

**JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH THE SAMARITAN  
WOMAN (John 4:16-30) FROM *TUAGANE*  
PERSPECTIVE**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis revisits the story of Jesus and the Samaritan women in the Gospel of John (4:16-30), whether Jesus sending of the women to go and call her husband would make her a disciple of Jesus. Biblical interpretation now shifts from the classical approach to humanistic approach which regards important the world of the reader. Thus, exploring Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman will be carried out using my experience as a brother in my Samoan social and cultural world as a hermeneutic. Therefore, I will look at the story from the eye of a *tuagane* – *tuagane* hermeneutics utilizing socio-rhetorical criticism as the reading method. The result of the study would evoke some understanding of how to consider women in our Samoan society.

## **Declaration**

### **Declaration of authorship of this thesis/research paper**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (full name of student- printed)

hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Malua Theological College or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Malua Theological College or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged

## **Dedication**

*In memory of my beloved father, the late Aumua Tavalagi Aumua Sepulona.*

To my loving mother Fuarosa Aumua Tavalagi,

To my brothers and sisters, to all my families and friends,

To my spiritual parents here in Malua, Rev. Dr Vaitusi Nofoaiga and Mile and kids.

Also not forgetting Rev Malutafa Leaupepe and Josephene and kids.

To my spiritual parents Rev. Toese Tuia and Paialalo, and also to my church, EFKS

Sataua for your unconditional love and support.

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## Introduction

Gendering as a cultural system or a worldview, slowly nullified the egalitarian shared roles of men and women in Samoa-the roles that ensure peace and harmony, in their community, in which both men and women should act together and in relation to the interest of their families. Gendering mentioned here is a consideration of women as not having the strength and power that men do to carry out certain works and duties. One of the ways that influenced this type of thinking and attitude is the continued-acceptance and practice of the traditional interpretations of discipleship where men are regarded as the chosen disciples of Jesus. This experience of gendering in the Samoan community led me to shaping a reading framework that identifies and recognizes the voice of the 'other' such as women suppressed by gendering.

Thus, the aim of this study is to explore the issue of gendering in the Bible by examining whether women can be regarded as disciples of Jesus. The study focuses on the story of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4:16-30. This story is one of the interesting events in John's Gospel because despite the difference between the Jewish and the Samaritan people portrayed in the text, it does not stop the Samaritan woman responding to Jesus in the way she does. Her action resulted in bringing the people of her city to Jesus. What she does could be looked at as an example of discipleship, which is not explicitly revealed in the text. Therefore, it is the task of this paper to investigate whether Jesus' sending of this woman to go and call her husband as well as her positive response, could make her a disciple.

In considering my reader's world important, I will utilise a hermeneutic from my Samoan world, as a lens to see the text. And to read the text from that lens I will use socio-rhetorical criticism as the interpretational tool.



In doing so, the paper is divided into four Chapters. In Chapter One, I will describe the reasons that gave me desire to pursue this study. This is important because it raises the issue of gendering taught and practiced in my Samoan world that has influenced the consideration of women in our society – in terms of their roles and statuses. Chapter Two will deal with the reading framework that will be used to read the text. It will describe my hermeneutic of *Tuagane*, and how socio-rhetorical criticism will be used as the interpretational tool, to read the text from that hermeneutic. The *Tuagane* hermeneutic has two categories which are *faasinomaga* and *fatuaiga tausī* considered as the hermeneutical lenses to see the text. This is followed by Chapter Three where the exegesis of the passage is described. The exegesis will be divided into two parts – analyzing the inner texture, and examining the social and cultural texture, of the text. Chapter Four as the final chapter presents the conclusion of the study showing whether women should be looked at as disciples and as such would they be considered ministers in our church community.

# Chapter 1

## HOW THIS STUDY CAME ABOUT

### 1.1 What gave me desire to do this study

Growing up in our village community, I have witnessed the harsh and oppressive treatment of *fafine nofotane* (women who live with their husbands at their husbands' families). For example, I have heard members of the husbands' families as well as the husbands themselves words such as: *Se o le fafine nofotane lava ia o lona lava nofoaga o le umukuka* (The place of belonging for a *fafine nofotane* is the kitchen).<sup>1</sup> From what I have witnessed, such treatment seemed acceptable not only by the husbands' families but also by the *nofotane*.

When I imagined my own sisters in such situations, I recognized that something was wrong with our community's or society's consideration of women. It is simply putting women secondary to men. I realized then, that subjugation and marginalization of the *nofotane* was an effect of gendering which had been a cultural system or world view in our Samoan social and cultural world. This type of gendering could be looked at as an influence of gendering reflected in the teachings of the missionaries. For example gendering is reflected in the traditional interpretations and practice of discipleship which leads to the consideration of men only to be ordained ministers.

However, from within the social and cultural world of the Samoan people we have a social and cultural value and practice which condemns such a male-controlled culture of gendering. That is, '*fetausia*'i or '*feoeoea*'i (mutual respecting of each other) embedded in the understanding and undertaking of the sister-brother relationship in the

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, it is the duty of a *nofotane* to cook for the husband's family and to serve food to them.

*faaSamoa*. And in this relationship, a brother as *tuagane* is expected to treat with great respect his sister, and the sister in return is to do likewise. This is good gendering.

Seeing women's involvement in our Samoan world/s from a *tuagane*'s eye, their oppressed treatments as explained above, contradict the relational value of the female-male respecting of each other, embedded in the sister-brother relationship in the *faaSamoa*. That value is egalitarianism which I translate into Samoan as *fetausia'i* and *feoeoea'i*. Part of this *tuagane*'s perspective is influenced by my own Christian values and understanding which is based upon Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom; the proclamation where Jesus disregards colonial treatments of those in need, such as women.

It is from the above-mentioned understanding and experience that gave me desire to seek in a story – of Jesus' encounters with a woman or women in the Gospels – more understanding of Jesus' consideration of women in his ministry. It should give us more awareness of how to regard women and their contributions into our society. I decided to study the story of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman which will be the task of this paper. Before I explain how this task will be carried out, I must first give a brief explanation of what I mean by gendering.

Gendering is understood as a tradition in our society which I have argued as one of the main thoughts or practices behind the oppression and colonization of women and the marginalized in our world/s.

## 1.2 Gendering as a Tradition

Gendering is a tradition or a belief functioning in a society,<sup>2</sup> which defines and shapes how women and men should act and behave. It functions hierarchically within the patriarchal tradition. And one very good example of a patriarchal tradition is our *Matai* system.<sup>3</sup> Most societies took on a particular flavor of gendering when joined with colonialism and such bearing would certainly make for gendering as a social, political, and religious processes that represent colonialism. Thus, gendering could be understood as a colonial value.

