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'SITTING ON THE FENCE'
AS A MECHANISM FOR SURVIVAL:
A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS
OF DANIEL 1:1-17

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ETH 2012

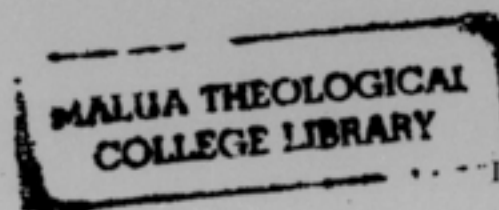


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ABSTRACT

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A Thesis Presented to the
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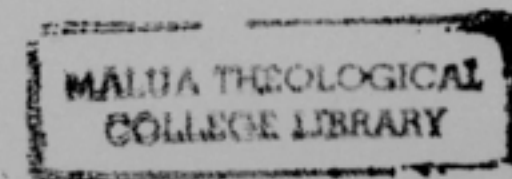
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ABSTRACT

In any dispersed community, one faces the challenge to survive and adapt to their foreign environment, while at the same time trying to stay firm to one's traditional beliefs and native culture. There are many means of survival, however, a postcolonial analysis of Daniel 1:1-17, provides one way to appease both sides. The hybrid lifestyle that is portrayed by the author of Daniel provides one way to survive in a hostile and foreign environment, relevant for all those who live in the Diaspora.

DECLARATION

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research paper to my late brother Derek Pouono who passed away on May 28, 2011. No words can explain the pain of not having you here, but it is my ultimate comfort to know you are at peace with our Lord. I love & miss you.

I dedicate this paper to the Rev. Elder Liki & Eseta and the Dominguez Samoan Congregational Christian Church, UCC for their continuous support and prayers. In addition, I would like to dedicate this paper to the First Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Long Beach along with Rev. Iosefa Momoli Papalii and his wife Mafa, for their spiritual guidance and countless support. This paper is also dedicated to all those who have supported me in one way or another and along with those who are not able to see the completion of this paper due to their calling by our Heavenly Father to their final resting place, especially to my late parents Saveatama Panama and Pesega Pouono.

Finally, this paper is dedicated to my lovely wife Herem and son Panama who have been supportive of my studies and completion of this paper. Malua would not have been the same without your patience, love, and care for me. I love you both.

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NRSV

New Revised Standard Version

OT

Old Testament

WBC

World Biblical Commentary

List of Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>ANE</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern</i>
<i>AOTC</i>	<i>Apollos Old Testament Commentaries</i>
<i>BDB</i>	<i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia</i>
<i>ITC</i>	<i>International Theological Commentary</i>
<i>LXX</i>	<i>Septuagint</i>
<i>NBD</i>	<i>New Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>NIBC</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
<i>OT</i>	<i>Old Testament</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>World Biblical Commentary</i>

Introduction

Over the past decades thousands of Samoans have migrated to the United States of America in search for a better life and future for their families. The transition from the Samoan culture to the American way of life however is not as easy as it seems, as they face problems of the diversity in language, politics, social structure and globalization. As a result, there are those who totally reject the American culture and prefer to stay firm in their Samoan customs and traditional practices. On the other hand, there are Samoans who are born and raised in America, and due to the American culture being embedded in their upbringing, most lose all forms of contact with their Samoan culture and language.

As a Samoan who was born and raised in America, I have experienced firsthand the struggle to uphold the Samoan culture and language passed down to me by my parents. Furthermore, through the struggles of my parents, I have also experienced the hardships that Samoans face when they refuse to adapt to the American lifestyle. The problem which I and many others face is that we tend to "sit on the fence" as far as this common phrase is concerned. Because the concept normally carries a negative notion to it, we tend to feel pressured into choosing which side of the fence we should get off. Should we join the pro-Americans or do we coincide with the anti-Americans?

The aim of this research paper is to address this issue. I have chosen Daniel 1:1-17 as the focal text, as he too was in a similar situation, i.e. an Israelite in the hostile and foreign environment of Babylon. With the appropriation of a Postcolonial Criticism, I believe

that Daniel provides a clear theory and practice of how to survive in between two cultures.

Chapter one will explain Postcolonial Criticism which is the chosen method of interpretation for this task. Chapter two provides the social-historical backdrop in which we are to understand Daniel 1:1-17. In chapter three, I shall then apply the method of interpretation to the text. Finally, I shall conclude by revealing my findings and provide possible implications from the study for today.

