewis Henry Morgan, *The Indian Journals: 1859 – 1862*, (Toronto: General Publishing Company Ltd, 1993), 1.

However the informal beginning of cross-cultural studies can be traced back as far as Herodotus[38] (484-425 BC). He made a survey contrasting the customs of the Egyptians, the Persians and others, with those of his Greek countrymen.[39] There is also evidence of cross-cultural studies in the non-Western world before the 19th Century. For instance an Indian man known as Abu Rayhan Biruni recorded cross-cultural findings on religion, peoples and culture of Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and Indian societies.[40]

Cross-cultural theory has been widely developed in cultural anthropology. Cultural anthropology refers to the study of "customary patterns in human behaviour, thought, and feelings."[41] It focuses on two main components known as ethnography[42] and ethnology[43]. Cultural Anthropology is one of the three branches of anthropology, including physical anthropology and archaeology[44]. However in order to for us to understand what cross-cultural study is, we must clarify what we mean by the word 'culture.'

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[38] Herodotus was a Greek historian, known as the father of history. He wrote that the development of civilisation is presented as moving inexorably towards a great confrontation between Persia and Greece, which was regarded as the centres of Eastern and Western Culture. *See* Felix M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology: The Science of Custom* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1990), 10.

[39] Keesing, (1990), 10.

[40] "Abu Rayhan Biruni was one of those rare prodigious minds who lived during the period of the most intense scientific work in the Islamic civilization. … [He] distinguished himself in so many different fields that he … is considered one of the most original and profound." His work includes astronomy, mathematical geography, anthropology, and many more. *See* Moahini Mohamed, *Great Muslim Mathematicians* (Malaysia: University Teknologi Malaysia Press, 2000), 63.

[41] William A. Haviland, Herald E.L. Prins and Berry McBride, *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge,* (Belmond: Thomson Wadsworth Learning, 2008), 9.

[42] "Ethnography is a detailed description of a particular culture primarily based on fieldwork. ... The hallmark of ethnographic fieldwork is a combination of social participation and personal observation within the community being studied as well as interviews and discussions with individual members ... referred to as participation observation." Haviland, et.al, (2008), 9.

[43] "Ethnology is the study and analysis of different cultures from a comparative or historical point of view but depends largely on ethnographic findings." Haviland, et.al, (2008), 12. Excellent!

[44] "Physical Anthropology is the study of human from a biological perspective. For Archaeology focuses on the study of prehistory and historic cultures through the evacuation of material remains." Gary Ferraro, Cultural *Anthropology: An Applied Perspective, 7th Ed.,* (Belmont: Thomas Wadsworth, 2006), 5 - 8.

Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies and symbols. It has played a crucial role in human evolution, allowing human beings to adapt the environment to their own purposes rather than depend solely on natural selection to achieve adaptive success. Every human society has its own particular culture, or socio-cultural system.[45]

The term was first defined by Tylor as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society.[46] Culture refers to a society's shared and socially transmitted ideas, values and perceptions which are used to make sense of experience and which generate behaviour and are reflected in that behaviour. These standards are socially learned, rather than acquired through biological inheritance.[47] The term was further defined as everything that people have, think and do as members of a society. This definition can be instructive because of the three verbs (have, think and do) correspond to the three major components of culture. That is everything that people have refers to their material possessions, everything that people think refers to the things that they carry around into their head, such as ideas, values and attitudes, and everything that people do refers to their behavioural patterns.[48]

Accordingly, these different viewpoints in regards to culture have been expressed in our way of living. In other words, each members of a society is proud of their culture in regards to the norms and guidance of that culture. A similar analogy is created when cross-cultural theory can be used in biblical studies. As the biblical

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[45]Socio-cultural system is an organization of a diversity of individuals who construct their cultural identity. They can be considered as part of the social system and hierarchically equal to economic, political and legal systems. Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*, (London: Routledge Press, 2000), 339.

[46] Ferraro, (2006), 27.

[47] Haviland, et.al, (2008), 9.

accounts in the Bible were written from the Hebrew context, which was from a totally different view from our context. However, we can also read and understand these accounts when we read them from our own cultural perspective. A development of this acquisition will be discussed in the following section.

1.2.1Introduction of Cross-Cultural Theory into Biblical Studies

Biblical scholars began incorporating cross-cultural theory into biblical studies from as early as the 1970s. It is a method of investigating the biblical text through the contact of the interpreter with the text, its author and original readers. This development brought to the fore the understanding of how the social and cultural background of the readers, consequently influences the reading and interpretation of the Bible. In other words, in this particular study for interpretation to be valid, the interpreter is required to realise the significance of his or her own cultural situation which serves to be a vehicle to enter the sphere of the original author and original reader's own culture and social dimensions.[49]

However, this theory was controversial in the eyes of historical critics. They argued that the reader or interpreter may read too much from their context into the text rather than attempting to understand the mind of the author in his or her own context. Despite this danger of cross-cultural theory, supporters of this approach can be found among the contemporary biblical scholars who perceive the need for readers to

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[48] Ferraro, (2006), 28.

[49] James Earl Massey, "Reading the Bible from Particular Social Location" Eds. Leander E. Keck et.al, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 1.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1994), 150 and Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert "Toward a Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement." *Reading from this Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). See also Gerald West, *Contextual Bible Study in South Africa: A Resource for Reclaiming and Regaining Land, Dignity and Identity, in the Bible in Africa: Transaction, Trajectories and Trends.* Ed. Gerald West and Musa W. Dube (Pietermaritzberg: Cluster Publication, 1993), 15.

acknowledge the influence they impose on the process of interpretation. One of those scholars is Fernando F. Segovia who claimed that all 'exegesis is ultimately eisegesis.' For him there is no such thing as pure exegesis, thus we can never separate ourselves from our interpretation. Furthermore he summons all readers to be honest and up front in their reading approaches, by acknowledging their social and cultural contexts as well as their preconceived presuppositions. [50] In support of this position, it is vital for me to first identify my Samoan cultural background as a prerequisite in reading the account in Hosea 4:1-3. This approach will compel me to explore more on the proverb, "*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele",* for it plays a pivotal role in this thesis.

Richard Soulen and Kendall Soulen also answered such criticisms by arguing that "all interpretation of scripture is cross-cultural to the degree that the culture of the Bible is no longer identical with that of its interpreters."[51] Cross-cultural biblical interpretation approaches the resulting hermeneutical challenge by focusing on interpretive resources uniquely afforded by the interpreter's particular cultural location. This is how the western culture, in the persons of biblical scholars, has used western thought-forms and norms to make sense of the ancient world(s) of the Bible. It is a method of analysing the biblical text through genuine interactions of the interpreter with the text, its author and original readers. It is an activity in which the cultural-self of the interpreter interacts with the text in and through the author's and original reader's culture. Thus, it is the interactions of two (or more) cultural identities with the purpose of discerning what the text means to each of the parties.[52]

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[50] Fernando F. Segovia, Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism: Ideological Criticism as Mode of Discourse, in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary A. Tolbert (eds.), *Reading From This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 16.

[51] Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism: Cross-Cultural Biblical Criticism (3rd Ed.)*, (Louisville: Westminister John Knox Press, 2001), 42.

[52] Soulen and Soulen, (2001), 42.

Nowadays, it is more recognised that every interpreter is socially located within a culture, and that location shapes the perspective from which scriptures are interpreted and understood. Cross-cultural biblical interpretation acknowledges this reality and intentionally employs culturally indigenous resources such as myths and legends, texts, concepts, worldviews, and so forth as hermeneutical keys to shed light on their biblical interpretations.[53]

This theory is widely adopted and employed by the non-westerners (such as the Asians, Indians, Africans, South Americans and even Pacific Islanders), since most of biblical criticism takes place in the western world and employs western critical perspectives, in the interpretation of the scripture.

This was highlighted in JG van der Watt's argument that reading the Bible and properly accounting for cross-cultural differences that also determine academic activities, still remains a challenge in the emerging world of Africa theology.[54] In Africa, the focus falls heavily on inculturation[55] and contextualisation which forces exegesis to take knowledge or understanding of the reading community, their requirements, wishes and abilities. Therefore, reading the biblical texts from the western world should be relevant to the African reader's situation.[56]

In the Pacific, a growing usage of the cross-cultural methodology is evident. Afereti Uili observed that the shelves of the Libraries in the Theological Colleges

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[53] Soulen and Soulen, (2001), 42.

[54] JG van der Watt, "Reading the Bible in a Cross-cultural (South) African Context", Website: www.worldcultures.org. Access: 9 April 2010, 10.00am. .

[55] Inculturation is a methodology whereby an academically trained reader reads the biblical text with a community of ordinary readers and from the perspective of the ordinary people. It is a commitment to a particular contextual starting point and wrestling with concrete societal issues. R. Daniel Shaw, *Transculturation: The Cultural Factor in Translation and Other Communication Tasks*, (California: William Carey Library, 1988), 121.