Samoaan society is one example of a society affected by the colonial influences of gendering which I say was enforced by foreign values and resources brought into our lands. For example, the scriptures were used as instruments not only to bring the good news in Samoa, but also the colonial values of the worlds, in which Jesus' ministry took place and was taken to, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The consideration of Jesus' disciples as men only told and shown in the Bible is one very simple example of gendering influence with a colonial flavor reflected in the Scriptures.

And this influence is taken to all nations or globally according to the globally-emphasized spreading of the good news. In this way, the egalitarian shared and respected treating of each other, a locally-emphasized positive understanding and practicing of gendering is overlooked. In other words, the recognized local social and cultural values, considerations, and needs of the local people in their own local places and spaces are neglected. They will be drawn into the big world of global discipleship which in the end only the global needs are considered more important than the local.

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<sup>2</sup> Elaine Mary Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (BZBW 60; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 28. Wainwright here has defined clearly the term gender, distinguishing it from sexuality. Wainwright defines it as a social construct and a belief system.

<sup>3</sup> Many women are becoming *matai* in Samoaan society. However men continue to be the most accepted *matai* in most villages.

These values were bolstered by the worldviews and cultural values of those who spread the good news around the world.<sup>4</sup> I will elaborate on how traditional discipleship as a globally-emphasized mission overlooks the local needs of local people such as women and why there is a need to revisit the Gospels' presentations of Jesus' ministry to find out how Jesus deals with the local needs of local people in his ministry.

### **1.3 Traditional interpretations and practices of discipleship as gendering and global**

The traditional interpretations of 'go and make disciples of all nations' as the first priority in undertaking discipleship, and of the consideration of men only as the chosen disciples to carry out that mission, continue to be the accepted traditions of discipleship in our Christian community. However, questions begin to arise from the Samoan people regarding the relevancy of those traditions in today's Samoan society.

One of the issues raised in these questions is that Jesus' inclusive ministry contradicts the one-focused emphasis of 'go and make disciples of all nations.' This emphasis signifies taking the Gospel to the global world which simply implies overlooking the local needs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> How this was possible has been demonstrated by Wainwright who writes in relation to the function of scripture: "It became clear that while the scriptures provided legitimation for the liberation of all who suffered under oppression, they were also used by many within the christian churches as a weapon against the poor and marginalized, as a means of "keeping them in their place." Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> This issue was raised by Vaitusi Nofoaiga in his studies of discipleship in the Matthean Gospel. Vaitusi Lealaiauloto Nofoaiga, "Towards a Postcolonial Reading of Disciple in the Matthean Gospel" (PhD Thesis, The University of Auckland, 2014). His raising of that question was not to nullify the traditional characteristics of discipleship, but to give us – Samoan readers of the Bible – a reason to revisit the texts in which these traditional interpretations were made from. For Nofoaiga, this work of revisiting is about making sense of the reality of the world in which the Samoan people as Christians experience in today's world. It is not to impose our local cultures and values on the biblical text but seeking in the text how Jesus deals with local issues in local contexts that are portrayed in the text. I consider this view important because before the gospel mission was to be taken to the global level, it was firstly practiced and exercised by Jesus as a local mission in different local spaces and places as told and shown by the narrators in the Gospels.

## **1.4 Summary**

Those traditional interpretations have been influencing how we live life and relate to each other in our Samoan world. One good example of these influences is the consideration of women's involvement in our church community. Regardless of their many contributions to the church, they are still not good enough to become ordained ministers in our church. I am not saying that they should be now considered ordained ministers. My attention is on seeking in the Gospels what could be their status and role in accordance with Jesus' dealing with women in his ministry, which should help us consider their contributions in our church and society. In doing so, it is the task of the next chapter to describe the reading framework used to revisit the text studied in this thesis, John 4:16-30. Thus, at the end of this paper, I should be able to show my recommendation on this based on what could be the resulting analysis of this thesis.

## Chapter 2

### READING FRAMEWORK

To be able to understand other worlds such as other local worlds or communities, it is important to firstly understand who we are in relation to our world/s in which we inhabit. These worlds for example are our families and communities in the local space/s and place/s we live in. This is a very useful and significant understanding and experience because it teaches us ways that are socially, culturally, and locally-related to resolve internal or local conflicts or problems especially those caused by colonialism and oppression. Thus, it is from this mindset, that I approach Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman and people in the local spaces or places encoded in the literary context of John 4:16-30.<sup>6</sup>

How I see women and their involvement in the world we live in is based on my understanding of Jesus' proclamation of egalitarianism in his ministry, and my experience and understanding of sister-brother relationship in our Samoan social and cultural world. It is from this combination that a hermeneutic is developed to read the Samaritan woman's interaction with Jesus. I call this hermeneutic, *TUAGANE*. *Tuagane* is a brother to a sister. I will begin this chapter with an explanation of my 'tuagane hermeneutic'.

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<sup>6</sup> The continuous changing of cultures and of the ways people think about the world brought about a new change in the world of hermeneutics. Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer brought into hermeneutics the significance of recognizing the contemporary issues, social status and location of readers. This brought about a shift from the classical hermeneutical approach to the structuralist, humanistic and critical approaches. In other words, in contrast to the traditional approach of interpretation that focuses on the author, biblical interpretation now considers the world of the reader, which brings a new dimension. This is the approach exercised in this study. For this shift in approaching biblical interpretation, see, David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 104-06; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutical Philosophical Description with special references to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), 24-47; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 356-57.

## 2.1 *TUAGANE* as a hermeneutic

As a reader/interpreter, my inhabiting of the present came from my understanding and experience of the *faa-Samoa* and Christianity. On the one hand, my understanding of *faa-Samoa* is that the essence of life is embedded in the undertaking of the sister-brother relationship in a Samoan family household – the relationship in which a brother considers himself a *tuagane*. The undertaking of that relationship bears egalitarian sharing of social, cultural and religious roles. On the other hand, Christianity is based on the proclamation of God’s kingdom in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection where both men and women regardless of their role and status are included. In Jesus’ life, he chose people to be his disciples to assist him not only during his work but also after his resurrection. If God’s saving action through Jesus includes everyone, why not in the choosing of the sick, poor, and marginalized which included both men and women to become his disciples?

Such awareness draws me to claiming ‘egalitarianism’ which I consider from my Samoan mind as *fetausiai* and *feoeoeai* as a critical element in “being in the beyond” and in “dwell(ing) in the beyond”<sup>7</sup> where I will re-describe and revisit the present by re-examining the scriptures. This understanding leads me to the text (John 4:16-30), which will be the main exploration of this work. I would like to explain briefly my awareness as noted above of egalitarianism as the critical element of my Samoan perspective of *tuagane*, the hermeneutic utilized in this study to see the text (John 4:16-30).