1.1 Postcolonial Theory: Origins & Development

In recent years, postcolonial theory has been a discipline used by philosophers and scholars as a way to deconstruct literature and writings of third world countries by revealing the oppressive attitude imposed by their previous ruling imperial powers.¹ Postcolonial theory, according to Dr. Marcos Mallo, (Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Piula Theological School) "initially was largely focused on ways in which literary productions of the former colonies were produced, marketed, and mediated in Europe and America".² Postcolonial theory takes into account the influence of colonization over their subjects through literature, publication, and propaganda and attempts to reveal the vast amount of information that is manipulated and used in prejudiced favour of the West³ to control and

John H. Coatsworth & Carl R. Hollander, *Behind Empire: A Beginner's Handbook* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 170-171.

Marcos Mallo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania" in *Review Theologica* (ed.), *The Pacific Journal of Theology, Series B* Vol. 40 (New South Pacific Association of Theological Schools, 2011), 34-38.

The term West in the contemporary use refers to the Western world including many countries of Europe as well as many countries of European colonial origin in the Americas and Oceania, such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil and India.

Chapter 1

Postcolonial Criticism

This chapter discusses Postcolonial Criticism which is the chosen method for analysis. In order to get a good understanding of the criticism itself, we must first explore the meaning of the postcolonial theory and its development.

1.1 Postcolonial Theory: Origins & Development

In recent years, postcolonial theory has been a discipline used by philosophers and scholars as a way to deconstruct literature and writings of third world countries by revealing the oppressive attitude imposed by their previous ruling imperial powers.¹ Postcolonial theory, according to Dr. Mosese Mailo, (Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Piula Theological School) "initially was largely focused on ways in which literary productions of the former colonies were produced, marketed, and mediated in Europe and America".² Postcolonial theory takes into account the influences of colonization over their subjects through literature, publications and propaganda and attempts to reveal the vast scheme of information that is manipulated and used in prejudiced favour of the West³ to control and

¹ John H. Hayes & Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 170-171.

² Mosese Ma'ilo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania" in Rusiate Tuidrakulu (ed.), *The Pacific Journal of Theology: Series II No. 46*, (Suva: South Pacific Association of Theological Schools, 2011), 34-54.

³ The term West in the contemporary use refers to the Western world includes many countries of Europe as well as many countries of European colonial origin in the Americas and Oceania, such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil and Spain.

colonize the native inhabitants.⁴ It should be clear that postcolonial theory emerged out of the struggle and experience of the colonized people. The imperialist analysis deemed native inhabitants and their views, culture and primitive religion as savage and of no value.

According to Musa W. Dube, (an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Botswana) views postcolonial theory as imperialism, where the imperial culture, language, political system, religion and images are implanted into the subordinate and marginalised native's lives.⁵ The native way of life is replaced with the imperialist ideologies and concepts, thus, making the native people the colonized...manipulating the religion, culture, language, land and minds of the native people, to serve the needs and interests of the imperial powers.⁶

The interest of the imperial powers according to Edward Said, a Professor in English and Comparative Language at the University of Columbia, believes that the colonial powers would fabricate an ideal lifestyle and view of seeing the world as being the right and proper way of living.⁷ This type of brainwashing was executed through European literature as a way of the West to depict under-privileged countries as the 'other'. Power and domination coupled with the production of knowledge by the West, always

⁴ Uriah K. Kim, "Postcolonial Criticism: Who is the Judge in the Books of Judges?", Gale A. Yee (ed.), *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 161-179.

⁵ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 36.

⁶ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 36.

⁷ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 36.

portrayed the people of Africa, Oceania, Asia, etc., as being uncivilized, exotic, and savage through continuous immoral images and literature.⁸

However, these inhumane images and literature were challenged during the 1980's by commonwealth literary critics by creating three types of textual analysis as a way to search deeper for any concealed messages or voices that revolted against colonial powers.⁹ The first group of critics focused on canonical literature.¹⁰ Their goal was to re-investigate and identify any type of continual endorsement or inquiring of the colonial schemes, information, and theory.¹¹ The second group of critics dealt more with non-canonical literature such as travel writings and missionary writings to name a few.¹² Their task was to see possible if the text could be read against the colonial voice, and in it, be able to reveal instances when the marginalised defied being represented by false colonial ideals.¹³

The second group of critics are also supported by two of the most controversial critics, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri C. Spivak. However, Bhabha and Spivak approach this analysis in two separate ways. Bhabha, (a Professor of English at the University in Harvard and one of the most important contemporary figures in postcolonial theory) argues that the marginalised subjects were a threat to the colonial powers by imitating the

⁸ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 37.

⁹ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 37.

¹⁰ For example of these canonical literatures are the famous and popular English novels *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad (1899), *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen (1814), *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1847) and many others.

¹¹ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 38.

¹² Hayes & Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 170-171.

