

**A SOCIO-RHETORICAL READING OF JOHN
15:18–16:4 USING THE SAMOAN SAYING,
*“O AU O MATUA O FANAU”***

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by
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ABSTRACT

Jesus' Farewell Discourse found in the Gospel of John parallels a father exhorting and encouraging his children to be courageous when they go through the challenges and hardships of life. Furthermore, it reinforces the training and upbringing that a child should never forget when they go forth to face the world. Therefore, this thesis explores Jesus' farewell discourse in John 15:18 – 16:4, to see whether Jesus' relationship with his disciples can be seen from the Samoan hermeneutic of "*O au o matua o fanau.*" My hermeneutic derives from the relationship between parents and their children (*va o matua ma fanau*) in the Samoan context. It is one of Samoa's sacred relationship where the children (*fanau*) must always love (*alofa*) and respect (*fa'aaloalo*) their parents while the parents must discipline (*a'oa'o*) and nurture (*fa'afailele*) their children according to their Samoan Christian ethics and moral values. These preparations are to prepare the child to face the world as they come of age and move forth from their parents. This thesis is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief historical background; Chapter 2 provides a literature review of Jesus' farewell discourse; Chapter 3 discusses my Samoan reading lens of *O au o matua o fanau* and methodology of socio-rhetorical criticism; Chapter 4 is the exegetical analysis; and Chapter 5 is the Conclusion of my study, highlighting the key discoveries and looking ahead to future directions of this study as a contribution to Biblical scholarship.

DECLARATION

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved grandparents *Mata'utia Fepulea'i Siaosi* and *Usugafono Fepulea'i Siaosi* who raised and taught me to always put God at the forefront in everything to do in life, and whose dreams inspires and keeps me going in difficult times.

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List of Abbreviations

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>fa'asamoa</i>	Samoan way of life
<i>va o matua ma fanau</i>	relationship between parents and children
<i>fanau</i>	children
<i>matua</i>	parents
<i>alofa</i>	love
<i>fa'aaloalo</i>	respect
<i>a'oa'o</i>	discipline
<i>fa'afailele</i>	nurture
<i>alofa fa'amatua</i>	parent's love for their children
<i>talanoaga fa'ale-āiga</i>	family meeting
<i>kalama o le gagana</i>	study of the Samoan language
<i>muāgagana</i>	Samoan saying
<i>'au</i>	team, handle
<i>au</i>	successful, complete, accomplish
<i>'au</i>	tool used for Samoan tattooing
<i>tāina o le tatau</i>	art of tattooing
<i>O au o matua o fanau</i>	The greatest joy of parents is their children

Introduction

Throughout my studies here in Malua, I have been fortunate enough to learn and gain a better understanding of the Bible especially in the study of the four gospels and how each gospel tells the biography and the ministry of Jesus Christ. Each gospel has its own particular emphasis, for example; Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the *King*, and Mark presents him as the *Servant*, while Luke presents him as *the Perfect Man*.¹ But for John, I found it interesting that John's Gospel is more unique and distinctive compared to the Synoptic Gospels. For example; John presents Jesus Christ as a God in his gospel, instead of miracles as used by Matthew, Mark and Luke; by using signs instead of miracles to portray and signify Jesus deity as Son of God. On the other hand, the gospel of John can be described as a stream or a narrow river that a child can wade but for an elephant to swim.² How can this happen? This can be explained by understanding the literary techniques of irony, symbolism, signs and misunderstanding; as used in John's Gospel of Jesus Christ.³ Given this, it draws my attention to the Gospel of John as my favorite gospel and therefore, has become my chosen text.

John 15:18 – 16:4 expresses Jesus' Farewell Discourse to his disciples concerning the world's hate over them when Jesus is gone. Just by reading the text, its literal interpretation is that of a father exhorting and encouraging his children to be courageous when they go through the challenges and hardships of life. This Father and Son relationship is mostly used in the Gospel of John than the Synoptic Gospels. In

¹ Dr. Alfred. Martin, *The Gospel of John. Life Through Believing* (Chicago: Meridian Publications, 1990), 14.

² Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 1.

³ Jey J Kanagaraj and Ian S. Kemp, *The Gospel According to John. Asia Bible Commentary Series* (Singapore: Asia Theological Association, 2002), 24.

John 5:16 – 47, Jesus claims himself to be the Son of God when he was defending himself from the Jewish leaders who tried to persecute him after healing the lame man by the pool on the Sabbath. This is where the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy and therefore plot his persecution. However, Jesus knew that not only him but his disciples will also be persecuted as they lived and prayed together. It is why on the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus in the Upper Room with his disciples were about to face the full storm of the world's hatred, but Jesus on that last night of earthly fellowship with his disciples spoke words of comfort and reassurance to them, which has now become the most precious spiritual legacy ever bequeathed and bestowed to men.⁴

Leonard Griffith believes that the significance of Jesus Farewell Discourses in John's Gospel contains everything that is very crucial and important in our Christian heritage.⁵ It is the same with our Samoan way of life (*fa'asamoa*) and it is why I am interested to see and explore Jesus' farewell discourse in John 15:18 – 16:4, whether Jesus' relationship with his disciples can be seen from the Samoan hermeneutic of "*O au o matua o fanau*." My hermeneutic derives from the relationship between parents and their children (*va o matua ma fanau*) in the Samoan context. It is one of Samoa's sacred relationship where the children (*fanau*) must always love (*alofa*) and respect (*fa'aaloalo*) their parents while the parents must discipline (*a'oa'o*) and nurture (*fa'afailele*) their children according to the Samoan and the Christian ethics and moral values. By keeping this relationship, it will surely bring good fortune and blessings to the children but happiness and joy to the parents as they are aware they have taught their

⁴ Leonard Griffith, *The Eternal Legacy From an Upper Room .The Farewell Discourses in John's Gospel* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 148.

⁵ Ibid, 18.

children well. I believe that this relationship was founded on the fifth commandment that was given to Moses by God, which is “Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”⁶

O au o matua o fanau is a Samoan saying (*muāgagana*)⁷ that describes the parent’s love for their children (*alofa fa’amatua*).⁸ This type of love has no boundaries because even if the children disobey and disrespect their parents, their parents will still love them as the children are a blessing (*faamanuiaga*) from God. I have experienced and felt parental love (*alofa fa’amatua*) growing up in my family. Whenever I felt like I disappointed my parents and returned home from college with no prize after prize giving, my parents continued to love and support me no matter what, even though I felt like I did not deserve their praise. It is because ‘*O au o matua o fanau.*’ It is also a tradition in my family that every last Sunday evening of every month, we would have our family meeting or *talanoaga fa’ale-āiga*. This is when my parents would tell off my siblings and I however in the end the most important part is when my parents then encouraged us to strive for excellence in the future as life will bring us challenges. As a child growing up, I would often think that my parents did not love us and did not care for us because of all the lectures we endured however, I was wrong as the countless lectures were lessons to prepare us on how to survive independently in the world of hardships once our parents no longer to be around for us. This is where I believe that Jesus’ farewell discourse in John 15:18-16:4 can be seen from the Samoan perspective

⁶ “Exodus 20: 12”, in *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (Peabody: Hendrickson Bibles, 1989), 51. From henceforth, the NRSV will be used for all Biblical passages from the New Testament.

⁷ Levesi Laumau Afutiti defines *muāgagana* as Samoan wisdom sayings. See Levesi Laumau Afutiti, “Native Texts: Samoan Proverbial and Wisdom Sayings.” in *Sea of Readings: The Bible in the South Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 53-68.

⁸ This saying can be a universal truth however, it is used here as a reflection of my Samoan experience with me and my parents.

of a parent encouraging and comforting their children as they will soon experience the many hardships of life.