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<sup>7</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.



## 2.2 Egalitarianism in *faa-Samoa* and its changes

Egalitarianism is a form of thinking that opposes hierarchical thought about human relationships in society.<sup>8</sup> It is about people having the same power in sharing different roles and responsibility as Bauckham says,

...for egalitarian though, human beings are fundamentally equal, such that none is entitled to status and privilege above others. ...the exercise of power and authority... is justifiable only as a responsibility to be exercised on behalf of all and in the interest of all.<sup>9</sup>

Bauckham's explanation defines my egalitarian belief from a Samoan perspective. Experiencing and understanding internal colonization and exclusion in my community, I have realized the significance of women becoming leaders in the Samoan community. Different positions in both church and villages influenced by gendering, is in contrast with the egalitarian relationship in the *faaSamoa* based on the sister-brother relationship. I was taught at a young age that the Samoan chief system is a hierarchical system. Observing the effect of such social order on people's lives, I realize that such a practice does not reflect the reality of the traditional communal sense of the Samoan chief system – the sense of *fetausia* and *feoeoeai*.

Traditionally, I believe that the chief system emerges from the egalitarian sister-brother relationship that signifies role not status. Thus, the Samoan chief system should be considered a role system not a hierarchical system. That understanding and my experience of exclusion shapes my world as a reader and interpreter..

It is locating myself in a reader space where I will take advantage of my understanding of the diversity of cultures and values in my community to establish a

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Bauckham, "Egalitarianism and Hierachy in the Biblical Traditions," *Interpreting the Bible: Historical and Theological Studies in Honour of David F. Wright* (ed. A. N. S. Lane; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1997), 259.

<sup>9</sup> Bauckham, "Egalitarianism and Hierachy in the Biblical Traditions," 259-60.

reading framework which I think will break social and cultural boundaries both in the biblical text and in the Samoan context.

In the New Testament, egalitarianism opposes fatherhood which represents the patriarchal tradition.<sup>10</sup> Rather, it accentuates ‘personhood’ where everyone relates to each other on the same level.<sup>11</sup> Thus, egalitarianism is an appropriate element to cross various social and cultural boundaries in my world as reader and the world of the text and it will be used in this study as a critical principle emphasising the sharing of roles and responsibilities.

To clarify this critical principle in my world as a reader/interpreter, I should now explain the fundamental base of ‘egalitarianism’ in *faaSamoa* which is called ‘sister-brother relationship’.

### **2.3 Sister-brother relationship**

I am a Samoan and this is the basis of my understanding of egalitarianism in both a Samoan family and community. The family is the foundation of the social and religious life of every Samoan. It is the primary learning centre of the sister and brother before moving on to the community level. The Samoan family system is therefore founded on the sister-brother relationship; the relationship that teaches both the sister and brother their egalitarian roles. They have to exercise their roles in the interest of every member of the family and the community.

For example, the sister will learn that her responsibilities, situation and sacredness in the family and community is not an individual matter, it is the will of the family and the community. She will learn to be a craftsperson, a priest, a peacemaker, a healer, a

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<sup>10</sup> Bauckham, “Egalitarianism and Hierachy in the Biblical Traditions,” 269.

<sup>11</sup> Bauckham, “Egalitarianism and Hierachy in the Biblical Traditions,” 269-70.

teacher, a chief, and a savior.<sup>12</sup> How she exercises her roles will bestow importance or honour on her family in the community.<sup>13</sup> As a craftsperson, she makes different colourful and beautiful handicrafts. Their quality and quantity rate the wealth of her family. As a priest she conducts worship.<sup>14</sup> Being a healer, she heals the sick. She has to teach family members the family genealogies, traditions and myths. She is chief and has her own post in the circle of the family's chiefs. Traditionally, when her family fights a war and loses, one of her tasks is to save her family. She sacrifices herself to be taken as a wife of the high chief of the victorious side so that her family can live. The sister-brother relationship is known by the title *feagaiga*.<sup>15</sup> This relationship is special and considered the most significant aspect of male-female dualism in the Samoan culture.<sup>16</sup> It is regarded as a covenant between brothers and sisters which implies a powerful undertaking of the social and cultural roles for all male-female relations.

Brothers had an obligation to consider the interests of their sisters and their sister's children. Sisters were held to have the power of cursing their brothers and descendants if the obligations were neglected.<sup>17</sup>

The sister is treated as a person who has special, almost divine powers. The sister as a *feagaiga* has prerogatives which the brother is careful to adhere to. For example, a brother should never raise a hand to his sister. Any non-fulfillment in the brother's role

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<sup>12</sup> Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *O le Faasinomaga: Le Tagata ma lona Faasinomaga* (Alafua: Lamepa, 1997), 16-20.

<sup>13</sup> Le Tagaloa, *O le Faasinomaga*, 16-20.

<sup>14</sup> Penelope Schoeffel, "The Samoan Concept of *Feagaiga* and its Transformation," in *Tonga and Samoa: Images of Gender and Polity* (ed. Judith Huntsman: Canterbury: Canterbury University Press, 1995), 85-105. She indicates (p. 95) that, "It is clear that in pre-Christian Samoa, women had played an important and possibly equal role with men in religious life, as priests, spirit mediums and deities."

<sup>15</sup> This word means a bond between two people. In Samoan context, both the sister and the brother are specially bonded by shared-responsibilities. The title is particularly given to the sister.

<sup>16</sup> Lowell D. Holmes, *Samoa Village* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 18.

<sup>17</sup> J. W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 23.

brings fear for a special role which indicates honour given to a girl by the members of her family.

I look at the sister-brother relationship as an egalitarian system of sharing roles in all parts of life in a Samoan family and community and is therefore a relevant social and cultural system in which I have placed myself as a reader and interpreter for the text. This egalitarian experience and understanding is enforced, confirmed and encouraged by the egalitarian message of Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom brought in by missionaries. So when life events occurred which do not reflect these Samoan Christians' teachings and practices questions arise which encourage us to revisit the Bible seeking more understanding especially on issues concerning other humans' treatment of others.

From this Samoan social, cultural, and religious understanding, experience and awareness of the importance and significance of egalitarian relational sharing of roles and responsibilities in the Samoan local world/s, come these categories of identifying my being a *tuagane* in relation to the local place/s or space/s I belong such as the *aiga*, *nuu* and *ekalesia*. These categories will be considered as the hermeneutical lenses used to see the text. They are *Faasinomaga* and *Fatuaiga-tausi*. In other words, I will see the text as a local person – *vaai faalotoifale i le tusiga*.