¹³ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 38.

ways of the colonial powers. This is identified as hybridity; spaces of mixing, where the colonized would not only practice their native culture, but at the same time use the colonial culture in order to benefit from it. The postcolonial theory studies both the dominant knowledge sets and marginalized ones as binary opposites maintaining their continuation as consistent entities.¹⁴

Spivak, however, is a feminist and supporter of Edward Said's concept of the 'other'. She investigated the dilemma of domination by imperial authorities and stresses that the recovery and presentation of an oppressed voice is very problematic due to the diversity in the masses of marginalised people. Instead, Spivak proposed that strategic essentialism – "speaking on behalf of a group while using a clear image of identity to fight opposition – as the only solution to this problem".¹⁵ Spivak acknowledges the fact that many oppressed and silent voices in society are misrepresented due to mixture and various groups oppressed and exploited by the colonial powers. Therefore there needs to be a clear representation of each group from a person that lives and understands the specific group's situation. As a result, it is a vital that one is allowed to speak freely, without the pressures and intimidation by colonial forces.

The third solution or analysis to postcolonial theory is expressed in the book titled, "The Empire Writes Back", by Bill Ashcroft.¹⁶ These group of critics analyzed how writers from the 'other' or colonized people well associated with colonialism, were able to articulate their own sense of identity

¹⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-3.

¹⁵ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 78.

¹⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 8.

by using unwritten texts obtained by native languages, symbols, and dialect. These unwritten texts incorporated a mixed version of native words and English, similar to Creole and pigeon, instead of following the normal English grammar.¹⁷ The colonized people were able to create their own language and way of communication, instead of relying on the colonized language. This form of resistance is subtle, however, also shows their acceptance of the English grammar by integrating it into their new language, supporting Bhabha's theory of hybridity.

This is a brief history of the development of postcolonial theory throughout recent studies. The most important point we can gain from this information is the fact that such readings or approaches to the biblical text are common amongst the marginalized, the weak, the poor and the low within society.

1.2 Postcolonial Criticism

According to Uriah Y. Kim,

Postcolonial criticism offers a way for these folks to read the bible on their own terms and challenges those who insist on interpreting the bible from the perspective of the West, which invariably benefits the West at the expense of the Rest.¹⁸

In other words, Postcolonial criticism focuses on the exposing of the elite ideology or ideology from above which is embedded within the text. From a Samoan perspective, it focuses on how missionaries and colonies of the West used Biblical passages as a way to justify their colonizing of the

¹⁷ Mailo, "The Challenge and Contribution of Postcolonial Theory to Theological Hermeneutics in Oceania", 38.

¹⁸ Kim, "Postcolonial Criticism: Who Is the Other in the Book of Judges", 162.

native inhabitants.¹⁹ Postcolonial criticism is more than merely resisting the dominance of imperial views, but also interprets texts according to one's own culture, experience and context. It recognizes the value of the interpreter's culture, beliefs and folklore. Post-colonialism in short, gives a voice to the oppressed and marginalized to not accept the views of the West as being correct, but challenges the West's view and allows the interpreter to express one's own view according to his or her (*Sitz im Leben*) situation in life.²⁰

1.3 Summary

For this work I have chosen to focus on Bhabha's theory of hybridity.²¹ I shall employ other literary-critical and social-historical methods in my attempt to expose the weak voice of the marginalized, but more importantly to hear what the marginalized voice has to say regarding Daniel 1:1-17's situation but also the issue of Samoans in America.

2.2 Social Historical Setting of the Author of Daniel

As mentioned above, the dates given in 1:1 and 1:21 cannot be taken at face value, and therefore needs to be further examined. Today, most

¹⁹ Richard N. Soulen & Kendall R. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 138-139.

²⁰ Soulen & Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 138-139.

²¹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1-4.

Chapter 2

Social Historical Setting of Daniel 1:1-17

2.1 Historical Background

The historical evidence in Daniel 1:1, 21 points to a sixth century B.C.E. dating of the book. The narrative is set within the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.E.) and King Cyrus (550-530 B.C.E.). The fall of Jerusalem is dated back to 586 B.C.E., which places the history of the narrative within the time of the Babylonian exile.²²

However, there are historical issues evident in the book that question this dating, as seen by the invasion of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign in 605 B.C.E. This story cannot be found in any historical books such as the Babylonian Chronicles and cannot be reconciled with any of the chronological information recognized from other books of the Bible.²³ Therefore, these dates cannot be taken literally, but however serve its purpose to set the story in a time of despair, similar to that of the author. The context of dominance in which these tales were written, served as encouragement for those who were also struggling to survive in their unfamiliar and hostile surroundings.