[56] van der Watt, "Reading the Bible in a Cross-cultural (South) African Context."

around the Pacific are filled with theses and dissertations written using the cross-cultural reading strategy.[57] To mention a few studies, Tevita Havea for example, utilised the cross-cultural reading strategy in his study of Paul, his thoughts and ministry, and how the Corinthians would have understood him. Thus, it involved a cross-cultural investigation whereby the cultural understanding and experiences of the Corinthians and Paul in the Greco-Roman world of the first century AD interact with the Tongan understanding of kinship community. He summed up that all biblical readings are culturally conditioned and we can only understand others through our common cultures thus making cross-cultural exegesis a must. Moreover, since the interest of cross-cultural exegesis is to discern the meaning of the text in its original context through the cultural context of the reader, cross-cultural exegesis is a must for biblical interpretation because such an approach fulfils the task of historical and socio-cultural interpretations.[58]

Nasili Vaka'uta in a paper with the title *Myth of (Im)Purity and Peoples of the (Is)Land: A Tongan Reading of Ezra 9-10,* presented to the *SBL* Conference in 2008, also offered a cross-cultural reading of Ezra 9-10. Vaka'uta's reading is located in the social class of Tongan commoners and theorized with the Tongan concept of *fonua* (land, place, sea and people). That is, it integrated Tongan cultural methods as a hermeneutical lens to gaze back at the text.[59] This attempt provided new insights and interpretations of Ezra 9-10 contrary to those of western scholars.

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[57] Afereti Uili. (Interview with the Author), 19 September 2010, 1.00pm. Uili was recently appointed as the principal of Malua Theological College and will take up his new position in November of this year. Currently he serves as deputy principal of The Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji.

[58] Tevita Havea, *"Paul's Kinship Status and Duties in 1 Corinthians: Cross-Cultural Exegetical Studies, Unpublished Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy,* (Department of Biblical Studies: University of Sheffield, July 2002).

[59] Nasili Vakauta, "*Myth of (Im) Purity and People of the (Is) Land: A Tongan Reading of Ezra 9-10", Unpublished Paper,* (SBL Conference: University of Auckland, 2008).

In regards to cross-cultural theory, it is highlighted that this theory is a useful tool in analysing cultural situations within the biblical world where one group understands another's location. This tool can also be seen as a perspective or an "optic" lens used for reading and re-reading the biblical texts so that the biblical accounts can be understood from our own cultural perspectives.

1.3 The Fusion of Ecological and Cross-Cultural Theories

There have been numerous attempts to fuse an ecological reading with a cross-cultural reading. A number of articles produced by the Earth Bible Team gave witness to this. For example, Oyeronke Olajubu used the Yorubu cultural understanding of nature and value of water to interpret John 9. From using her cultural understanding she brought new insights to the interpretation of the healing stories in the passage.[60] Another example is Arthur Walker-Jones' reading of Psalm 104 using the Fijian cultural understanding of the *vanua* (land or earth). Here Walker-Jones highlighted the ecojustice principles depicted in the Fijian concept of *vanua,* to formulate his interpretive lens to interpret Psalm 104. For him, the concept of *vanua* gives the earth intrinsic worth, since Fijian culture saw the gods and the ancestors to be in the *vanua*. Moreover there is interconnectedness between the earth community reflected in the *vanua* concept; the gods, the ancestors, flora and fauna, they all intermingle within the *vanua.* And lastly, Fijians saw the *vanua* or Earth as a living entity with the ability to raise its voice in joy and against injustices.[61]

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[60] Oyeronke Olajubu, "Reconnecting with the Waters: John 9: 1 – 11," in Norman C. Habel and Vicky Balabanski, *The Earth Story in the New Testament*, (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 108-109.

[61] Arthur Walker-Jones, A Celebration of the Vanua, in Habel (ed.), (2001), 84.

Iutisone Salevao equally made the same attempt fusing the Samoan cultural world view of the land and ecojustice principal of kingship and voice in his reading of Hebrews 6:7-8. From this perspective Salevao saw the burning of the land in Hebrews 6:7-8 not only as way of destroying the land but also as a means of destruction of life and at the end of the day demolishing ourselves.[62]

Apart from the members of the Earth Bible Project, Oceania biblical scholars also integrate ecological and cultural perspectives in their readings of selected passages. For example Vaitusi Nofoaiga in a paper presented to the Oceania Biblical Studies Association and Waves of the Moana Conference on Climate Change, employed an ecological-cultural reading of the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-12). In his reading Nofoaiga used Samoan concepts such as *tautua (servant/service)*, *tapu (taboo)*, *feagaiga (sacred covenant)* and *tuaoi (boundary)*, to construct the hermeneutical lens that reflected the ecojustice principles of interconnectedness and mutual custodianship to conduct an inter-textual reading of Genesis 3 with the Parable of the Sower.[63]

Clearly, judging from the above examples fusing the two reading perspectives is not new. There have already been attempts to employ the two reading strategies together that have brought new and fresh insights to broaden our horizons in understanding biblical texts. In other words, reading from this integrated approach yields new meanings that either compliments or sometimes conflicts with the western interpretation of texts.

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[62] Iutisone Salevao, Burning the Land: An Ecojustice Reading of Hebrews 6:7-8, in Habel (ed.), (2000), 222.

[63] Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *"Interconnectedness and Mutual Custodianship in Matthew 13:1-12: A Samoan Ecological Reading of the Parable of the Sower" Unpublished Paper*, (Auckland: The Oceania Biblical Studies Association and Waves of the Moana Conference, 2010).

This fusion is clearly evident in the Samoan proverbial saying, "*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*".[64] This Samoan proverb both has ecological and cultural repercussions and this paper will employ it as a hermeneutical key in understanding the weeping of the land in Hosea 4: 1-3 from a Samoan perspective. The proverb clearly brings in to light the Samoan cultural understanding of the earth and also emphasises a number of ecojustice principles. The fusion is possible if we consider that the proverb has a dual meaning. On the one hand the proverb has an anthropocentric meaning, suggesting a deep sadness or cry from within, that hurts one's heart and blood. There are sources of human emotions according to Samoan beliefs. On the other hand, the proverb also carries ecological nuances depicting the cries of the rock and earth which are elements of the land. However, further clarification of this Samoan proverb highlighting these connotations will be the objective of the next chapter.

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[64] The heart (or rock)) and blood (or earth) weeps.

Chapter 2

What Does the Proverb *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"* Say?

The essence of this chapter is to further clarify the Samoan proverbial saying, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*, to illuminate its different nuances and to highlight its cultural and ecological values, so that the position I will be reading Hosea 4:1-3 from is well defined. In doing so, the chapter offers a critical analysis of the proverb, a search that will lead us to the question of original meaning and usage. What was the original meaning of the proverb? What meanings did it carry? This quest will also lead us to Samoan myths and legends, since there are a number of Samoan myths that provide explanations concerning the original meaning and usages of the proverbial saying. These stories include the creation story from *Manua*[65]; the story of *Salevao*[66] from the village of *Satupaitea*[67]; and the story of *Vaea*[68] and *Apaula*[69] from the district of *Vaimauga*[70]. These three stories will be critically scrutinised to bring out the different meanings of the proverb in them, and above all for them, to give a clear portrait of the interpretive position that will be used in reading the selected text for this project.

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[65] *Manua* is an island in the eastern side of *Samoa* with its government is under the jurisdiction of the government of United States of America.

[66] *Salevao* is a medium spirit who lived in the village of *Satupaitea*.

[67] *Satupaitea* is a village within the district of *Itu o Salega* in the northern side of *Savaii*.

[68] *Vaea* was known of his might and strength by the people of *Vaimauga*.

[69] *Apaula* was the daughter of *Tuifiti* who saved the lives of her brothers from the hands of *Vaea*.

[70] *Vaimauga* is a central district of the island of *Upolu*.

2.1 The Samoan Creation Story from *Manua*

The creation story of *Samoa* begins when *Tagaloa*[71] created the different rocks as the foundation of his created world. This was followed by the creation of the earth, sea, fresh water, sky, immensity, space and cloud. Then, *Tagaloa* made mankind out of the spirit, heart (*fatu*), will, and thought that was then joined to the earth (*eleele*) and they were called *Le-Fatu* and *Le-Eleele:* a couple with *Fatu* as the husband and *Eleele* the wife. *Tagaloa* appointed them to settle and populate the eastern islands.

Tagaloa continued his creation by bringing forth night and day ordaining them to produce the 'eye of the sky' (the sun). The couple (*Fatu* and *Eleele*) had four children named *Manu'a*, *Samoa*, *La* (Sun) and *Masina* (the Moon). *Tagaloa* then appointed *Manua* and *Samoa* to go down below to be chiefs over the offsprings of *Le-Fatu* and *Le-Eleele*, while the Sun and Moon followed their parents. When it is day let the sun follow and when it is night let the moon come out too. These two are the shades of *Tagaloa,* and they are well known in the entire world.

It is believed that one day *Tagaloa* visited the land beginning from the eastern groups, which included Fiji, Tonga and *Savaii*. He was delighted in them and said "it was good". Then he populated the eastern groups with *Atu-Sasae*, Fiji with *Atu*-Fiji and Tonga with *Atu*-Tonga.[72] But *Le-Fatu* and *Le-Eleele* was asked by *Tagaloa* to populate *Savaii*. Then the couple sent *Valua* and *Tiapa*[73] to do what *Tagaloa* had requested. Then

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[71] *Tagaloa* was the god whom the Samoan people used to worship. He was the god of creation.

[72] *Atu* refers to row, line or chain while *Sasae* to the eastern side. Therefore the word *Atu-Sasae* refers to the row of islands in the eastern side of *Samoa*. *Atu*-Fiji refers to the chain of islands of Fiji. *Atu*-Tonga refers to the lines of islands of Tonga.