*Faasinomaga* is identifying a person's belonging to his/her local family, village or church. It includes the names of his/her family, village, or church. Some of these local places or spaces have distinct geographical features or landmarks which easily identify them. Different relationships that formed and shaped a local community are also part of *Faasinomaga*. For example is the relationship between men and women. Another example is the relationship between the poor and the rich. Thus, *faasinomaga* as a hermeneutical lens examines how a character or characters belong to the local place or

space encoded in the text, and more importantly, the different relationships these characters are in and their effects. The analysis begins with examining how the literary features of John 4 as a whole chapter can be read as a literary local world, leading to the main section emphasized in this study; John 4:16-30.

*Fatuaiga-tausi* is the role/s or responsibility/ies of the local people which are meant for the betterment of a local people or community. For example, as mentioned, in our Samoan social and cultural world, despite the colonial influence of gendering, it has a very important cultural value which signifies how men as brothers should take care of their sisters. Thus, *fatuaiga-tausi* which is the gendering of roles and responsibilities in local places, as a hermeneutical lens, examines the roles of women and men in the text, and how these roles and responsibilities function in the local context encoded in the text. More importantly, *fatuaiga-tausi* also examines whether those roles enforce and encourage either elitism or oppression of the marginalized in the text.

From *tuagane* hermeneutic, the exegetical task will investigate from *fatuaiga-tausi* whether Jesus' role as savior help bring to the centre those marginalized because of their recognized oppressive roles in the so-called literary local world embedded in the text. For this particular study, *fatuaiga-tausi* as a lens will investigate whether Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman to call her husband can be looked at as a work of a disciple. To read the text, namely John 4:16-30, from *tuagane* hermeneutic, I will use socio-rhetorical criticism which I will explain in the next section.

## **2.4 SOCIO-RHETORICAL CRITICISM**

### **2.4.1 Socio-rhetorical criticism as interpretational tool**

This interpretational tool seeks to identify the marginalized in the text such as women and how Jesus as the protagonist brings out of the margin the oppressed. Socio-rhetorical criticism was developed by Vernon K. Robbins as an attempt to combine

social science with more literary based methods in biblical studies.<sup>18</sup> His aim is to put together a rhetorical method that integrates literary, social, cultural and ideological issues in different and variety of texts. Socio-rhetorical criticism integrates the world of the text, the world behind the text and the world of the reader.<sup>19</sup> The approach targets searching the meaning of the text, by investigating the values, convictions and beliefs, in the texts' world/s.<sup>20</sup> It examines how those values help shape meaning and as readers we compare or contrast them with the world in which we live in, in order to make meaning relevant to us.<sup>21</sup> For this study, socio-rhetorical criticism will bring my Samoan male perspective to interact with a socio-rhetorical reading of John 4:16-30.<sup>22</sup>

#### **2.4.2 Vernon K. Robbins' stages of socio-rhetorical reading**

Vernon K. Robbins' socio-rhetorical approach has five stages which are inner texture, inter texture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture. The scope of this study does not allow me to use all stages. For the purpose of this thesis, I will use only two stages. These are 'innertexture', and 'social and cultural texture.'

#### **2.4.3 Inner texture**

Analysing the inner texture is exploring the ways the word structures, devices, contraries, and modes of text are used in a text.<sup>23</sup> For this thesis, exploring the

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<sup>18</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 26.

<sup>22</sup> Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 11. Robbins states here, that this is one of the goals of socio-rhetorical criticism.

<sup>23</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

innertexture is examining whether John as a narrator's telling and showing of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in a progressive and narrational texture could display a consideration of the Samaritan woman as a disciple in Jesus' ministry.<sup>24</sup> It will look at the use of contraries in the text (John 4:16-30), to find what the language of the text presents. These questions will guide the analysis. From the lens of *faasinomaga* (place of belonging), I ask these questions. What is the *lotoifale faalenuu* or *faaleaiga* (local community or families) encoded in the language of the text? Who are the members of these *lotoifale*? How do these members relate to each other? What are the local needs of these people? How are members of these *lotoifale* seeking help for their needs? Who help them and how? From the lens of *fatuaiga tausi* I ask these questions. How does the language of the text show the *fatuaiga tausi* of the people portrayed in the story? Are these *fatuaiga tausi* local roles and responsibilities? Do some of these *fatuaiga tausi* help bolster the proclamation of God's kingdom?

#### 2.4.4 Social and cultural texture

For any author, his/her building of a text is affected by a world or worlds around him/her. Because John's Gospel was written somewhere in the first century Mediterranean world, therefore, John as the author is looked at as having an understanding of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world.

This part of the analysis deals with an examination of the social and cultural values featured in the social and cultural elements of the language of the text.<sup>25</sup> It investigates the Johannine use of rhetorical arrangements and style which had been used and understood in the first century. These include the rhetoric of praise and blame which

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<sup>24</sup> "Progressive texture resides in sequences (progressions) of words and phrases throughout the unit." See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71.

presents the social and cultural values of “honour and shame.”<sup>26</sup> This might present John’s resisting of the social and cultural values of the first century Mediterranean society influenced by Roman imperialism.

These questions will guide the social and cultural analysis. From *faasinomaga* lens: How does the language of the text show the belonging of *tagata auai* (characters) in the text to the local place or context encoded in the text? Does this sense of belonging reflect the honor and shame value of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world? How does Jesus as the main character deal with this social and cultural value in his conversation with the Samaritan woman? From the lens of *fatuaiga tausi*: How does the language of the text present the social and cultural *fatuaiga tausi* of Jesus and the Samaritan woman? Is there any subversion of these *fatuaiga tausi*? Is there significance of these subversive changes in Jesus’ proclamation of God’s kingdom to both Jews and Samaritans?

## 2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have explained my *tuagane* hermeneutic which I will use to see the text (John 4:16-30). It is followed by the reading method which is socio-rhetorical criticism.

The scope of this study does not allow me to use all the five stages of this method. Instead, I focus only on two stages which are ‘inner texture,’ and ‘social and cultural.’ Questions are constructed for each stage to guide the analysis. It is therefore the task of the next chapter to carry out the analysis of the passage utilizing the reading framework explained above.

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<sup>26</sup> One of the characteristics of the Mediterranean Families and societies. Halvor Moxnes, “What is Family: Problems in Constructing Early Christian families,” in *Constructing Early Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; London: Routledge, 1997), 20.