2.2 Social Historical Setting of the Author of Daniel

As mentioned above, the dates given in 1:1 and 1:21 cannot be taken at face value, and therefore needs to be further examined. Today, recent

²² Ernest Lucas, *Daniel: Apollos Old Testament Commentary*, (Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 43.

²³ C. L. Seow, *Daniel*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 22.

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January, Third Edition, (eds.)
Twenty Years, 1946), 32.

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(Dan.11:31).²⁸ A violent persecution was then let loose against Jews who stayed faithful to their God and his Torah (Dan. 11: 32-35).²⁹

Disloyalty to the tyrant was also seen in the rebelliousness of the Jews to his socio-political, economic and religious policies. This caused civil conflict within the Jewish community as many sought after the position of high priest by way of paying taxes to Antiochus and his government. These taxes were used to pay for Roman protection of his province. Antiochus insisted on strengthening his military and garrisons, called the Akra³⁰, and built a gymnasium as a way to Hellenize the Jews in Greek warfare and games, which all resulted in violence and bloodshed during the Maccabean Revolt (168-165 B.C.E.).³¹

Times were not easy for the Jewish communities during the reign of Antiochus. They were faced with the dilemma of either choosing to conform to Antiochus IV's ridiculous policies, or to stay faithful to their God and face death. This is the context from which the author of Daniel 1:1-17 writes from, and the struggles he/she - together with the Jewish community - is facing are evident in the portrayal of the person of Daniel. Does he choose to live according to the imperial (Greek/Babylonia/American) way of life, or does he remain faithful to the God of Israel and suffer the consequences?

²⁸ Smith-Christopher, "Daniel" *NIB*, 25.

²⁹ D. H. Wheaton, "Antiochus" in *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, (eds.) I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, (et.al) (Illinois/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 52.

³⁰ Akra is the Greek garrison or battalion that was placed around the Jerusalem temple as a means of keeping the temple courts under close surveillance. This garrison was later destroyed by the Maccabees during their revolt from 168-165 B.C.E.

³¹ Smith-Christopher, "Daniel": *NIB*, 25.

2.3 Summary

The historical evidence and social setting points to a second century B.C.E. setting, placed during a time of despair, confusion and persecutions. The importance of the social historical background is to understand the world of the author so that we may comprehend the reasoning behind the way his or her story was written. After analyzing the social historical background of Daniel, it is obvious that we can also sense the existence of friction between two cultures in play, i.e. the Greek and Israelite. It is also clear that three parties are involved, i.e. those who have conformed to the imperial culture, those who rebel and are conservative to their own culture, and finally those who are stuck in the middle still undecided of which side to get off.

Chapter 3

Postcolonial Analysis of Daniel 1:1-17

This chapter will provide a postcolonial analysis of Daniel 1:1-17 to draw out intrinsic evidence of the author's hybrid ideology. For this task, I shall carry out a rhetorical analysis of important key words, the form of the text, its structure but also social concepts within the text. I have provided a working translation of the text for our purposes.

3.1 Translation

1:1 In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods. 3 Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 young men without physical defect and handsome, versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace; they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. 6 Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah. 7 The palace master gave them other names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. 8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself. 9 Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master. 10 The palace master said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your own age, you would endanger my head with the king." 11 Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah,

Misrael, and Azariah: 12 "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 You can then compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations, and deal with your servants according to what you observe." 14 So he agreed to this proposal and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was observed that they appeared better and fatter than all the young men who had been eating the royal rations. 16 So the guard continued to withdraw their royal rations and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. 17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all visions and dreams.³²

3.2 Word Study

This section will focus on important key words and how they expose the postcolonial thinking of the author.

The verb נתן is from the root word נתן;³³ meaning "to give" or "make." Verse 2 talks of God giving Judah into the hands of the Babylonians. Verse 9 sees God giving Daniel good fortune. In verse 17 God again gives to Daniel knowledge and skill. Rhetorically, the author uses the word נתן to show that (1) with God as the giver, both Daniel/Israelites and Babylonians as receivers, they can be considered as being equal in status. This could represent the idea of both cultures – Israelite and Greek - being equally available to the author's disposal. (2). The Israelites have always considered Yahweh as dwelling in Jerusalem only. This understanding of God being everywhere emerged from the exilic community, thus, God's involvement with not only

³² New Revised Standard Version, *The Holy Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 716-717.

³³ "נתן", Francis Brown, S.R. Driver & Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Hendrickson Publishers: Peabody, 2007), 678. The word נתן is used three times (vv.2, 9, and 17) with God being the subject on all three occasions.

the Israelites but also the Babylonians – as seen in the use of “give” - can be considered postcolonial in nature. (3) If we also consider the three usages as rhetorically telling a story, we can see that although God gave them under foreign authority, God also equipped them with “knowledge and skill” in order to survive. While knowledge and skill are normally attributed to the wise, they can also be characteristics of those who prefer to sit on the fence. In other words this is also referred to by many as “using your head.”