[73] *Valua* and *Tiapa* are descendents of *Le-Fatu and Le-Eleele* who populated the island of *Savaii*.

Tagaloa created *Upolu*[74] and *Tutuila*[75]. He populated *Tutuila* and *Upolu* with the children of *Le-Fue*[76], named *Tutu* and *Ila*[77], who populated the island of Tutuila, while *Tele*[78] and *Upolu* populated the island of Upolu.

These arrangements by *Tagaloa* saw peace and harmony prevail over the islands. Each descendent went in their own allotted island and lived peacefully without war and conflicts. This is evident in *Tagaloa's* parting words given at *Malaela*[79]: "Always show respect to *Manua*; if any one does not, he will be overtaken by calamity; but let each one do as he likes with his own lands." *Tagaloa*, therefore, made *Manua* his headquarter and *Tuimanua* his representative on earth to ensure peace and calm reigned on the islands. However, this period of tranquillity ended when *Valua,* and *Tiapa* attacked *Tuimanua* for power and supremacy over the islands; an act of terror that caused *Fatu* and *Eleele* to cry and weep soberly. This is the origin of the Samoan proverb; "*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*"[80].

2.1.1Critique of the Creation Story

The creation story clearly highlights a number of issues. Firstly the creation story could be seen as ideologically loaded, as it is biased towards the island of the people of *Manua*. Leaula Tavita Amosa[81] and Muagututia Leausa[82] both agree with this

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[74] *Upolu* is the second largest island of *Samoa*, where the central government is located.

[75] *Tutuila* is another island in the group of islands in *American Samoa*.

[76] *Le-Fue* is one of *Tagaloa's* descendent. *Fue* is a name of a creeping plant.

[77] *Tutu* translated as to set fire to, while *Ila* is a mark in the skin.

[78] *Tele* refers to great or large.

[79] *Malaela* is the meeting place of *Tagaloa* and *Le-Fue* in the district of *Aleipata* in the eastern side of *Upolu*.

[80] *Ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele* simply translated as the heart (rock) and earth (land) mourns.

[81] Leaula Tavita Amosa, (Interview with the author), 7 May 2010, 10.30am. He is the chairman of the *Faleula o Samoa*. *Faleula o Samoa* is the group of high chiefs discussing the issues related to the Samoan culture.

claim. Amosa saw the creation story as a mechanism that served the interests of the people of *Manua,* and Leausa saw the creation story as a medium that elevates the people of *Manua* and gives a picture that *Manua* is superior over the other Samoan Islands. So if the creation story served the interests of the *Manua* clan, can it then represent the rest of Samoa? Can I, as a Samoan from Upolu, be identified with this creation story? Aiono Fanaafi[83] thinks so. For her this creation story represents the rest of *Samoa* because it is the only creation story among Samoan myths and legends that mentions *Tagaloa*, the supreme god of Samoa as the creator god. In other words, she saw this creation story to be more realistic because it claimed the created world to be the work of *Tagaloa*. Therefore, any Samoan can trace his or her heritage back to *Tagaloa* the creator god, and identify themself with this creation story.

Secondly, the issue of authenticity raises the question of how the creation story for all of Samoa has now become a creation story for the people of *Manua*. Amosa supports this issue as he saw the original version as brief and without special mention of the *Manua* Islands. These features and the longer version for Amosa were later insertions made by an editor in the 14th Century, when *Manua* Islands were the dominant force in Samoa. However, Tauanu'u Taeaonamuamua[84] firmly supports the validity and authenticity of the creation story. For him, it is the true story passed down from generations to generations by our ancestors to us today. However, oral

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[82] Muagututia Leausa (Interview with the author), 9 May 2010, 1.00pm. He was the *matai* (chief) of the village of Mutiatele in the district of Aleipata.

[83] Aiono Fanaafi, (Interview with the author), 9 April 2010, 10.30am. She holds a doctorate in *Samoan* studies and currently serves as a lecturer in the University of *Le-Amosā*.

[84] Tauanuu Taeaonamuamua, (Interview with the author over the telephone), 16 August 2010, 8.30pm. He is the high chief of the *Manua* Island.

transmission of traditions is open to modifications or alterations from one source to another.[85] Therefore, Taeaonamuamua's claims raises questions of authenticity.

Lastly, despite the disputes concerning the creation story it also yields or produces ecological insights useful in defining our interpretative lens: first the creation story portrays the *Le Fatu* (rock) and *Le Eleele* (earth) as living beings possessing attributes of life such as: 1) The ability to reproduce as in the story of *Le Fatu* and *Le Eleele* as presented by *Tagaloa* to populate the Eastern Islands where they bore descendants. In fact, the creation story depicted that most Samoans as being descended from *Le Fatu* and *Le Eleele.* Therefore, it establishes a kinship bond between Samoans and the land. 2) The ability to communicate. They were gifted with a voice to vocalise their thoughts and their feelings which is evident in the fact that *Le Fatu* and *Le Eleele* wept in hearing the news of their children acts of terror. Therefore, the weeping was their response to the acts of injustice. 3) The ability to rationalise and make decisions. This was evident in how *Le Fatu* and *Le Eleele* fulfilled *Tagaloa's* orders to resettle and populate *Savaii*. They rationalised by coming up with an alternative, sending their sons *Valua* and *Tiapa* in their place.

The proverb, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*, in the creation story illustrates the human weeping of *Le-Fatu ma Le-Eleele* because there ceased to exist a mutual respect between their descendants. Therefore, the land mourned as a result of the inappropriate activities, such as tribal wars, that occurred.

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[85] Hays H.J. and Holladay R.C., *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 2nd Ed., (London: SCM Press, 1983), 93.

2.2 The Story of *Salevao* from *Satupaitea*

Salevao and his parents *Fuluulaalefanua* and *Sinalevaiana*[86] lived in the village of *Amoa*[87]. *Fuluulaalefanua* dealt unkindly with the people of the district for trespassing into his part of the forest in *Amoa*. He made many enemies including many local half-spirit beings in *Amoa*. *Fuluulaalefanua's* enemies were looking for ways to kill him. One day, they burned down his house with him and his family still inside. Fortunately for *Salevao* he was saved from the fire by *Vave*[88], unfortunately his parents died in the fire. This led to *Salevao's* continuous cry over the loss of his parents.

Salevao went to sleep in tears as he could not stop crying as it was hard for him to forget the killing of his parents by the might of the fire. *Vave* took *Salevao* with him toward the western side of Savaii looking for help to end *Salevao's* crying. They ended up at *Sauā*[89] in the village of *Satupaitea*. The people of *Satupaitea* were told of the murder of his parents as the cause of his non-stop crying. Moved by the story, the people of *Satupaitea* helped him by showing him the walking trees and the skulls of the dead spirit mediums rolled out from their graves. However, *Salevao* continued to cry. Unable to help him, the people and the land of *Satupaitea* and *Sauā* cried with him. Thus emerged the saying "*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*". This refers to the *fatu* (heart) of the people and the *eleele* (land) because of their love for the boy. However, it has been told that *Salevao* momentarily stopped crying when the daughter of the chief of

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[86] *Fuluulaalefanua* and *Sinalevaiana* are Salevao's parents. The people of *Amoa* claimed that Fuluulaalefanua was a medium spirit who accompanied a Samoan couple who went to Fiji to heal the *Tuifiti's* daughter's sickness, in which he married *Sinalevaiana* from *Amoa*.

[87] The village of *Amoa* is in the district of *Faasaleleaga* in the eastern-side of the island of *Savaii*.

[88] *Vave* was very popular in the village of *Amoa* in the game of pigeon catcher.

[89] *Sauā* is a sub-village within *Satupaitea*.

Satupaitea danced before him, for it is believed that the chief's daughter resembled his dead mother.

However, the story ended when *Vave* killed *Ulioamoa* who instigated the tragedy against *Salevao's* parents. When *Salevao* heard that *Ulioamoa* was killed he danced for joy, as *Ulioamoa* had received his due punishment. The people of *Satupaitea* celebrated with *Salevao* who remained in *Satupaitea* for the rest of his life.

2.2.1Critique of *Salevao's* Story

There are a number of factors in this story that have been challenged by leading orators who are also keepers of tradition in Samoa. Tiatia Laupua Sale[90] disputed the place where *Salevao* and his parents resided. He claimed that the people of *Salega* believe that *Salevao* and his parents resided at *Ualota* in *Salega*[91] but not *Amoa*. Sale's argument is based on the landmark in the story which still exists today in *Salega*. Sale stated that *Salevao's* mother was *Fuluulaalefanua* a lady from *Amoa* but married a spirit medium from the family of *Tuifiti*[92]. Later they had a son named *Mataulufotu*, which was later changed to *Salevao*.

Leuluaialii Vini Taeleipu[93] disagreed with Sale's claims of *Satupaitea's* story. Taeleipu states that according to his village traditions, *Salevao* was saved from the fire by *Vave* and *Sealiitu*. Later, they adopted him as their son. In their attempts to stop

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[90] Tiatia Laupua Sale (Interview with the author), 24 June 2010, 11.00am.

[91] *Ualota* is a sub-village within the village of *Salega* in the district of *Itu o Salega* in the northern side of *Savaii*.

[92] *Tuifiti* was the king of Fiji who ruled the Fiji islands, when *Tuimanua* was killed by *Valua* and *Tiapa*.

[93] Leuluaialii Vini Taeleipu (Interview with the author), 19 May 2010, 5.00pm. He is the *matai* of *Amoa*.