## Chapter 3

### ANALYSIS OF JOHN 4:16-30

In this chapter, I will analyse John 4:16-30 as a rhetorical and narrative unit, exploring how Jesus' going through Samaria as encoded in the text, might be read through my lenses of *fa'asinomaga* (belonging to a place) and *fatuaiga tausī* (role and responsibility that is family related), as consideration of the Samaritan woman's importance to Jesus' ministry in this part of the story. The first section discusses the inner texture of the text. Section Two deals with the social and cultural texture of 4:16-30 which will enable me to explore Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom in the context of the world of Samaria as encoded in the text. I will examine whether Jesus' vision of God's kingdom makes meaning within the social and cultural world of the first century Mediterranean world with particular attention given to the marginalized women. Can it be read as a space where Jesus' vision of God's kingdom is proclaimed in accordance with the reality of the local world the local Samaritans are facing? In combining my hermeneutical lens and methodology, I will assess whether the proclamation of God's kingdom in this part of John's gospel can be read as consideration of the needs and rights of local Samaritan people.

#### 3.1 Inner textual reading

The following questions from the methodology mentioned in the previous chapter will guide the innertexture analysis: How do literary features of 4:16-30 as a rhetorical and narrative unit show Samaria as the local place encoded in the text? How do literary features of this unit show Jesus the protagonist's belonging to that local place?

How do literary features of this unit show the Samaritan woman and other people in the story belonging to Samaria? How does the narrator in this unit tell and show Jesus' relationship to the Samaritan woman as giving primary attention to the needs and rights of those people?

### 3.2 Social and Cultural Reading

Despite little differences in various structures of the Gospel according to John, they all fall into the four divisions as mentioned in the structure used in this study shown below.<sup>27</sup> However, the interpretation will utilize the structure attributed to Brown and Dodd and was adopted and utilized by Kanagaraj and Kemp.<sup>28</sup> Provided below is the Brown's and Dodd's structure.

1: 1 – 18: the Prologue

1: 19 – 12: 50: the Book of Signs

13: 1 – 20: 31: the Book of Glory

21: 1 – 25: the Epilogue

From the above structure, the selected text (John 4:16-30) explored in this thesis, falls under the second category – the book of Signs. According to Sloyan, the Gospel according to John chapter 4 is a single literary unit.<sup>29</sup>

He added that this particular narrative is connected to the previous chapters – such as chapter 2 where the first sign is told.

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<sup>27</sup> An example of one of those structures is Francis J. Moloney's proposed structure of John's Gospel, divided into five sections: I. The Prologue (1:1-18); II. The Book of Signs (1:19-12:50); III. The Book of Glory (13:1-20:31); IV. The Conclusion to the Gospel (20:30-31); V. The Epilogue (21:1-25). The small difference shown in this structure is the inclusion of a conclusion section. Otherwise, the structure also emphasizes the four common divisions of the fourth Gospel. See Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* Sagna Pagina (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 23-24.

<sup>28</sup> Jey J. Kangaraj and Ian S. Kemp, *The Gospel According to John*, Asia Bible Commentary (Singapore Asia Theological Association, 2002), 17-19.

<sup>29</sup> Gerard S. Sloyan, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: John* (Georgia: John Knox Press, 1988), 52.

In other words, Sloyan considers chapter 4 the continuation of chapter 2 and 3 narratives. Hence chapter four can be read in light of the previous chapters. So before coming to the interpretation of the selected passage, it is important to have a look at the progression of the story and the placement of the passage in the whole of the book.

Chapter two of John's gospel begins with the story of the first sign that took place in Cana of Galilee. From verse 13 until chapter 3, there is a shift in the setting of the narrative as it was set in Jerusalem. According to Mark Stibbe, there is significance of the movement of Jesus from Cana (Galilee) to Jerusalem, and then back again to Galilee.<sup>30</sup> It provides a contrasting point between the encounter of Jesus and Nicodemus in Jerusalem, and Jesus with the Samaritan woman in Samaria, on the road toward Galilee. Stibbe's interpretation revolves around the marital symbolism where Jesus was the bridegroom and John the Baptist the best man.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the selected passage is in that same line of interpretation which Stibbe sees as showing 'here comes the Bride' to describe Jesus' visitation to Samaria. But why did Jesus have to go through to Samaria? From the *tuagane* hermeneutic, Jesus had to go through to Samaria because he considers important the needs of the local people in Samaria. And those needs make them also part of his proclamation of God's kingdom. Let us find out by looking at John 4:16-30 from *tuagane* hermeneutic.

John 4:16-30 is part of chapter 4 as a literary unit. Looking at the literary construction of this Chapter from the hermeneutical lens of *faasinomaga*, I regard verses 1 to 15 as the local setting of Samaria where Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman occurs.

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<sup>30</sup> Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1993), 10.

<sup>31</sup> Stibbe, *John*, 62.

The geographical features of Samaria reveal in the text, and the link of Jesus and the Samaritan woman as characters in the story to Samaria, portrayed Samaria as the targeted local place and community encoded in John chapter 4. First is the mention of the well of Jacob. The narrator describes the location of this well near Sychar a Samaritan city. And the literary purpose of this well is a meeting place for Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Reflected in the first moment of this meeting is Jesus' goal for his going through Samaria which is to call the Samaritan people into his salvation ministry. The Samaritan woman thought that only her and her people belong to this well. She did not know that Jesus is a descendant of the people of Israel before they split to Judea and Samaria. Thus, it makes Jesus belong to this well of Jacob. Second is the Samaritan woman's claim that 'Jews do not share things in common with the Samaritans' (v. 9). The implication of this claim is that the Samaritan woman identifies another reason why she belongs to Samaria and not Jesus. Third, the Samaritan woman going to collect water from this well of Jacob is her role as a woman in Samaria.

This role identifies her as a woman in Samaria. Jesus as mentioned identifies himself with the Samaritan by going to the well as well, and initiates the conversation with this woman which is a conversation tabooed in accordance with the Jews-Samaria conflict. And this is more evident when Jesus offers this woman the water of life that will never make this woman thirsty. Thus, from the lens of *faasinomaga*, verses 1-15 sets Samaria as the local place encoded in the text in which Jesus and the Samaritan woman both belong not only geographically or physically but also spiritually. This setting of belonging to Samaria for both Jesus and the Samaritan woman foreshadows or anticipates what is going to happen in vv.16-30 which is the main text emphasized in this study. This text is looked upon as a rhetorical and narrative unit in itself.

As explained above, the Samaritan woman said to Jesus in verse 15 to give her the water Jesus suggested, which will not make her thirsty. Instead, Jesus replies by sending her to go call her husband to come to him in verse 16; the verse that begins 4:16-30 as a rhetorical and narrative unit. It implies in Jesus' sending of this woman in verse 16 that the next event of Jesus' encounter with this woman is to bring the people of Samaria to the water that Jesus talks about. Bringing the Samaritan people to the water Jesus talks about in this section of the story is possible, because instead of Jesus' giving the water requested by this woman, he sends her to bring her husband. Thus, treating 4:16-30 as a rhetorical unit<sup>32</sup> is appropriate.