The noun **אֲדֹנָי** is from the root word **אָדָן** meaning “Lord”.³⁴ The word appears only twice in the text (vv.2, and 10). The first is employed by the author as referring to Yahweh the God of Israel. The second time it occurs it is used to refer to the king of Babylonia. Again, we are reminded of the two opposing cultures in postcolonial theory.

Like the point above, the noun **אֱלֹהִים** from the root word **אָלַה** meaning “God”³⁵ occurs five times in the text. Three times (vv.2, 9, and 17) it is used to refer to the God of Israel, and twice (v.2) it refers to the gods of Babylon. (1) While both Gods are seen as being passive and inactive in v.2, it is only the God of Israel that is active in vv. 9 and 17. This is evident of biasness on the part of the author. Promoting of ones deity through the use of literature is very common to the marginalized or ideology from below. Once again, this can also point to the postcolonial perspective of the author. (2) In terms of structure, the two references made to the Babylonia deity (v.2) occur in between the mentioning of the God of Israel (vv.2, 9, 17). Rhetorically this can mean that Yahweh oversees all activities showing His superiority. It also

³⁴ “אָדָן”, BDB, 678.

³⁵ “אָלַה”, BDB, 41.

shows that sometimes other deities and cultures may be useful as long as they are used within the boundaries of God's will. The author stresses that whether Daniel decides between the two cultures, God is sovereign over both nations.³⁶

The noun *חָכְמָה* is from the root word *חָכַל* meaning "prudent", "insight" or "understanding".³⁷ The first usage (v.4) refers to the understanding and wisdom Daniel obtained from his Israelite background. The second (v.17) sees God as the source of this wisdom and knowledge. According to James Crenshaw,

Formally, wisdom consists of proverbial sentence or instruction, debate, intellectual reflection; thematically, wisdom comprises self-evident intuitions about mastering life for human betterment, gropings after life's secrets with regard to innocent suffering, grappling with finitude, and quest for truth concealed in the created order and manifested in Dame Wisdom. When a marriage between form and content exists, there is wisdom literature. Lacking such oneness, a given text participates in biblical wisdom to a greater or lesser extent.³⁸

In other words, wisdom (*חָכְמָה* *hokmah*) designates the skill of a workman (e.g., Ex 36:8), it may also refer to royal judgement (1 Kgs 3:28); it describes the attribute of cleverness (Prov 30:24-28); it embodies the proper rules of one's conduct (Prov 2:1-22); it designates piety (Prov 9:10; Job 1:1); and it entails a way of coping with life. So rhetorically, the use of the noun in the text denotes that not only through God can we move forward in life but also with the appreciation and appropriation of what we learn from the environment. (2) The usages by the author also sees the equating of context

³⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 14.

³⁷ "חָכַל", BDB, 968.

³⁸ J. L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 19.

and God as the source of wisdom. What he learns and gathers from his experiencing of his current situation is simply wisdom from God. (3) Daniel is portrayed as receiving wisdom from not only his God but also from his immediate context. Unlike Daniel, the foreigners remain loyal to their Chaldean culture and life as the source of wisdom. Here it is clear that it is Daniel benefits from the best of both sides, i.e. from God and from the foreign environment.³⁹

The verb **שׁוּב** is from the root word **שׁוּב** meaning "put", "place" "determine" or "set".⁴⁰ The verb is used three times (twice in v.7, once in v.8). The verb is used twice in v.7 referring to the palace master as the subject, determining or placing the new names on Daniel and his friends. In verse 8 the subject is now Daniel. The play on words is evident in the Hebrew translation as Daniel determined to refuse king's offer. The author uses this as a literary and rhetorical feature to present Daniel as the subject and the palace master as the object of Daniel's determination to refuse the royal rations.⁴¹ The verb is placed in juxtaposition in vv.7-8 to stress the reversal of roles of authority. This is a clear indication of postcolonial approach, where the dominant voice adheres and gives attention to the marginalized voice, and vice versa. The author depicts of a give and take relationship that is evident in postcolonial thinking.

³⁹ T.J. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Composition*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 27.

⁴⁰ "שׁוּב", BDB, 962.

⁴¹ Seow, *Daniel*, 25.