Salevao's crying, they travelled to *Tufu* in the village of *Gataivai*[94]. This is where Taeleipu says that *Salevao* stopped crying when he saw the walking trees and the dancing rocks. Then *Salevao* and his adopted parents (*Vave* and *Sealiitu*) travelled to *Sauā* at *Satupaitea*. *Salevao* became a well-known spirit in those days and later returned and resided permanently in *Amoa*; protecting his village from other spirit mediums. The place where *Salevao* resided, is a preservation site or landmark in *Amoa*.

However, Asiata Selesele[95] strongly denies Sale and Taeleipu's stories. He claims that the story of *Salevao* belongs to the people of *Satupaitea*. He reiterated that the story did not originate in *Satupaitea,* but that *Salevao* found peace and stopped crying in *Satupaitea*. The people of *Satupaitea* and the land of *Sauā* cried because of their love for the boy. Salevao only found peace in *Sauā,* when the daughter of *Valomua*[96] danced before him. Selesele claims that many of the oracle proverbial expressions that have been used in Samoan *lauga* (speeches) came from this legendary story.

The story also reveals several ecological implications that could enhance the construction of our reading mechanism. First, the proverb "*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*" shows how the people of *Satupaitea* and *Sauā* wept together with *Salevao* because of their love for him and his condition. As previously mentioned, the story of the killing of *Salevao's* parents moved the people of *Satupaitea* and *Sauā*, but when they were unable to appease his crying, they wept with him. There is no clear indication in the story of why the land weeps together with the people. However, a few speculations can be made.

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[94] *Tufu* is a sub-village in the village of *Gataivai* within the district of *Palauli* in the eastern side of *Savaii*.

[95] Asiata Selesele (Interview with the author), 29 May 2010, 2.30pm. He is the high chief of *Satupaitea*.

[96] *Valomua* is the daughter of the high chief of the village of *Satupaitea*.

First, it shows the narrator's presuppositions of the interconnectedness between the people and the land.

Secondly, Fanaafi says that there is no need to explain why the land weeps together with the people in the story since it is a common Samoan belief that the land and the people are interconnected. Whenever the people cry the land mourns with them and whenever the land cries the people mourn with it. From these observations, we can see the inter-relatedness and interconnectedness between the people and the land, highlighting the underlying meaning of the proverbial sayings; the interconnectedness between the people and the land.

Thirdly, the burning of *Fuluulaalefanua's* house can also be understood as the burning of the land; meaning that the burning of the house/land not only destroyed *Salevao's* identity to his family (house), but also hurts the land.

These three explanations highlight the interconnectedness of the land and the people in an intimate relationship. It portrays the land with a voice to express its sadness because of the pain and sorrow experienced by its counterpart (people).

2.3 The Story of *Vaea* and *Apaula* from *Vaimauga*

The story of *Vaea* and *Apaula* took place in the *Vaimauga* district, when the sons of *Tuifiti*, travelled from Fiji to challenge *Vaea*. They brought with them their sister *Apaula*. They anchored their boat off of *Mulinuu*[97]. *Vaea* saw the boat at sea and immediately guessed the purpose of their visit. He then reached out, grabbed the boat that was still occupied with people who were fast asleep, and placed it on the tree-top. At dawn the next day, the men realised that they were on top of a tree and feared for

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[97] *Mulinuu* is one of the coastal villages in the district of *Vaimauga*.

their lives. They begged *Vaea* for mercy and offered their sister *Apaula* in exchange for their pardon. When *Vaea* consented, the men returned to their homeland without their sister, shamefully defeated.

Apaula wanted to return to her family and homeland, so her brothers returned to *Samoa* to accompany her back home safely. As they set out to the sea, *Vaea* stood on the land of *Apia* known as *Savalalo*[98], until they were one with the horizon.

Apaula was pregnant when she arrived home, giving birth shortly to a baby boy whom she named *Tuisavalalo*[99]. *Apaula* remained with her family for many years, while *Vaea* was heartbroken without her. *Tuisavalalo* on the other hand was growing bigger and stronger with each passing day.

Meanwhile, *Apaula's* brothers never forgot the shame and humiliation they suffered at the hands of *Vaea*, the boy's father. So they plotted against the boy. One day, they told *Apaula* that her son was summoned to serve at the gathering of the chiefs. In her heart, *Apaula* knew that her son was in danger. Therefore she told him, "Go, but if the sea turns to blood, I will know you have perished." *Apaula* had guessed correctly. Her son was sacrificed to appease the anger of her brothers.

Apaula returned to Samoa to her husband *Vaea*. However, she found out that *Vaea* was not only ill but was slowly transforming into a mount. Heartbroken and in tears, *Apaula* began crying and weeping uncontrollably. Unable to comfort her and take vengeance for the death of their son, *Vaea* in response to his wife's tears also mourned over his death. Thus the Samoan proverb, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*, is used here to refer to the fact that there was nothing else that they could do. Tears from *Apaula's* eyes

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[98] *Savalalo* is a landmark within the town area *Apia*.

[99] *Tuisavalalo* was the only son of *Vaea* and *Apaula*.

are believed to have formed a river that flows alongside Mount Vaea. The river is called "*Loimata o Apaula*" (Tears of Apaula).

2.3.1Critique of *Vaea* and *Apaula's* Story

As with the previous stories, there exists a dispute over ownership of the story of *Vaea* and *Apaula*. According to Loli Tuisavalalo Oloāsavaii[100] the *Vaimauga* version of *Vaea* and *Apaula's* story is incorrect. He claims that this is a family legend, as he is a descendent of the people in this story. Oloāsavaii claims that his family name and the graves of *Oloāupolu* and *Oloāsavaii*[101], *Vaea's* parents from *Tufutafoe*[102], are still there as landmarks to commemorate this story. Oloāsavaii states that in his family, he has two brothers named *Vaea* and *Vaatausili* and a sister named *Apaula* and that he was named after *Vaea's* son, *Tuisavalalo*. He continues by saying that *Vaea* and his family stayed in *Tufutafoe*, but only came to *Upolu* to visit his mother's family in *Vaimauga*. According to Oloāsavaii, *Vaea* was in *Vaimauga* when the sons of *Tuifiti* came over to kill him. They went to *Savaii* but did not find him. Instead they were told that *Vaea* was in *Upolu* visiting his family. Oloāsavaii reiterates that the reason *Vaea* sent *Apaula* to look for *Vaatausili*[103] in *Savaii* is so that he could avenge the killing of his son. He

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[100] Loli Tuisavalalo Oloāsavaii, (Interview with the author), 26 May 2010, 3.00pm. He is the *matai* of *Tufutafoe* and a member of the *Faleula o Samoa*.

[101] *Oloāupolu* and *Oloāsavaii* were *Salevao's* parents.

[102] *Tufutafoe* is in the district of *Alataua i Sisifo*, in the western side of *Savaii*.

[103] *Vaatausili* was *Salevao's* brother.

further states that the name *Apaula* has been given to the *sa'otamaitai*[104] at *Tufutafoe* in remembrance of her.

This claim is absurd according to the people of *Vaimauga*. They strongly reject Oloāsavaii's assertion. Their view is well represented by Pupualii Senio Pupualii[105] and Laauli Kalauta Faimalo[106]. They claim that *Vaea's* father was *Oloasavaii* from *Tufutafoe* and his mother was *Oloāupolu* from *Vaimauga.* They resided in the *Vaimauga* district. However, his brother *Vaatausili*, a mere boy, went and stayed with his father's family at *Tufutafoe*, because people of *Vaimauga* did not like him. They firmly believe that this version of the story is truly a story of *Vaimauga*. Fainuulelei Hawaii Lavea[107] supports Pupualii and Faimalo's arguments and stated that most of the landmarks in this story are found in *Vaimauga*. This includes the Mount of *Vaea* and the river tears of *Apaula*.

The story sheds three important ecological perspectives that further enhance our methodological apparatus in understanding from a Samoan and earth perspective in using biblical text. Firstly, *Apaula* seeks her husband to be a blood avenger for the death of their son. Unable to fulfil that request and compounded with the fact that her son is dead, tears were shed as a sign of resistance to the inflicted pain suffered at the hands of her brothers. Tears can be a physical response mechanism used by the body to release tension and stress. The site of tears is an indication that the body is no longer able to cope with the overburdening stress and tension. It is similar to the earth when it is no

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[104] The word *sa'otamaitai* refers to as a chieftainess who has the direction. It is a group of unmarried women within the village community. *See* George Pratt, *Pratt's Grammar & Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1977), 263.

[105] Pupualii Senio Pupualii (Interview with the author), 24 May 2010, 9.30am. He is a mayor and high chief of the village of *Matautu-Uta* in the *Vaimauga* district.

[106] Laauli Kalauta Faimalo (Interview with the author), 24 May 2010, 11.00am. He is the *matai* of the village of *Apia* in the *Vaimauga* district.

[107] Fainuulelei Hawaii Lavea (Interview with the author), 24 May 2010, 4.00pm. He is the *matai* and *pulenuu* (mayor) of the village of *Vaiala* in the *Vaimauga* district.

longer able to tolerate the abuse it suffers at the hands of creation. Its resistance is seen in its response, such as droughts, floods, and other natural disasters. The tears of *Apaula* illustrate that response and the flowing of her tears further enhances that intimate relationship that exists between creation and the earth.