### **3.2.1 Opening and Closing signs of John 4:16-30 as a unit from tuagane hermeneutic**

One of the questions from my hermeneutical lens of *fa'asinomaga* is how features of a text could tell and show the world encoded in the text as a local place, and the characters in the text as people belonging to that place. I have explained Samaria as such a place and Jesus and the Samaritan woman as people belonging to that place. John 4:16-30 is the middle part of Chapter 4 which is followed by vv. 31-54 which speaks of the positive response of the Samaritans and Jesus' going on to Cana in Galilee where he performed the second sign – the healing of a royal official's son. The second sign happened before Jesus went to Jerusalem again. There is significant literary function of 4:16-30 as a unit in itself which I will focus on. As mentioned above, it is where the narrator tells and shows Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman as the messenger to the Samaritan people and the Samaritan's response.

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<sup>32</sup> Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 1998, also sees 4:16-30 as a unit emphasizing the establishment of Jesus' relationship to the Samaritan woman as a relationship initiated by Jesus.

This part could be looked at as a vital part of the narrative of Jesus in Samaria because it is the link between Jesus and the Samaritan woman which could be considered as a prophetic link that brings in the Samaritan people into God's purpose of salvation as proclaimed by Jesus. Thus, it is important to give special attention to 4:16-30 examining whether this Jesus-Samaritan woman link could make this woman a disciple.

The opening and closing signs of 4:16-30 as a rhetorical unit are interpreted as an *inclusio* that indicate Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman to call people to Jesus, and the people's response to that call.<sup>33</sup> The opening signs of the rhetorical unit are shown in verse 16: *Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."* They are: first, the words *Jesus said to her* indicate Jesus' reply to what the Samaritan said to Jesus in verse 15. And Jesus' reply states Jesus' changing of the subject from water to sending the woman to call her husband. This change indicates a rhetorical shift from the previous topic (Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and water) to the next (Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and her people). The shift anticipates the beginning of Jesus' attempt to bring the Samaritan people into salvation.<sup>34</sup> And this attempt will be carried out by the Samaritan woman. Secondly, v. 16's connection to the previous activity, portrays Jesus as the protagonist. Third, Samaria, as the place where the story is set according to vv. 1-15, is also the rhetorical space or the *lotoifale faalenuu* where the audience of Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman will be found.

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<sup>33</sup>*Inclusio* is "signs of opening and closure." See George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 34, 82.

<sup>34</sup> Jean-Marc Chappuis from an ecumenical point of view interprets Jesus' initiating the conversation with the Samaritan woman as an example of how a separation between people can be broken down by the power of communication. Chappuis in his own words says: "[B]etween Jesus the Jew and the woman of Samaria, the walls of separation are high and thick. Ethical, cultural, religious, they are solid, and the Samaritan knows it. [However] Jesus' action consists in destroying the wall of separation, in raising the age-old ban, in making communication possible between people separated by their ethnic, cultural and religious traditions." See, Jean-Marc Chappuis, "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: The Variable Geometry of Communication," *ER* 34 (1982): 14.

The closing indicators of the unit are seen in these words of v. 30: *They left the city and were on their way to him*. Firstly, the word *left* indicates the beginning action of the Samaritan people's response to the Samaritan woman's call and also states the result of Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman. Thus, this sentence is the ending of this rhetorical and narrative unit (4:16-30). Secondly, these people going on their way to Jesus points out that the effect of the Samaritan's calling of these people is actually happening. Thirdly, Jesus' sending of the Samaritan woman to her people in the opening of the unit (v. 16), and the people's response to that calling in the closing of the unit (v. 30) forms the rhetorical frame that surrounds the presentation of a prophetic task carried out in this part of the story in the local place of Galilee. And this task is a very significant part of Jesus' going through Samaria on his way back to Galilee from Jerusalem. Thus, the Samaritan's woman function as a messenger to the Samaritan people is very important in this part of Jesus' ministry in John's Gospel. The analysis will be based on the following threefold structure of that rhetorical unit that reveals the significance of the Samaritan woman to the people of Samaria in accordance with Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Beginning (vv.16-19): | Jesus sending the Samaritan woman to call people to him       |
| 2. Middle (vv.20-26):    | Why Jesus sends the Samaritan woman to call her people to him |
| 3. End (vv.27-30):       | The Samaritan people's response                               |

### 3.2.2 Beginning (vv. 16-19)

From *faasinomaga* and *fatuaiga taus*i lenses, I see in the beginning of 4:16-30 as a rhetorical and narrative unit, other roles and responsibilities of Jesus as the main character and the Samaritan woman as another character, which considered the well-being of the local people of Samaria in this part of the story – the well-being of being

included in Jesus' saving action.<sup>35</sup> Jesus' sending of this woman is an imperative. After the conversation between Jesus and the woman in vv. 1-15, they seem to recognize each other's company.<sup>36</sup> This is reflected in Jesus' immediate sending of the woman. It reveals that the relationship of Jesus to the woman in this part of the story could be looked at as a relationship that meant to deal with the ways that promote the spiritual well-being of the Samaritan people. The woman whose role according to the social and cultural context is to go and collect water is here becoming the one that will bring her people to the water of life that Jesus talked about. The significance of the sending of this woman as a woman is revealed in the word go translated in Greek as *ὑπάγε*.

The word *ὑπάγε* meaning depart is an intransitive verb that "always expresses the past tense by the Imperfect."<sup>37</sup> As such, it expresses the 'go' that Jesus commands – that is for the woman to make her being the person that draws water from Jacob's well, as the person that is used here by God to bring her own people into God's salvation in and through Jesus' Christ ministry. Thus, her drawing water from the well where she met Jesus is the departure point for returning to her Samaritan households. In this way, it implies Jesus' expectation of this woman's drawing of water which is to return to serve her Samaritan household/s in light of what she has experienced and understood in her encounter with Jesus.

Thus, from the lens of *faasinomaga*, the sending of this woman is a sending of a messenger or a disciple to bring her people, the local people of Samaria to Jesus.

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<sup>35</sup> Graig R. Koester, "“The Savior of the World” (John 4:42)," *JBL* 109 (1990): 665-680. According to Koester, Jesus is portrayed in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman as the Savior of the world.