3.3 Form

Most commentators agree that Daniel 1:1-17 falls under the category of 'court tales'. Common in the Ancient Near East countries, court tales are stories that "entertains by its romantic story of the flourishing of young exiles at a foreign court".⁴² The common features of such stories include; foreign courtiers as an expression of national pride intended to promote a sense of importance in conquered people; the tales convey a fundamentally positive outlook. Prudent courtiers will thrive, even at the court of a foreign king.⁴³ According to Ernest Lucas, a Professor in Biblical Studies, court tales were written for certain purposes, one being:

...those about courtiers in the service of foreign kings, seem to have had the added intention of encouraging conquered peoples to maintain their sense of identity and worth, while taking a generally positive attitude to their situation.⁴⁴

The point then can be made that the author of such stories, rhetorically utilized the form of court tales as a way to encourage those who struggle to survive in a foreign environment. The author portrays a positive and promising future for those who not only stay faithful to their native customs, but also have an optimistic view towards their current and unfamiliar surroundings. This is parallel to postcolonial thinking, as both the subordinate and dominant cultures are used to benefit the person or individual.

⁴² Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 6.

⁴³ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 6.

⁴⁴ Lucas, *Daniel: AOTC*, 27.

3.4 Structure

The structure of Daniel 1:1-21 can be divided into five sections, forming a chiastic structure where the story of the test is the climax of the text.⁴⁵

A Historical Introduction (1-2)

B The young men taken for training (3-7)

C The story of the test (8-16)

B' The young men excel in their training (17-20)

A' Historical Conclusion (21)⁴⁶

Subdivision A and A' provide a historical setting during the time of Babylonian exile, which also presents the two kings Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar in juxtaposition to show the clash between the colonial power and the people of God.⁴⁷ Subdivision B and B' introduce the main characters of the book and their cunning way in which they survived by being well educated in both Babylonian and Israelite culture, which other sages lacked. Section C, provides the test that resonates throughout the whole book, is it possible for a Jew to stay faithful to his God, while working for a pagan king?⁴⁸ The author places the test in the middle of the chiasm as the climax of the story. The test however, is whether Daniel will conform to the Babylonian culture, or hold fast to his Israelite background. The author portrays however,

⁴⁵ See also Lucas, *Daniel: AOTC*, 49. Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 8.

⁴⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 8.

⁴⁷ Lucas, *Daniel: AOTC*, 49.

⁴⁸ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 14.

that Daniel's success comes from a hybrid type of living or "sitting of the fence" strategy which allows him to make the best of both worlds.

3.5 Social Rhetorical Analysis

3.5.1 Conquering of a People

The conquering of a nation and its vessels during the reign of dynasties and empires like Babylon was a way for powerful nations to remind its enslaved people of their subordinate nature as mentioned in vv. 1-2.⁴⁹ Notice however, the juxtaposition and the play on words in v.2 "the Lord", "house of God", and "his gods".⁵⁰ The Hebrew word **יְהוָה** for Lord in v.2 is replaced with the Hebrew word **אֱלֹהִים** God, as to show that He is not only the God of Israel, but the sovereign ruler over all nations. The titles "the Lord" and "God" belong only to Yahweh.⁵¹ God is no longer confined to a single dwelling as Jewish belief upholds, however, God is now shown to be omnipotent and omniscience throughout the world. Daniel is not restricted to worshipping God in Israel, but can also worship his God in a foreign land. This also is the means in which he receives his wisdom, in order to face the difficult tasks of whether to resist or to assimilate to the Babylonian culture, a clear indicator of living in between spaces.

⁴⁹ Smith-Christopher, "Daniel": *NIB*, 39.

⁵⁰ Lucas, *Daniel: AOTC*, 53.

⁵¹ Seow, *Daniel*, 22.

3.5.2 Foreign Education

Adding insult to injury, the Babylonians forced Daniel and his friends to learn the literature and language of the Chaldeans. This is a reminder of the memory of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) where God confused the languages of the people with their own languages due to their arrogance and disobedience to God. Nevertheless, King Nebuchadnezzar reversed his decision to create different languages and gave them a universal and single language.⁵²

However, notice the four tantamount terms used in the text. The edification should have given them (v.4): שכל "hassidut" "wise",⁵³ ידע "know",⁵⁴ בין "discern".⁵⁵ These terms are well trained in Babylonian language and culture. This knowledge that allowed them to be superior to the Babylonian sages.⁵⁶ This is reminiscent of the knowledge given to Joseph by God in the Genesis account (Gen 41: 33, 39). Daniel also possess such wisdom from God as shown in v. 17. Daniel's success to succeed in a foreign court similar to Joseph. Daniel's success is due to his Babylonian training as a way to survive in the king's court.

⁵² Seow, *Daniel*, 23.

⁵³ "חכמה", BDB, 314.

⁵⁴ "ידע", BDB, 393.