Secondly, the story shows the interconnectedness of a family relationship. For parents, children are precious and to lose a child is to lose a part of oneself. Therefore, losing their son illustrated the strong family ties that exists in families, for they both wept over the tragic loss. This bond also sheds light on the relationship between humanity and the earth. For *Vaea* was transforming into a mountain, and yet he wept together with his wife, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"* reinforces the interrelatedness of human to the *eleele* (land). Therefore, the story shows how Samoans and the earth are interconnected beings and that what happens to one, affects the other.

Lastly, the ecojustice principle of purpose is witnessed in this story. Every part of the created order has an intrinsic worth and purpose. In our story, we bear witness to that purpose. The son of *Vaea* and *Apaula* represented the last living heir to their family line. He was the representative of his parents into the future as the seed of hope and the seed that will further populate the earth. However, his death brought an end to that purpose. Like the earth, everything in it plays a role to ensure the well being of creation. Each created part plays its role in the larger scheme of things. When one part is missing or lost, creation can no longer function normally. This is seen with the outcome of the story in the weeping of the land, again highlighting the strong interconnectedness between humanity and the earth. This story in combination with the other two stories demonstrates the strong interconnectedness that exists between a Samoan and the *eleele* (land). In the end the *eleele* is an important part of a Samoan's identity along with his/her culture, language, and traditions.

2.4 My Lenses in Reading Hosea 4:1 – 3

After critically reviewing the stories behind the Samoan proverb *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*, several conclusions can be drawn that can aid in the construction of our reading approach. Firstly, the land (earth and rock) is seen by Samoans as parents of humanity, with Samoans being deeply connected to the land and in unison with the land, meaning Samoans are the sons and daughters of the land. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi[108] explains this connection between man and the land using the Samoan ritual of burying the embryonic birth sac that contains the *uso/fanua* (placenta) and the *pute* (umbilical cord) after birth. The significance of this ritual is to remind the people of the common birthing process shared by the human female and the mother land. Therefore, illustrating that the origin of the human body is the land, a declaration by the Samoans that the land is a living, life-giving and life-receiving being. In other words the land is a source of life for all Samoans. The imagery recalls a mother weeping for her children, just as the land is a life-giving mother that weeps over her children within it. Therefore, we can no longer view ourselves as a separate entity from the land, but instead we must view ourselves as land creatures, brought forth by the land as our mother and our source of life.

Furthermore, as a parent, the land deeply feels for humanity, expressing feelings of despair, sorrow, and grief when humanity suffers during troubling times. This can be seen in the three stories where the land (*fatu*/rock and *eleele*/earth) weeps or cries for humanity. For example, in the Creation story, the land weeps for *Valua* and *Tiapa;* in the story of *Salevao,* the land weeps because of *Salevao's* suffering and in the story of

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[108] Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, (Interview with the Author), 20 April 2010, 11.00am. His Highness is the Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa.

Vaea and *Apaula*, the land cries over *Apaula's* loss of her son and husband. This is affirmation of the Samoan belief that the land possesses a voice or a means to communicate its thoughts and feelings. In other words, they are feelings of sadness or resistance towards injustice.

Finally, seeing the land as parents for humanity not only affirms the fact that humanity depends on the land for its needs, welfare, and protection but it also highlights the reciprocal obligation that humanity has toward the land. That is humanity needs to treat the land with the utmost care, respect and honour. The actions of humanity have severe consequences for the land. Therefore, humanity must be a good steward, a good son, or a good daughter if the land is to continue to care and provide for the land's well being.

These conclusions are clearly in line with some of the ecojustice principles of the Earth Bible Project. As a Samoan, we are blood descendents of the land. So the land is in me and I am in the land. So I will read Hosea 4:1 – 3 from this perspective or what the Earth Bible Project calls the "Earth/land creature" Bible perspective[109]. This requires a completely different type of mentality, completely opposite to the usual norms of reading a biblical text. This means that when I read about the land, I will respect, listen with empathy, have sympathy towards, feel for, and honour the land.

Chapter 3

Literature Review of Hosea 4:1-3

This chapter provides a review of the studies of scholarly studies of Hosea 4:1-3. It will highlight the methodologies of reading and their interpretations of the text in question. Because of the limited space given for this project, the aim here is not to provide an exhaustive review of biblical scholarship, but to select a few works that depict the development and trend of reading and studying of Hosea 4:1-3.

3.1 Hans Walter Wolff's Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

Hans Wolff's approach of Hosea 4:1-3 is from a form critical perspective[110]. This form of study identifies this passage as a prophetic judgement speech. In other words, Wolff sees the "Land Mourns" narrative as the prophet addressing not only the land but all its inhabitants in regard to YHWH's[111] lawsuit.[112]

The lawsuit is based on Israel's offenses that have been committed. There is no trustworthiness or faithfulness as well as a lack of loyalty toward the land. In other words, it shows a lack of communal responsibility among the people of Israel living together on the land. Their crime is rooted in their lack of knowledge regarding God. In

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[109] The Earth Bible Team, (2000), 38.

[110] Form Critical or Form Criticism is described as integrative pattern analysis. That is a view which examines the form, content, and function of a particular unit to be classified and interpreted as belonging to a particular genre. This criticism is looking at the structure, genre, setting and intention of a text. Martin J. Buss, Form Criticism, in Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Hayes, *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 70.

[111] This thesis will use the spelling: "YHWH" rather than Yahweh and will be used interchangeably with God in the analysis.

[112] Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 66.

other words, their crimes are based on their disobedience to God's commandments. Accordingly, Israel's due punishment from YHWH comes in the form of a great drought. Therefore, the land will completely wither away and will no longer be able to sustain any form of life, whether human or any other inhabitants of the land.[113]

Wolff stated that this proclamation formula is very common during the time of the prophets. For instance in verse 1a, "Hear the word of YHWH, O sons of Israel", is also an expression that is found in Amos, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In addition, the introduction of the lawsuit in these narratives have the same setting as the introduction of the judgement given in the court assembled at the city gate found in the book of Exodus.[114] This supports the view that the judgement speech in the narrative is a tradition and common practice during the era of the prophets, while its settings can be found in the judicial system of Israel.

As discussed previously, Israel's punishment from YHWH came in the form of a drought on the land. Wolff states that the impact of this drought will not only affect humans and all the other inhabitants of the land, but it will also affect the land. All life including humans, vegetation, animals, birds and even the fish of the sea will cease to exist because the land will dry up.

In summary, Wolff sees Israel as a nation raised by YHWH to be his faithful people. In return, Israel is not only expected to obey YHWH's commandments but should have knowledge of Him. However, this was not the case. According to Wolff, Israel has no knowledge of God. As a result, they failed to live harmoniously with their own fellow citizens. They are no longer concerned with the welfare of their neighbours. Swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery became embedded within a community

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[113] Wolff, (1989), 66.

[114] Wolff, (1989), 67.

where brotherhood once thrived. As a result, Israel ceased to exist as YHWH's people, and the land and all of its inhabitants endured suffering as a consequence of Israel's disobedience.[115]

3.2 Graham. I. Davies' Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

Davies sees the function of the "Land Mourns" narrative along the same lines as Wolff. In other words, he uses the same form of study to analyse the narrative. According to Davies, the form critical study of the narrative certainly confirms the series of units with different themes and addresses in Hosea 4:1-19. However, the narrative (Hosea 4:1-3) is considered to be a prophetic judgment speech, in which the accusation is formulated first followed by the judicial sentence.[116]

Hosea was appealing to the people of Israel to hear the word of YHWH because of the accusations YHWH brought against them. This includes no kindness, no faithfulness within the community, and Israelites' lack of knowledge of God. In other words, Israel failed to provide assistance for their neighbours because they had no devotion in their hearts to lend any help to those who were in need. However, the lack of knowledge by the Israelites of YHWH led them to commit the crimes in verse 2, which includes swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery. Thus, Israel could not go without punishment for the crimes they committed. Davies stated that YHWH delivered Israel's punishment in the form of a great drought. This brings destruction not only to the land, but also the lives of people, animals, and all living creatures who dwell on the land.[117]

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[115] Wolff, (1989), 67.

[116] Graham. I. Davies, *NCBC: Hosea*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 110.

[117] Davies, (1992), 113-114.

Davies claims that the language and accusations in the narrative have been framed similarly with the judicial terms in two psalms (Psalms 50 and 81). These judicial accounts were normally used for cultic worship. Therefore the prophetic lawsuit was developed from a feature of the temple worship, even though the hearers of Hosea were not familiar with temple worship.[118] This indicates that the judicial system during the time of Hosea was either a continuation of the Psalter's legal system in terms of worship or it was borrowed.

According to Davies, the word "mourns" or "languish" refers to either "to dry up" or "shall be dried up". Thus the expression "dry up" refers to a present experience and "shall be dried up" refers to a prophetic expectation.[119] Thus, the land or earth being dried up has dire consequences for all the inhabitants of the earth. In other words, the living creatures on the earth wither and perish away. The land mourning in this narrative reflects a land that is being dried up.

Davies' analysis highlights that YHWH's legal actions against Israel is rooted in their lack of knowledge of YHWH. In other words, Israel's continual disobedience and commitment of many offenses stem from their thinking that God is not present amongst the land.[120] However, Hosea has already made known Israel's crimes beforehand, but Israel failed to listen. Consequently, YHWH punished Israel for their sins by causing the land to dry up. Thus the land is seen to be a victim of Israel's crime.