<sup>36</sup> Other interpretations see Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman as a 'betrothal type-scene' of similar events told and shown in the Old Testament. However, in John's Gospel, the meaning shifts to a theological scene, where the betrothal scene is changed into a non-betrothal way. See Lyle Eslinger, "The Wooing of the Woman at the Well: Jesus, the reader and reader-response," *LT* 1 (1987): 167-183.

<sup>37</sup> J. W. Wenham, *The Elements of the New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 52-54, 103, 203.



And from the lens of *fatuaiga tausi*, this woman's obedience, to do Jesus' sending of her, makes her a local disciple, whose *fatuaiga tausi* is to look after the needs and rights of her people in this part of the story. Hence, this woman can be looked at as a disciple for this particular moment of Jesus' ministry – which is in the local space and place of Samaria.

### **3.2.3 Middle (vv. 20-26): Why Jesus sends the Samaritan woman to call her people to him**

After the Samaritan woman calls Jesus a prophet, she then talks about worship in relation to the place where it should be practiced. There is a rhetorical hiatus at this stage of the flow of the unit. Why does the woman talk about the subject of worship in this part? Worshiping is not the topic of her conversation with Jesus. It is her amazement at Jesus' knowing of her life. However, the word prophet exhibits why the woman changes the subject to worship. It is a literary way of moving the progress of the story towards the emphasis of Jesus' ministry – which is helping the person's heart and soul, the spiritual life in relation to the real world. Embedded in the word prophet is the importance of worshiping God. In other words, one of the significant roles of being a prophet is worshiping God. The conflict between Jewish and Samaritan people was known in the prophets choosing of the place or mountain they believe should be their place to worship God. So the shift from Jesus as prophet to the subject of worshiping God is important especially in revealing the main purpose of Jesus' going through Samaria. It is to save the souls of the Samaritan people.

So the middle part of the unit simply reveals worship as its theme which raises these questions for me from the *faasinomaga* lens: Is there significance of 'worship' to the Samaritan's sense of belonging to their local place? It is implied in Jesus' going to Samaria on his way to Galilee that he relates to the people of Samaria which is

symbolically depicted in his presence at Jacob's well – the well that the people of Samaria claims as their well. In this regard, I ask the question: Is there significance of worship to Jesus' relationship to the people of Samaria? Is there significance of 'worship' to the Samaritan woman as the messenger in this part of the unit? The following analysis will answer these questions.

After the woman's response to Jesus calling Jesus a prophet, she becomes critical of the Jewish claim of Jerusalem as the mountain on which to worship God. The mountain that the woman is referring to, as 'this mountain' is Mount Gerizim, at the foot of which Sychar was situated. Jacob built an altar on this mountain, and worshiped God (Gen 22:2, 33:20). According to the Samaritan woman, their (Samaritan people) fathers, worshiped on this mountain. She is referring to the temple built by Sanballat on this mountain. Reflected in the woman's response to Jesus is one of the differences between the Samaritan people and the Jews. It is the difference in the claim of the place or mountain on which God is to be worshiped. This is important to any Jewish or Samaritan sense of belonging to their place or land. For Samaria and Judea as tribes of Israel as a nation in the beginning, worshiping God is part of their sense of belonging to being people of Israel. So the tension in the claim of which mountain or place as the place to worship God is here resolved by Jesus' reply to this woman. It reveals two important points.

Firstly, worshiping God continues to be one of the most important parts of being an Israelite. Secondly, the mountain that is given emphasis, on which God is to be worshiped, is the heart and soul of the worshiper.<sup>38</sup> And this is the reason why the woman as a messenger is sent to call her people.

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<sup>38</sup> Lesslie Newbigin's interpretation of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman emphasizes the significance of true worship. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 52-53.

From the lens of *faasinomaga*, this is why this woman is important not only in this part of this unit, but also the whole story. It shows that this woman as a messenger is herself belongs to her people as one of the worshipers of God. More importantly, it reveals one important characteristic of her being the messenger or a disciple. That is worshipping God in heart and soul. Thus, from the lens of *fatuaiga tausi*, this woman's role as a member of the Samaritan family is to call or bring her people to learn the importance of worshipping God – the way of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. It implies Jesus' continuation of his *fatuaiga tausi* as God's son to bring everyone into the family of God. The middle part of the unit ends with Jesus' answer to the woman's question, whether Jesus is the Messiah named Christ. Jesus says that he is the one talking to her. The presentation of the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, to end the middle unit is important. It affirms the sending of the Samaritan woman to call her people to Christ as someone sent by the One who has authority – he is Jesus Christ. Thus, this woman should be looked at, a disciple of Jesus. This identifying of Jesus as the Messiah anticipates what is happening in the ending part of the unit analysed below.

### **3.2.4 End (vv. 27-30): The Samaritan people's response**

After Jesus' reply to the woman which again identifies Jesus as the Messiah in this unit, then the narrator brings in the presence of the disciples to show how the relationship between the Jews and Samaritans are considered. More significant to the flow of the story in this unit is how the disciples see women. But, the disciples do not voice what is in their minds.

The bringing in of the disciples' character is to reveal the difference between Jesus and his disciples. Jesus' mission follows his purpose of the proclamation of God's kingdom. But for the disciples, despite following Jesus, they continue to hold on to so-called traditions that differentiate the Jews from others.

However, this difference is not able to hold back Jesus and the woman he chooses to take the message of salvation to others of Israel – the Samaritans.

The Samaritan woman moves on to call her people to Jesus. According to the narrator in verse 28, the woman left behind her water jar and went to her people. This water jar can be looked at to have a literary link to the water Jesus talks about (4:13-15) before the beginning of this unit. Jesus talks about the water that will not make the Samaritan woman thirsty again. But when the woman asks for that water, Jesus instead sends her to call her husband. The appearance of the water jar in this end part of the unit could be looked at as a reminder of the difference between the water the woman goes to fetch from the well, and the water Jesus talks about. It is not to show that the water in the well is no longer important. Rather, it is to show that the water Jesus talks about is spiritual water. And this makes sense as part of the theme of worship presented by the implied author in the middle part of the unit. Thus, the Samaritan woman's putting aside of her water jar is not to throw it away.

But to show that when coming to worshipping God, spiritual water of the heart and soul is more important to make sure that praising of God is the utmost priority in times of worship. The unit ends with the people coming to Jesus. It is told later in the story (4:39-42), that many Samaritan people believed in Jesus and wanted him to stay with them.

The sending of this woman and her positive response, and the coming of her people to Jesus, because of her, makes her a disciple of Jesus. It is reflected in this process, the characteristics that consider a person in Jesus' ministry a disciple such as: 'sent by Jesus, the positive response of the person sent, and the result of his/her undertaking of the calling which is the positive response of the people called.' This claim will be elaborated upon in the social and cultural texture analysis show below.