⁵⁵ "בין", BDB, 106.

⁵⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 15-16.

⁵⁷ Goldingay, *Daniel: WBC*, 15-16.

3.5.3 Name Changing

Name changing was a common practice for those who entered into a new rule or allegiance to a foreign king (Gen. 41:45; 2 Kgs. 23:34). In this case, the Hebrew names that praised the God of Israel were to be stripped away in order to rid the Jewish youths of their background and heritage, and were replaced with foreign names that exalted Babylonian gods.⁵⁸

The meaning of their Hebrew names has some reference to the God of Israel. Daniel meaning 'God has judged', Hananiah 'Yahweh has been gracious', Mishael 'Who is what God is?', and Azariah 'Yahweh has helped'.⁵⁹ In addition, Daniel and his friends were given new names by the palace master. The foreign names given to the four young Judeans are in stark contrast to their Hebrew names: Belteshazzar meaning "Protect the king's life" (Daniel), Shadrach "shining" (Hananiah), Meshach from the Persian religious name "Mithra" (Mishael), and Abednego "Servant of Nabu" (Azariah).⁶⁰

However, there seems to be no objection by the author as the names are used inter-changeably throughout the book of Daniel. However, name changing can be found throughout biblical literature and is a well-known sign of dependent status, as seen in the stories of the patriarchal fathers Abram (Abraham; Gen. 17:5) and Joseph (Zaphenath-paneah; Gen. 41:45).⁶¹ Nevertheless, the point is clear, name changing was another way for the dominant culture to show their ability and power to perform such an act.

⁵⁸ Lucas, *Daniel AOTC*, 53

⁵⁹ Porteous, "Daniel", 28

⁶⁰ Smith-Christopher, "Daniel": *NIB*, 39.

⁶¹ Smith-Christopher, "Daniel": *NIB*, 39.

Daniel and his companions, however, accepted the usage of these names. This is a clear indication that it was not a complete resistance of their new pagan names, but was an act of using both Israelite and pagan names as seen fit.

However, their surroundings and conditions shortly presented a number of actual tests that would challenge their loyalty to God. The offering of daily provisions of food and wine from the king's table would challenge the Jewish youths to prevent from defiling themselves. The king's intentions were to provide ample nourishment in order for the exiles to endure the three year training required, in able to make one eligible to stand in the king's presence.⁶²

3.5.4 Royal Rations

The usage of food in this chapter is symbolic to the significance of food throughout the Bible. Food and feasting is a biblical symbol of power and overindulgence as seen in the stories of Pharaoh's birthday in Gen. 40:22 and Samson's wedding in Judg. 14:10.⁶³ The control of food is a symbol of one who controls the very livelihood of the people. Therefore, the refusal by Daniel is a risky and daring move considering his circumstances. Daniel, however, does not fully resist the food offering but instead asks for a different menu of food in fear of defiling himself. As Mary Douglas states:

"The worries about the purity of the body are symbolic reflection of concerns for the integrity of the social group, and purity laws serve as effective barriers to assimilation. The assertion of purity concerns during the exile serves as an important spiritual and social bulwark against the dangers of

⁶² John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 35.

⁶³ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 40.

sly maintains this important

Daniel is well aware of the
s people altogether. It is not
ense effects the religious and
in accepting vegetables and
מִסֵּת־בִּנְיָן; (root word: pat-
amount from the portion of
nce on the wealth and riches
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ws that although they resisted
d accepted food in order to

in vv.7-8 as indicated by the
ppointing' or 'put in place'.⁶⁶

שִׁי) the names of Daniel and
ides (שִׁי) whether to accept
Daniel makes a stand not to
to his God, the working force
lies to Daniel's request not to

ondon: Routledge and Kegan Paul,

el: *The Anchor Bible*, (New York:

analytical Key to the Old Testament,
694.

accept the royal rations with the Hebrew word **יְיָ** (my Lord), reminiscent of v.2.⁶⁸

Notice the shift of subject and object as the palace master was the subject and Daniel the object of the appointing of names. However, Daniel becoming the subject and the palace master becomes the object of Daniel's request to appoint other food rations. The courtier's willingness to allow Daniel his way shows that postcolonial view where there is a give and take between the imperial and colonized subject. Not only is Daniel adapting to his surroundings, but the pagan courtiers are beginning to respect Daniel and his God as seen with the usage of the palace master's word **יְיָ**.