This study is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 gives a historical background of the whole Gospel of John, focusing on the authorship, dating/setting, purpose, theme, and structure in order to establish the context and setting from which a father and son or parent and child relationship occurs. Chapter 2 gives a literature review mainly on Jesus' farewell discourse concerning the hatred of the world and how scholars have come to understand this text. Chapter 3 will discuss my Samoan reading lenses of *O au o matua o fanau* and preferred methodology of socio-rhetorical criticism. Chapter 4 will be exegetical analysis section of my selected passage. Wherein I will use my Samoan hermeneutical lens to interpret the text. Last but not the least, Chapter 5 gives the Conclusion of my study in relations to my Samoan context.

Chapter One

General Background of the Gospel of John

Introduction

This chapter gives a brief background of the Gospel of John; its authorship, dating/setting, purpose, theme, and structure. The historical background provides a picture of the world in which John lived and shaped his material about Jesus, the Son of God.⁹ It is important to understand the background of the Gospel of John in order to understand its uniqueness to the other three Gospel writers and how John portrays his Jesus. One of the most unique and distinctive features of John's Gospel apart from the Synoptic Gospels is that instead of the well-known parables told by Matthew, Mark and Luke, John uses lengthy discourses to illustrate how the 'signs' performed by Jesus leads to 'belief' and how that 'belief' by way of faith provides 'life'.

1.1 Authorship

According to Biblical scholarship, the authorship of the Fourth Gospel or the Gospel of John is attributed to John the son of Zebedee, who was a disciple and an apostle of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ However, to determine the authorship of a document that is

⁹ Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "NT202 Gospel of John," New Testament Department (Malua: Malua Theological College, 2018).

¹⁰ Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, (Grand Rapids; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1976), 23. Leon Morris ed., The Gospel According to John, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Revised Edition, (Grand Rapids; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 4-25; Gary M. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 40; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John: The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, (Leicester: Apollos, 1991), 68; and Kanagaraj and Kemp, *The Gospel According to John. Asia Bible Commentary Series*, 35.

almost two thousand years old, we need to identify the *internal evidence* and the *external evidence*.¹¹

Internal Evidence

According to Gary M Burge, the author of the gospel of John is anonymous or in other words is unspecified as John the Baptist is the only John mentioned in the gospel, whom is not the author¹². But the other John considered as the author is the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, whom is not mentioned anywhere in the gospel. However, the mentioning of the beloved disciple hints that he must have been an apostle who knew Jesus very well. He was firstly seen in the upper room before Jesus' arrest (13: 21-30), then at the foot of Jesus' cross with Jesus' mother (19: 25-26), and when Jesus rose from the dead, he outran Peter to the tomb and witness the empty tomb that Jesus was buried (20: 2-10). And lastly in chapter 21: 20-24, the fate of the so-called beloved disciple becomes a natural subject after Jesus foretold Peter's death, saying that the beloved disciple was the one who was bearing witness and had written the fourth gospel.

External Evidence

According to D. A Carson, the main external evidence refers to the evangelist or the author of the Gospel as John the son of Zebedee the disciple, who later became an apostle of the Lord.¹³ This relationship between John the Elder and John the Apostle has also been problematic as the Bishop of Hierapolis named Papias, mentioned two

¹¹ Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of*, 40.

¹² Ibid, 40.

¹³ Carson, *The Gospel According to John. The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, 68.

Johns – John the son of Zebedee and John the Elder.¹⁴ Based on these contrasting reports there is no unanimous suggestion as to who the author is. This unresolved debate speaks not about the significance of the writer or author, but rather the content of the words within to be the focus of importance. The message that Jesus shares with the early Christian community becomes the focus of the Gospel and speaks to the importance of the message within. Thus, when the farewell discourse is presented (the passage of interest for this study), Jesus not John is the central figure to provide fatherly wisdom for his children before they go forth without him.

1.2 Date / Setting

David Lipscomb believes that the gospel of John was written late in the first century between 85 – 90 C.E, due to the expulsion of the Christians from the synagogues/conflict with ‘the Jews’.¹⁵ However, Leon Morris, places the dating early, pre-70 CE due to the fact that some of the materials presented are very early and lack any correspondence with the Synoptics, if it were late as well as no mention of the fall of the Temple.¹⁶ The significance of the debate of dating adds to the importance of the Farewell Discourse as it was written during a time of uncertainty a time of flux, whether before the fall of the Temple and the persecution of the Christians under Nero (pre-70 CE) or when the Christians and Jews were in conflict with the expulsion of the Christians from the synagogues. The followers of Jesus needed to be comforted as a parent comforts a child before they continue onwards in life.