### 3.3 Social and Cultural Analysis

In the innertexture analysis, I have shown that through the lens of *fa'asinomaga* John 4:16-30 is part of Jesus' relationship to the Samaritan people as local people encoded in the text. Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom in this part of the story shows Jesus' ministry as a mission that is particularly aimed at dealing with the needs of the people of Samaria. In the analysis of the social and cultural texture, I will use the lens of *faasinomaga* and *fatuaiga tausi* to explore how the social and cultural nature of 4:16-30 implies Jesus' relationship to the people of Samaria. It will show how Jesus gives primary attention to the local social and cultural needs and rights of the Samaritan people as giving honour.

The values of honour and shame were pivotal values of antiquity influencing the way people related to each other socially and culturally in the first century Mediterranean world.<sup>39</sup> They are social and cultural practices first learned in the family unit but carried into all other levels and spaces of society.

Jesus is presented as a person with honour in the Johannine story. He was the Word in the beginning – the incarnated word. He is the Messiah. And that messianic honour is reinforced by his baptism by John the Baptist. In 4:16-30 as a rhetorical unit, Jesus as the person with highest honour is revealed in the Samaritan woman's positive response to Jesus. For example, she calls Jesus a prophet. There is a time she asks Jesus in the end part of the unit whether Jesus is a Messiah, the Christ the people of Samaria heard is coming. Jesus himself replies he is that person. Manifestly, Jesus is the person with honour and his message and ministry will honour those who accept it.

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<sup>39</sup>See, David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2000), 23-94; John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 130, 133-34.

And the woman's response shows that she is the first recipient of that honour. This is revealed in her putting aside of her water jar and does what Jesus told her to do. Her conversation with Jesus on where God is to be worshiped reveals what will give honour to any Samaritan regardless of their differences with the Jews. That is to worship God with their hearts and soul. It is the mountain on which God is to be worshiped. Not only is the place where God is to be honored but also the place where he honours his worshiper. In this way, the Samaritan considered by the Jewish people as shame is here given honour of God's kingdom by Jesus if they worship God with true minds, heart, and soul.

### **3.4 Summary**

The interpretation from the lenses of *faasinomaga* and *fatuaiga tausí* has shown three aspects of the Samaritan woman's belonging to the local place of Samaria. First, she belongs to Samaria as a woman whose role is to get water from the well of Jacob. Second, her belonging to Samaria as a local person is identified as someone who had five husbands. It shows that she is a sinful woman. Third, regardless of her reputation as a woman and her role as woman in accordance with the life she encounters in local Samaria, this woman also belongs to Samaria as a person chosen by God to spread the word of salvation. Thus, her other sense of belonging to Samaria is as a good person who helps make her people become members of God's kingdom. Her work makes her a person with honor and her people as honoured as well.

## Conclusion

What gave me desire to pursue this study is my own concern of how some women as wives are treated by their husbands and families as *nofotane*. *Nofotane* as a label to call these women has its own stigmatization and expectation. For example as I mentioned in the beginning of this thesis that they are expected to do the cooking and cleaning for the husband's family. I see this as an example of gendering. Looking at this way of life from a *tuagane* point of view, I wonder how my sisters would feel when encountering similar situation. Considering the Bible as the only place where answers to these questions and concerns are found, I decided to revisit a story in Jesus' ministry where Jesus deals with a woman in a marginalized situation. And I chose Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4:16-30.

In doing this exploration, I have utilized my understanding of my role of a *tuagane* as a hermeneutic to see the text. Interpreting the text from that hermeneutic, I have used socio-rhetorical criticism. The two categories of that hermeneutics were *faasinomaga* (sense of belonging to a place) and *fatuaiga tausi* (role or responsibility). The use of these lenses is to seek in the text how Jesus deals with the needs of local people in the local place encoded in the text. It is to find out whether reflected in Jesus' dealing with women in this local place the issue of gendering or any resolution to it. From the interpretation, Samaria as a local place encoded in the text was identified and located. It is revealed in Jesus' decision to go to Samaria before he continues on to Galilee from Jerusalem. More importantly, found in the exploration is that both Jesus and the Samaritan woman belong to Jacob's well regardless of their difference as Jewish and Samaritan. This is important because it shows a link between Jesus as life savior and the woman as a local person in need. It is apparent in the woman's getting water from the well the gendering culture occurring in local Samaria.

It is the woman's responsibility to get water from the well. Another gendering stereotype reflected in the story, is the depiction of the woman having five husbands, an implication of a picture of a not good person – a sinful person. However, as shown in the interpretation, Jesus' meeting the woman at the well and Jesus' talking to her is a departure point to breaking down gendering labels and issues that marginalized this woman in the local society of Samaria.

Shown in the interpretation, the implied author makes use of this woman character, a woman with a very bad reputation, to pass onto the people of Samaria, God's message of salvation. Jesus' sending her to 'go' and call her husbands, and her positive response makes her a very important person in this part of the story. Her positive response resolves the gendering issue of the consideration of men only as Jesus' disciple. To make this woman even more important is reflected in the response of her people. They left the city and went to Jesus. Maybe this woman was firstly looked at as only someone to go and get water from the well or someone who has many husbands. But, the positive response of her people to her call condemns the gendering stereotype that marginalized women in the local society of Samaria. As the social and cultural texture analysis has shown, this woman is considered as a person with honor because she is able to bring the people of Samaria to worship God, not in Jerusalem or in Gerizim but in their own heart and soul. Thus, the Samaritan woman can be considered another disciple of Jesus. Her being a disciple is to help fulfill the needs of her own people. It shows that being a disciple is not just to go and make disciples of all nations. Being a disciple is also helping local people in need in our local places.

The issue of women becoming ordained ministers in our church is still an issue that church members continue to talk about. From this study, no doubt women have potential to be excellent disciples in their own ways.



As a *tuagane*, one important part of my roles is to make sure that my sisters do not get caught in the hardship of dealing with the ministry works. I rather face the difficulties of the ministries than seeing them suffer in trying to deal with them. Thus, women can choose how they serve God from who they are as women. Make that decision from where they are recognized in our society and I think this is important. In this way, I say, becoming an ordained minister should not be the issue, but serving God as a man or a woman should be the main focus.

## Glossary

*Nofotane* – This is a specific term given to a woman from the perspective of the husband's family.

*fa'asinomaga* – place of belonging

*fatuaiga* – *tausi* – pertains to the role of responsibility one has within their respective family

*feoeoea'i* – the nature of sharing between people

*fetausia'i* – the nature of caring between and for people

*vaai faalotoifale i le tusiga*.- looking through th lens of 'local space' of the text

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