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[118] Davies, (1992), 113.

[119] Davies, (1992), 116.

3.3 James Limburg's Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

Like Wolff and Davies, Limburg employs a form critical study in his analysis of the "Land Mourns" narrative. In his studies, Limburg correlates the background of the narrative with the court of law proceeding. According to Limburg, YHWH is the plaintiff and judge of this legal case against Israel. Limburg highlights three negative charges brought by YHWH against the defendant, Israel.[121]

Firstly, there is no faithfulness in Israel. Limburg observes a lack of trustworthiness in the community of Israel during the time of Hosea. Secondly there is no kindness in Israel. Israel's crimes such as killing, stealing, adultery and murder illustrates the lack of love and loyalty in the community, but especially in their relationship with YHWH. Lastly, Israel has no knowledge of God in the land. Limburg states that Israel fails to acknowledge God as a Saviour and a Giver of good gifts. Their ignorant attitude towards YHWH is the cause of the many crimes committed and violations of the Ten Commandments and brings two charges with sociological and theological implications against Israel.[122]

Limburg states that the prophetic judgement speech, a form of saying used in the Old Testament is very common to the prophets. It begins with an accusation (vv.1-2) providing the reason for an announcement of future punishment (v.3).[123] Therefore, common practice during the time of the prophets can be regarded as the prophetic tradition of pronouncing YHWH's complaint or lawsuit against his people, Israel.

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[120] Davies, (1992), 116.

[121] James Limburg, *Hosea-Micah: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 16.

[122] Limburg, (1988), 16.

[123] Limburg, (1988), 17.

According to Limburg, the punishment announced in verse 3 denotes an ecological crisis that threatens not only human but all life on earth. This crisis is also found in Israel's attitude of arrogance, irreverence, selfishness, and greed. It is believed that the root of this ecological crisis is a result of Israel's failure to acknowledge YHWH and to care for their neighbour.[124] This lack of faith by Israel led to the withering and pollution of the earth. As a result, the earth and all its creatures would soon be destroyed.

In this passage, Limburg presents the crimes committed by Israel as lodged by YHWH, as a violation of the Ten Commandments. This includes murder, stealing and adultery. As a result of Israel's failure to acknowledge God as the only God in the land, the land or earth has become polluted and withered. This threatens all the inhabitants on Earth, humans and all living creatures.[125] Therefore the land mourns in this passage as a result of Israel's violation of God's rules in the Ten Commandments.

3.4 Elizabeth Achtemeier's Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

Unlike Wolff, Davies and Limburg, Achtemeier uses rhetorical analysis[126] as a tool for interpreting the "Land Mourns" narrative. She argues rhetorical analysis shows that the redactor uses Hosea 4:1-3 to summarise the prophetic messages and materials collected in chapters one to three and use it as an introduction of the book. The intention of the redactor is to read chapter four to chapter fourteen through the lenses of the introductory summary (1-3). By using this method, Achtemeier divides chapter four

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[124] Limburg, (1988), 18.

[125] Limburg, (1988), 18.

[126] Rhetorical Analysis or Rhetorical Criticism is a denotation of a reading strategy to the Bible designed to uncover the writer's objective and meaning by identifying the compositional content, structure and style of the text. Critics using this approach should have an eye for parallelism, chiasmus, inclusion, repetitions and so forth. *See* Hays and Holladay, (1983), 74.

into two sections. The first section s verses 1-10 and it shows the loss of the springs of life in the land. The second section is verses 11-19 and it concerns the cultic life of the people.[127]

According to Achtemeier, the "Land Mourns" narrative is an indictment of the relationship between Israel, God, and themselves. God has initiated a court proceeding against Israel because there is no reliability, no loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. It is because of the lack of reliability and loyalty to God that chaos reigns in its society. In other words, more crimes have been committed by the Israelites against the land.[128] Rhetorically, this broken relationship has been depicted in Hosea's relationship with his unfaithful wife, Gomer, in the preceding chapters (1 – 3).

Achtemeier foreshadows the judgement befalling the faithless people of Israel as the cause of a great drought in which the land will wither and the sea will dry up. In other words, Israel will be cut off from all springs of life.[129]

As discussed previously, Achtemeier has mirrored the broken relationship of YHWH and the Israelites with the relationship of Hosea and Gomer. The argument suggests that the unfaithful Gomer is a depiction of a return to the pagan gods of the Cannanites. In other words, these pagan gods should have been abandoned and forsaken when YHWH delivered Israel from exile (Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon). From Achtemeier's point of view, paganism still persists in Israel, even though YHWH is the one who gave them life.[130]

Achtemeier acknowledges the punishment that the Israelites will face due to their broken relationship with God. This is a drought which will bring misery not only

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[127] Elizabeth Achtemeier, *NIBC Minor Prophets: Hosea*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 35.

[128] Achtemeier, (1996), 34.

[129] Achtemeier, (1996), 36.

to the inhabitants of the earth but also the earth itself. The land will wither away and even the sea will dry up.[131]

Archtemeier's rhetorical study of the narrative highlights the broken relationship between Hosea and Gomer. Hosea and Gomer are also seen symbolically to represent YHWH (Hosea) and Israel (Gomer) and thus a theological discussion of the broken relationship between Israel and YHWH, due to Israel's faithlessness to the providential love of YHWH.

3.5 Gale A. Yee's Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

Gale A. Yee's interpretation of the narrative utilises the same critical methodology employed by Achtemeier, rhetorical analysis. This analysis prompted Yee to point out that Hosea 4:1-3 is the introduction to chapters four to chapter eleven, while still preserving obvious links with chapters one to chapter three.[132] In other words, the accounts in the narrative of chapter four to chapter eleven are still contrasted with those found in chapter one to chapter three. However, chapter one to chapter three are not an introduction to chapter four to chapter eleven. Thus the view found in Hosea 2:2-15, in which Hosea complains against the unfaithfulness of his wife, is further expanded in Hosea 4:1-3 as God's legal complaint against the people of Israel. In addition, Yee also views the broken relationship between YHWH and Israel in the narrative as the broken covenant between Hosea and Gomer. That is YHWH accuses the sons of Israel for

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[130] Achtemeier, (1996), 36.

[131] Achtemeier, (1996), 36.

[132] Gale A. Yee, *The Book of Hosea*, in Leander E. Keck, et.al, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 7.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 236.

committing crimes that are prohibited by the Decalogue, similar to Hosea accusing his wife for being unfaithful in their marriage.[133]

Like Achtemeier, Yee mirrors the narrative regarding YHWH and his people with the accounts in the preceding chapters concerning Hosea's family. In this case, Hosea 4:1-3 illustrates that YHWH will take disciplinary actions against his disobedient children, Israel. This is similar to the dynamics found in Jewish households regarding the disciplining of children who break the law (cf. Proverb 23:13-14).[134]

Yee highlights the anguish of the creation because of the social iniquity of Israel. Creation's anguish is a result of human wickedness that pollutes nature and all the creatures within it. This cosmic corruption is known as a drought.[135] This corruption will cause the land to become infertile, which can be compared to the barrenness of a woman. Yee continues that the narrative illustrates interdependency between the land and those who dwell on it. Therefore, the way people live their lives will invariably affect the rest of creation. If people bless God, the land will blossom with lush vegetation, but when people sin, then the land will mourn. The pollution of our land proves the brokenness of our society. Therefore, the narrative is a call to action to reinforce our bonds with the rest of creation, exhorting us to restore the harmony amongst creation by setting our lives in order.[136]

Yee emphasises that the narrative basically illustrates the infection of creation by the social iniquity of the land's inhabitants. In other words, the wickedness of Israel

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[133] Yee, (1994), 236.

[134] "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death." NIV Translation.

[135] Yee, (1994), 236.

[136] Yee, (1994), 237.

and their failure to keep the covenant with God will cause the inhabitants to suffer by withering and perishing away. [137]

3.6 Melissa Tubbs Loya's Reading of the "Land Mourns" Narrative

In her article 'Therefore the Land Mourns; The Grievance of Earth in Hosea 4:1-3'[138], Melissa Tubbs Loya claims that the narrative is an example of the lawsuit (byr) genre, in which YHWH brings a covenant lawsuit against the people of Israel. But she poses a question regarding the role that the Earth plays in this lawsuit. Interestingly, Loya argues:

> "Earth[139] is the active agent through which YHWH's judgement is rendered in Hosea 4:1-3. YHWH acts in bringing the lawsuit. However, Earth acts in bringing about the consequences. It is Earth, then, and not YHWH, that acts in verse 3. Yet, Earth does not act outside of YHWH's purposes. Rather Earth – the entire cosmos – is governed not only by physical laws, but also by moral order YHWH builds into creation at its inception. The mourning, languishing, and perishing of earth and its inhabitants described by Hosea are consequences of Israel's breach of this moral order through the crimes they commit against one another."[140]

However, Loya's analysis highlights that this is not the only role that the Earth plays in the narrative. The Earth is described as a home and not just the political entity of Israel, but rather a residence also to the animals of the field, the birds of the air, and

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[137] Yee, (1994), 237.

[138] Melissa Tubbs Loya, Therefore the Earth Mourns: The Grievance of Earth in Hosea 4:1-3, in Habel and Trudinger, (eds.), (2005), 53.

[139] The word "earth" derived from the Hebrew word Ar²a² can also be referred to land. *See* F. Brown, S. Driver and C. Briggs, (2003), 75. In this thesis either word can be used in discussion of the narrative.