¹⁴ Kanagaraj and Kemp, *The Gospel According to John. Asia Bible Commentary Series*, 35.

¹⁵ David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on The Gospel by John* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1939), 12. Believed the Christians were excluded from the synagogues in the 80's CE.

¹⁶ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 29-30.

Furthermore, it is believed that the Gospel was written in Ephesus. As for others, they argue that Ephesus was not the place where the gospel was written. They stated that the gospel was written in Alexandria based on John's thoughts which are similar to Philo of Alexandria and of Gnostic Valentinus.¹⁷ The dispute over setting places the Gospel outside of Palestine, whether Ephesus or Alexandria. The interesting point here is that looking at the overarching history; this was during the reign of terror of Domitian, with Alexandria and Ephesus representing the early Christian community house churches in the East (Ephesus) or the West (Alexandria). Whichever setting one chooses, it illustrates the volatility of the locations from which the Gospel was planted. If Ephesus (East), you have the Judaizers (traditional Jews) and Romans to contend with and if Alexandria (West), you have the Hellenistic Romans/Jews and Gnosticism, thus both pose threats to the growth of the early Christian movement and provides the background for the sagely advice of a father to his children as they embark on their journey to evangelize the Gospel.

1.3 Purpose

According to Vaitusi Nofoaiga, the purpose of the gospel of John is to provide the Christians in the province of Asia which is now known as Turkey; a fuller understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, especially by leading them to a settled faith on the teachings and works of Jesus Christ, that they will have life in His name.¹⁸ This is supported by the work of Merrill Tenney, who states that, John 20: 30-31 represents the purpose of the Gospel, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that

¹⁷ Kanagaraj and Kemp, *The Gospel According to John. Asia Bible Commentary Series*.38.

¹⁸ Nofoaiga, *NT202 Gospel of John*, Notes.

you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”¹⁹ According to Tenney, the three key words of John’s purpose are ‘signs’, ‘belief’, and ‘life’. The ‘signs’ were done by Jesus in order for those who read and saw to ‘believe.’ Thus the ones who ‘believe’ and accept Jesus Christ, they are the ones who find ‘life,’ which is more than just human vitality or existence. Rather, it implies consciousness, it signifies contact, and it involves continuity, and assumes development.²⁰ Thus according to Tenney, “Eternal life, and man’s full destiny, is the objective of the teaching of this Gospel.”²¹

1.4 Theme

One of the major themes to follow closely in reading the gospel of John is Jesus Christ the Son of God. John shows and portrays that Jesus is unique as he is God’s special Son (human), yet he is fully God.²² Given his divinity, Jesus is able to reveal God to us clearly and accurately. This does not however, preclude the importance of the historical Jesus as presented by the Synoptics. Instead, The Gospel of John uses history to demonstrate the authenticity of the theology espoused within his Gospel. That Jesus is truly, the word made flesh (1:14), and if so, he is truly man and truly God.²³ The history demonstrates the reliability of the signs performed by Jesus to bring about a greater spiritual truth for ‘his’ followers. Thus creating belief and how that belief by way of faith leads to life and according to Tenney, a life that is “vigorous, growing, and

¹⁹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 34; Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 27-36; and C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel of John*, (Cambridge; University Press, 1953), 9.

²⁰ Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 32.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 34; Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 50.

²³ Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 50.

expanding” and in constant conflict with the opposing forces of the world.²⁴ Therefore we can perfectly trust what Jesus says to us, in order to gain an open mind and to understand God’s message and fulfill His purpose in our lives.