3.6 Summary

According to ideological critics; ideologies embedded in any text is clearly a portrayal of the ideological world from which the text was produced.⁶⁹ Therefore, the hybrid ideology in the text reveals to readers the social-historical situation of the author. The rhetoric in language and grammar as shown in our word study clearly portrays postcolonial thinking by exposing and supporting both sides, i.e. the two opposing cultures. Furthermore, there is an equal sense of leniency towards both and not preferring one over the other. The form itself in its life setting also brings into play the struggles of the marginalized and their attempt to survive under hostility through the use of

⁶⁸ Lucas, *Daniel: AOTC*, 57.

⁶⁹ Gale A. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body," in *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, (ed.) Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 147. See also W. Randolph Tate who clearly points the influence social, political and economic issues have on how one writes.—Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, third edition (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2008), 325-326.

literature. Through the structure of the text, rhetorically it exposes that point of how being in the middle can be a challenging position, which is also relevant to the concept of hybridity. Finally we find in the socio-rhetorical analysis the interchangeable use of both cultures by the author to further highlight the hybrid ideology he is accustomed to.

In summary, it is clear in the analysis that there is a strong presence of hybrid ideology embedded in the text.

Antiochus Epiphanes IV. What is he/she to do? Does he/she remain conservative and faithful to his/her customs and traditions? This as we know results in death. Or does he/she avoid the worse result by complying with the needs of the adapted environment? Yes we can be righteous in our thinking and theologizing and expect one to be faithful to his/her indigenous culture, but we must also be realistic as it is the highest priority of any human being to survive.

Daniel 1:1-17 gives a strong message of hope for those who struggle with the everyday life of choosing whether to conform to one's current surroundings, or stay firm to one's culture and beliefs. The message is clear, hybridity or rather "sit on the fence" and take full advantage of the opportunities which are presented by both sides.

Implications of the Study

From this paper, I put forward a two-fold implication; i.e. an implication for the negative connotation of sitting on the fence, and implications for the positive action as per the problems raised in the beginning of the study. I will also take an awareness of Sanga and its current situation.

Conclusion

Like the hybrid lifestyle, the concept "sitting on the fence" does carry a negative connotation of one taking advantage of something. However, in desperate or serious situations as Daniel and his friends face, sitting on the fence may be necessary in order to survive in such hostile conditions. The author is experiencing the same scenario during a time of persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes IV. What is he/she to do? Does he/she remain conservative and faithful to his/her customs and traditions? This as we know results in death. Or does he/she avoid the worse result by complying with the needs of the adapted environment? Yes we can be romantic in our thinking and theologising and expect one to be faithful to his/her indigenous culture, but we must also be realistic as it is the highest priority of any human being to survive.

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Implications of the Study

From this paper, I put forward a two-fold implication; i.e. an implication for the negative connotation of sitting on the fence, and implications for the positive notion as per the problems raised in the beginning of the study. I will also raise an awareness of Samoa and its current situations.

First, from a social perspective, "sitting on the fence" is usually associated with negative connotations of being passive, being a bystander, being inactive, being lukewarm or the very familiar phrase; being "two faced." For example; a middle person who takes advantage of two opposing sides in order to gain favour or benefit from both parties. Here, the middle person does not conform to any side but will temporarily do so when needed. It is very common that the middle person is the instigator of friction and conflict between the two opposing sides, and when trouble arises, the middle person will not side with anyone but remain seated comfortably on the fence, i.e. out of trouble. The purpose however of this work is not to confirm or justify such practices, but it can assist in raising our awareness and understanding of why some people choose to sit on the fence, i.e. it is their personal means of surviving. Given that perception, we may then have some idea of how to provide a remedy for such unnecessary practices.

Second, when we speak of the term survival in the means of "life and death" the situation then becomes more serious. We may then come to acknowledge the validity of how "sitting on the fence" can indeed be positive and necessary. I had set out in the beginning of this work being very concerned of my situation as a Samoan living in America. I, like many others were practically sitting on the fence and at times were feeling the pressure of having to choose which side to get off, i.e. do I emphasize the American culture and its way of life, or do I remain faithful to my roots and uphold the Fa'aSamoa – "the Samoan way of life"?

From the study, the hybrid ideology has given me new hope, i.e. "sitting on the fence" can also be a positive concept – I have the power to choose and

the decisions that I make should never be permanent in nature. I should merely take advantage of both cultures and the opportunities that they offer, i.e. the fence is your home, jumping off it should be temporary in nature. You always jump off with the intention to return home. Whichever side you jump off should be merely based on your immediate needs and wants. That is the way to survive when in between cultures in conflict. And when conflict arises "literally," make sure that you are seated firmly on the fence and stay out of the way.

Finally, although Samoa has claimed independency and colonization appears to be a thing of the past, the strong influences of Western cultures are evident. This work is also relevant for Samoans living in Samoa. Come to think about it, a lot of Samoans are doing very well today by "sitting on the fence".

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