[140] Loya, (2005), 54.

the fish of the sea.[141] Therefore, the Earth sustains all creation. In that sense, the earth in verse 3 is mourning when Israel commits her crimes in and against the land.

The article brings into light the crucial role that the earth or land plays in the narrative. This is reflected by the significance of the land to the people of Israel. Traditionally, it is Israel's national identity, which was gifted to them by YHWH. Therefore, if Israel committed crimes then its identity would suffer from God's wrath, however, if they remain faithful to YHWH, their land will flourish and bear good fruits.[142]

As discussed previously, Loya sees the earth in the narrative as YHWH's agent in His lawsuit against Israel. That is the earth will deliver the punishment to Israel. Therefore, the earth will bring the consequences upon those who dwell on it, including humans, animals of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea. Yet, the land is also presented as a victim in the narrative, which suffers from Israel's crimes.

Loya's overview of the narrative looks from the perspective of the land. In other words, the earth emerges as the active agent, simultaneously imposing and suffering the sentence of YHWH against Israel. Loya suggests that this narrative serves as a reminder to its readers to refrain from the anthropocentric approaches that obscure the earth's role in its relationship between YHWH and creation.[143]

3.7 Summary

The aforementioned literature review of the "Land Mourns" narrative reveals an apparent development. The movement from the anthropocentric (man centred) western

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[141] Loya, (2005), 57.

[142] Loya, (2005), 57.

[143] Loya, (2005), 62.

interpretation to the geocentric (land centred) interpretation of the Earth Bible Project is clearly seen. On the one end of the spectrum, scholars Wolff, Davies, Limburg all use form critical analysis to interpret Hosea 4:1-3. In their interpretation, they viewed Hosea 4:1-3 as a prophetic judgment speech pronouncing punishment for Israel for their sins against God. These interpretations are anthropocentric or human oriented; centring on humanity without any consideration of the lands role and involvement of the land in the story. They view the land mourns as a metaphorically description of the punishment inflicted upon humanity by God; and also they see the land mourns as a small element in the overall punishment of humanity by God. In this sense we can still see humanity's superiority over land.

In the middle of the continuum, we can place the views of Achtemeier and Yee. They both interpret Hosea 4:1-3 using rhetorical criticism. They also see Hosea 4:1-3 as a prophetic judgment. However, unlike the above three, Achtemeier and Yee put little emphasis on the roles of the land. They saw creation's anguish as a response to human wickedness described in the marriage metaphor of Hosea. In this sense the land is seen as making judgment and expressing herself towards human actions. So we can say that from Achtemeier's and Yee's interpretations the land has a voice and plays a role in the story.

On the other end of the spectrum, Loya reads Hosea 4:1-3 from an ecological perspective. In her reading, the land becomes the centre of the story. That is the land now plays a role similar to God's, as an agent of God's judgment. The land also becomes a victim of Israel's crimes as she carries the burden and cries because of Israel's calamities. Furthermore, the land plays a God-like role, becoming the judge to judge Israel's sins, the prosecutor accusing Israel of sinful acts, and the executioner to carry out the punishment through lying idle and unproductive. Moreover, it can also be

seen from Loya's reading that the land possesses Godly attributes, especially the attribute of love as shown through the land weeping for the failures and sufferings of Israel.

It is clear and conclusive from this critique that the land which was once at the periphery of interpretations, is now at the centre under the ecological methodological perspective, serving the aims of the Earth Bible Project but also is in direct alignment and continuity with the aims of an ecological-cultural (Samoan) perspective.

Chapter 4

Reading Hosea 4:1-3 from an Ecological-Cultural (Samoan) Perspective

This chapter will critically analyse Hosea 4:1-3 from a Samoan ecological perspective developed by critically analysing the Samoan proverbial saying *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*.[144] In doing so, there will be an attempt to dialogue with the scholarly views mentioned in the previous chapters. The aim of this dialogue is to broaden our horizons and to identify where this Samoan ecological reading stands in respect to the modern interpretations of Hosea 4:1-3. The lenses that will be used to understand this reading are: land as parents, land with parental attributes, and the reciprocal responsibility of children to their parents/land.

4.1 Land as Parents

Firstly, by using the lens of the land (earth and rock) as parents of humanity, with Samoans being deeply connected to the land and in unison with the land, meaning Samoans are the sons and daughters of the land. Our interpretation of Hosea 4:1-3 will then parallel the views of Achtemeier[145] and Yee[146] who view the "Land Mourns" narrative as the lands inability to reproduce in comparison with the barrenness of a woman. Although Achtemeier and Yee have drawn this conclusion, it is based on their interpretation of the "Land Mourns" narrative as the consequence of the broken

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[144] *See* Reading Lenses, 35.

[145] *See* Achtemeier's Reading, 44.

[146] *See* Yee's Reading, 46.

relationship between YHWH and Israel through the marriage metaphor of Hosea and Gomer. Moreover, they both view the land as the weaker partner in this relationship, dependent on humanity as the final say in its behaviour. However, from the Samoan ecological perspective, the land is the parent upon which humanity depends for existence. Without the land, humanity ceases to exist. Therefore, when the land mourns, there ceases to be an inheritance for humanity and ultimately no future.

From this perspective, the land mourns in Hosea 4:3 and therefore can be seen as a parent's cry because of the despair and desolation that fell upon her children (people, wild animals, birds and fish).

> "Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing" **(Hosea 4:3)**[147]

All these are the consequences of human action: their lack of faithfulness and loyalty toward God, their stealing, murdering, swearing and committing adultery. The failure on the part of humanity to know and understand who God is has brought this indictment upon them and all of the inhabitants of the land. Therefore, the land mourns and weeps because of its interconnectedness with humanity. Humanity no longer stands alone before God in the courtroom to receive its punishment for its misbehaviour. Rather, humanity stands together with the land and all its inhabitants to face God's judgment and therefore suffer together the punishment from God.

The land's cry to an extent can be seen as the fulfilment of the ecojustice principle of voice. However the land's voice here is not raised for the cause of celebration or to resist injustices toward her. Instead, it is a cry of love due to the suffering of loved ones. In this sense, the land's cry in Hosea 4:1-3 is not because of the fulfilment of the punishment for humanity's sins, but an expression of love and concern

for Israel whom God has punished for their sins. Moreover, the land as parent brings to the fore the ecojustice principle of custodianship. That is the inhabitants of the land, humanity, animals, birds and fish are all under the land's custody. The land is providing them with protection, shelter, and care. So from our designed perspective, we can also see the land's mourning as a cry of distress and anguish because the land no longer will be able to provide what a guardian should be able to provide for those under her care.

4.2 Land with Parental Attributes

Secondly, as parents the land deeply feels for humanity, expressing feelings of despair, sorrow, and grief when humanity suffers during troubling times. As a parent, the land does not mourn or weep because of humanity's indiscretion or sins. Instead, it mourns because her child is suffering. The parental characteristics attributed to the land in this lens helps to expand the traditional reading of the land mourns narrative in Hosea 4:1-3. One of the traditional views sees the land as YHWH's active agent in delivering the punishment to Israel.[148] However, the Samoan ecological perspective views the land as a sympathetic and loving parent who weeps and mourns over the judgment and punishment that has befallen humanity. The land does not react as a consequence of humanity's actions; instead it reacts out of love for what humanity is going through because of its actions towards YHWH. The "Land Mourns" narrative through this lens is a geocentric perspective of how the land is a loving and compassionate parent and not an instrument of YHWH's passing judgment.

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[147] NRSV

[148] *See* Loya's Reading, 49.

According to Hosea 4:1 an indictment has been brought upon all inhabitants of the land because there is no knowledge of God in the land:

> "Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land." **(Hosea 4:1)**[149]

This illustrates how humanity and all of creation is to suffer due to their unresponsiveness to God. The pending judgment to befall humanity causes the land to weep and mourn out of sorrow, despair, and grief. The emotional instability of the land is not a consequence of punishment, but rather a consequence of humanity's inter-relatedness to the land as its children and offspring. The land therefore feels sympathy and pain when it sees its own children suffering and enduring pain.

To support this shared suffering, Hosea 4:3 further states,

> "...all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea..."
> (Hosea 4:3)

The land and all of its inhabitants (people, wild animals, birds and fish) all mourn together because of their interconnectedness. Therefore, the land is unable to separate itself from humanity and likewise for humanity. From this perspective, it can clearly be seen that the land weeps because of humanity's pain because humanity is an extension of the land, and not as the agent of suffering. In other words, if the land were an agent to inflict pain and suffering upon humanity, then it would be inflicting that pain and suffering upon itself. However, it shares the pain and suffering of humanity in its mourning and weeping. This illuminates the ecojustice concept of interconnectedness. It shows how the land and all its inhabitants are linked and connected to one another.

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[149] NRSV

When one part is in pain, the rest feels for that component. In this sense, the land's weeping can be seen as a collective cry of creation for humanity who is at the receiving end of God's wrath.

4.3 Reciprocal Obligation of Humanity

Thirdly, the land as parents for humanity not only affirms the fact that humanity depends on the land for its needs, welfare, and protection, but it also highlights the reciprocal obligation that humanity has toward the land. This final lens highlights the fact that humanity has a role to protect and care for the land in return for the necessities, providing for its welfare, and protection received from the land. This reciprocal relationship stems from the symbiosis that exists between parents and their children and vice versa. This symbiosis is seen in the intimate relationship between a nurturing child and mother. Without the mother, the child would perish, but as the child gets older and becomes an adult, that adult-child has the responsibility to provide for and protect its mother. It is this relationship that forms and shapes this Samoan ecological lens.