1.5 Structure

The structure, that assists in my Samoan reading of John 15:18-16:4 is that offered by Tenney. According to Tenney, the Gospel of John can be broken down into stages of action:

Prologue	1:1-18
The Period of Consideration	1:19-4:54
The Period of Controversy	5:1-6:71
The Period of Conflict	7:1-11:53
The Period of Crisis	11:54-12:36a
<i>The Period of Conference</i>	<i>12:36b-17:26</i>
The Period of Consummation	18:1-20:31
Epilogue	21:1-25 ²⁵

The Period of Conference represents the section that my selected passage is found and according to Tenney, “...is, in a sense, a parenthesis in the action of the Gospel.”²⁶ Furthermore, he states;

“It records Jesus’ conference with the disciples for the purpose of preparing their minds for His death, and with the Father that He might

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, 36.

²⁶ Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 39.

make His final report on His commission and intercede for the disciples whom He had won.”²⁷

In other words, Jesus meets with his disciples, his friends, his children that he has won over from the world. It recalls our Sunday evening meetings that I mentioned earlier, with my parents, as a review of the week that was and our progress, while also looking ahead to the new week before we move forward. This was important to me, because it represented how much we learned from our parents and putting those teachings from within our family into action in the outside world. Thus according to Tenney, this is paralleled in the permanent interest of the Gospel itself, to look at the “work that was done within the circle of believers, rather than in the historical currents of the outside world, [thus] this section though parenthetical to the narrative, is of the highest importance to its meaning.”²⁸

Using this structure’s Period of Conference, I too will highlight how the Samoan saying, “*O au o matua o fanau*,” exemplifies the importance of this section to the overall narrative as a display of how the ‘signs’ performed by Jesus Christ brought about ‘belief’ and how that belief was reinforced by Jesus and the Father by way of ‘life’ for all who believed. This boost of encouragement was to vigorously grow and expand life in and from Jesus Christ to the outside world.

Summary

In this chapter, I have explored that both the internal and external evidence provided by the biblical scholars claimed John the son of Zebedee as the author of the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

gospel of John. Not only he was a disciple of Jesus but was also called the beloved disciple as he witnessed Jesus' ministry from the start till His death and resurrection. The date/setting of John's gospel is also found interesting as it was written in Alexandria at the time of Domitian's reign of terror. This contributes to the fact that John's gospel is far more depth and rich in theology compared to the other three gospels. Also contributing to John's theology is the purpose and the theme that he portrayed in his gospel. Apart from the synoptic writers, John's purpose was to provide his audience a fuller understanding that Jesus performed signs for us to believe in order for us to have eternal life that is in the Son of God. Furthermore, Jesus not only showed us signs, but he also advised and encouraged us to be bold and strong when we come to face the oppressions of the world.

The next chapter will explain the people who are in the world and the reasons why they hate Christians and followers of Jesus. The next chapter will now look at what scholars have said about Jesus' Farewell Discourse, especially, John 15:18 - 16:4.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the literary world of my chosen text in order to understand the world of the author and the meaning behind the text. In doing so, this review will firstly explore the placement of the text inside the whole gospel of John, so that we might understand the reason why my chosen text is not placed at the beginning or the last part of the gospel, but in the middle of the gospel. This review will also discuss the nuances of the word ‘world’ as it used in the text and the reasons why those referred to as the world hate and oppress the followers of Jesus Christ.

2.1 The Placement of the Text

The placement of the text allows us to explore and understand the story world of the text, so that our interpretation would not focus solely on the text of interest, but also on the narrative as a whole. Paul N. Anderson outlines John’s gospel into four unequal parts or sections, which is the Prologue (1:1-18), the Book of Signs (chapters 1-12), *the Book of Glory* (chapters 13-20), and the Epilogue (21:1-25)²⁹. Therefore my chosen text lies in the third section which is the Book of Glory. This section features and tells the exaltation of Jesus during the final week of his ministry. It starts with the fulfillment of Jesus hour and his last will and farewell discourse to his followers especially his disciples³⁰.

²⁹ Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel. An Introduction to John*, 9.

³⁰ Ibid.