In Hosea 4:1-3:

> "Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing."
>
> **(Hosea 4:1-3;NRSV)**

This relationship between the land (parents) and humanity is illustrated negatively in that humanity's actions towards the land is seen in its unfaithfulness, lack of loyalty, lack of knowledge of God, swearing, lying, murder, stealing, adultery and bloodshed after bloodshed. The consequence being that the land and all its inhabitants mourn. The

symbiotic relationship illustrated in Hosea 4:1-3 depicts humanity as failing to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities to their parents (land). The land has provided faithfully and diligently in sustaining and maintaining life (humanity). However, humanity's indiscretions and failures before God have caused the land to mourn.

The "Land Mourns" in Hosea 4:1-3 highlights humanity's failure to respond to the love, care, and well-being provided by the land as a parent provides for a child. Humanity's forgetfulness of its connections to the land is also a reflection of its lost identity. The land that gave birth, nurtured, raised, and provided for humanity has been forgotten and in so doing, humanity has been disowned and cut from its ancestral line. Removed from its identity, humanity misbehaves and encounters troubling times, which is further complicated by God's judgment. Therefore, according to this lens, in order for humanity to redeem itself before God, humanity must return to the land. Humanity must take up its responsibilities of caring for the land and providing for its well being. Unless that happens, humanity will continue to incur God's judgment and the land will continue to mourn and weep until humanity returns home.

These lenses reveal that the relationship between the land and humanity has now shifted from the periphery and has taken its rightful place in the centre of our continuum. As mentioned earlier with our spectrum of analysis that looked at the prevailing scholarship and its interpretations of Hosea 4:1-3, there was a development in how the earth was viewed as a passive bystander in God's and humanity's interactions.[150], to playing a minor part in God's relationship with humanity[151], and finally as the active agent in God's judgment and punishment of humanity[152]. From these perspectives and in combination with the ecological-cultural (Samoan) lenses

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[150] *See* Wolff's Reading, 39; Davies' Reading, 41; Limburg's Reading, 43.

[151] *See* Achtemeier's Reading, 44; Yee's Reading, 46.

utilised, the land has taken its rightful place as the equal partner and co-defendant with humanity before God. The land is no longer viewed as a separate entity outside of humanity; instead it is an integral part of who humanity is and what humanity will become. Therefore, the reading of Hosea 4:1-3 illustrates a new understanding of the interdependency of humanity's role to the land as equal partners in sustaining and maintaining life.

[152] *See*, Loya's Reading, 48.

Conclusion

The fusion of ecological theory and cross-cultural theory into an Ecological-Cultural Reading Approach has proven to be a difficult task. However, from this study, it has been clearly demonstrated that the employment of this new reading device to read the biblical narrative brings out new and fresh insights.

This was achieved by allowing the interpreter to bring in his or her own cultural context into the interpretative process. Knowing one's culture enables dialogue between the reader and the text and the world behind the text. This dialogue between the reader and the text creates a fusion of the interpreter's horizon with that of the text and author. In addition, the interpreter brings into light the ecological crisis surrounding his or her environment in this process. The interpreter no longer ignores this crisis as it becomes a global issue in both the contemporary world of the reader and biblical world.

In this study, I have found out that knowing my cultural background with my understanding of the recent environmental changes have equipped me well for my engagement with the "Land Mourns" narrative. Such prior preparation has given me the ability to draw out meaningful interpretations of the text, relevant to my context. Apart from that, the process has made me aware of the biases that exist in the interpretative process. These biases were usually disregarded or ignored before. However, this has given me a greater appreciation of the readings and meanings drawn out of texts by other interpreters, since we all have different social and cultural locations. For this reason, an ecological-cultural approach cannot deem its interpretation final because one's interaction is always a part of a wider activity of interactions in which others are involved.

Through employment of cross-cultural reading, I was able to authenticate my immediate interpretation of the "Land Mourns" narrative during my initial encounter with the text. Because of my cultural background, my attention was shifted away from the rest of the "Land Mourns" narrative and drawn closely to the relationship that Israel shares with the land. This shift has led to the conclusion that the "Land Mourns" narrative highlights this close relationship. In other words, the unfaithfulness of Israel in this relationship makes the land mourns.

The shift in the interpretative centre was based on the stories that formulated the proverb, *"ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele"*. My understanding of the proverb unconsciously pointed me towards the relationship of Israel to the land. However, this was just one of the many parallels and comparisons that could have been used from the proverb stories.

In our ecological study of the proverb and the "Land Mourns" narrative, we learned that the proverb expanded on our understanding of the "Land Mourns" narrative. This is evident in the three lenses that were employed: 1) the lens that viewed the land as the parents of humanity, 2) the land with parental attributes, and 3) the reciprocal relationship that exists between the land and humanity. Utilising these three lenses to critically analyse the land mourn narratives of Hosea 4:1-3 further enhanced the development of scholarship that moved the land from the periphery in its relationship to humanity and brought it to the fore as the equal partner of humanity in maintaining and sustaining life. This new ecological-cultural methodology has provided a new Samoan ecological perspective in reading biblical text.

On this note, I believe the objective of this study has been achieved. I have proven without any reasonable doubt that my cultural background and the recent change in the environment shaped the outcome of my encounter with the studied text. Although my interpretation may have some limitations, it can be added to one of the many

readings and interpretations of the "Land Mourns" narrative. This study has certainly witnessed the potency of ecological-cultural reading approach. It is therefore the belief of this study that any interpretation of biblical texts must always take ecological-cultural exegesis into account.

The use of an ecological-cultural methodology has an inherent limitation, and that is the final reading is understood through the eyes of the eco-culturalist, thus anthropocentric. However, this limitation may be understood as a practical view of the biblical text. What is meant by this is that the purpose of exegesis, hermeneutics, or plain and simple interpretation is for the reader to understand what is being read. Whether it is through the eyes of the author or the reader himself, the purpose of any material is for the one reading to fully grasp what was written by the author.

In order to do so, we must immerse ourselves into the world of the author to see what he saw and what he ended up writing. However, for us to make sense of it, we must come to understand it in our own context to fully appreciate what the author intended to write. Therefore, putting ourselves at the fore does not make the interpretation less meaningful, it makes it more practical as long as we are aware our attempts to come to terms with the finite things (things of this world), is the process by which we come to understand and know the infinite things (God). Just because man is centred in our understanding doesn't mean that God's centrality is neglected. It only means that for us to understand, we need to be practical in our thinking so that we can come to understand the impractical or the supernatural.

The use of the ecological-cultural reading on Hosea 4:1-3 was a risky attempt on my part to fuse two horizons by which to understand biblical text. Based on the amount of research and work put into this paper it was not. However, I believe that I was successful in merging the two horizons and extrapolating some insightful and useful

information from the Book of the Prophet Hosea. In so doing, I believe that I have opened a window by which future papers can be creative and free to experiment with the learning process, especially when it comes to understanding "sacred" biblical texts.

The future direction for this paper can look at implementing ecological-cultural practices that will begin to address some of the crisis seen in the world today. In reference to biblical studies, an ecological-cultural reading can look at the end times or the apocalypse as a final act in human history and look at the fusion of cultural practices with ecological issues as a way to speed up or slow down the end days, with the question: can we dictate when the end days will occur? Such ideas are just the tip of the iceberg for any and all interested readers. I just hope that in the end this paper was able to do justice to the merged horizons of the ecological-cultural methodology.

Glossary

Apaula	The daughter of *Tuifiti* accompanied her brothers to Samoa. She appeased the anger of *Vaea* from killing her brothers by marrying him.
Eleele	Earth or land or blood
Ie	A mallet used for making tapa cloth
Fatu	Rock or heart
Feagaiga	Sacred covenant
Fee	A cuttle fish or an octopus
Fulуulaalefanua	The people of *Amoa* believed he was *Salevao's* father but *Salega's* people claimed otherwise to be *Salevao's* mother.
Lauga	Speech
Loimata o Apaula	Tears of *Apaula*
Manua	It is one of the self-dependence eastern islands of Samoa under the jurisdiction of the United States of America.
Mataulufou	The people of *Salega* believed to be *Salevao's* real name.
Moa	A centre of the earth
Oloāupolu	Vaea and Vaatausili's mother
Oloāsavaii	*Vaea* and *Vaatausili's* father
Sa	Sacred
Sa ia Moa	Sacred to *Moa*
Sa'otamaitai	Chieftainess
Sauā	A sub-village of *Satupaitea*.
Savaii	The biggest island of Samoa.
Tagi	Crying/Weeping
Tapu	Taboo
Tautua	Servant/Service
Tuaoi	Boundaries
Tuimanua	He was the descendent of *Le-Fatu ma Le-Eleele*, who ruled the Samoan islands in those days.
Ulioamoa	He is a medium spirit who killed *Salevao's* parents.

Vaatausili	*Vaea's* brother.
Valua and *Tiapa*	The people of *Manua* believed they are the children of *Le-Fatu ma Le-Elelee* was sent to people the island of *Savaii*.
Vave and *Sealiitu*	The people of *Amoa* believed that this couple who saved *Salevao* from the fire later adopted him to be their son.

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