However, Carson has a different outline of the gospel of John from Anderson's. Instead of four sections, Carson divides John's gospel into five different sections. Firstly is the Prologue (1:1-18) then secondly is Jesus' Self-Disclosure in Word and Deed (1:19-10:42). The third section is the Transition: Life and Death, King and Suffering Servant (11:1-12:50). Fourthly is Jesus' Self-Disclosure in His Cross and Exaltation (13:1-20:31) that consists of the last supper (13:1-30), the *farewell discourses* (13:31-16:33), the prayer of Jesus (17:1-26) and the trial and passion of Jesus (18:1-19:42), and lastly is the Epilogue (21:1-25).³¹ Given Carson's outline, my chosen text lies under the fourth section in Jesus' Self-Disclosure in His Cross and Exaltation, through giving and conveying his farewell discourse or speech to his disciples as He knows His hour is near. What Jesus' hour means is that the time of His earthly ministry has come to an end as all prophecy will be fulfilled. Based on Carson's outline of the Gospel of John, Jesus not only comforted and strengthened his disciples but also prayed to God for them (17:9-19). Jesus' prayer serves as a petition to God the Father to spare his followers and disciples from tribulation and evil spiritual assault that would separate them from the love of God, the Father.³²

According to Cougan Collins, John 15 begins with Jesus' seventh (7th) "I am" statement, "I am the true vine." Collins stated that this allegory of Jesus as the true vine is quite simple but its message is powerful.³³ Jesus as the true vine and God as the vine grower, urges Jesus' followers to grow and remain in Jesus as the vine in order for them to bear fruits. If they do not grow in Jesus, God as the vine grower will prune them from

³¹ Carson, *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, 105.

³² Scott Gambrill Sinclair, *The Past from God's Perspective: A Commentary on John's Gospel*. (California: Dominican University of California, 2004), 179.

³³ Cougan Collins, *The Gospel of John*. (Lone Grove: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1982), 147.

the vine (Jesus) and burn them with fire. Thomas Aquinas believed that Jesus used this allegory to comfort his disciples over his departure (14:1) and to strengthen them for the troubles that they will face ahead.³⁴ It is for this reason Jesus has given them a new commandment to love one another as He loved them (15:12). By loving one another, this will unite them in unity to stand and face the oppressions from the outside world and their enemies.

2.2 The World

The word “world” as in our text is translated from the Greek word ‘κόσμος’ which means universe or mankind. It also means a way of life, opposing the purpose of God and the Christian way of living. John uses the term “the world” in several ways in his writings; firstly he uses it as the planet which is a metaphor for all mankind, and secondly as a human society or community that functions apart from God³⁵. The question is who are these human societies that opposed God and Jesus’ teachings? Wright argued that from Jesus’ perspective the world does not refer to the pagan world or the Greek and Roman world but the world where Jesus was born and lived which is the world of Galilee, Jerusalem, the children of Abraham, the people of Israel and the so called people of God³⁶.

Moreover, the world as God created in the beginning (Genesis) was good and perfect, but there is a part of it that resisted God. Brodie argued that it is the human will that resists God’s salvific acts so that they can rule the world instead of its Creator

³⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John: Chapters 13-21*. (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 96.

³⁵ Bob Utley, *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II and III John*. (Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2011), 206.

³⁶ Tom Wright, *John for Everyone: Part 2 Chapters 11-21*. (London: Ashford Colour Press, 2002), 77.

(God)³⁷. It seems that there are two worlds, a positive world where Jesus' "followers" dwell and a negative world made up of those who rejected Jesus. This division and separation of the two worlds provides tension among the people, those who are willing to the earthbound world of prestige and pleasure and those who are longing for the heavenly world full of God's blessings and joy. Additionally, Burridge describes that John's gospel contains three attitudes towards the world: positive, negative and neutral³⁸. In the Prologue of John's gospel, all three world's attitude was foreshadowed as in chapter 1 verse 10 saying: "He was in the world (neutral), and the world came into being through Him (positive); yet the world did not know Him (negative).

2.3 The Reasons of the World's Hatred

The world's hatred for Jesus' disciples and followers is not something out of the ordinary. There is a reason and a cause as to why the world hates and opposes them. As mentioned earlier, the world and Christians represent opposing ends of a spectrum. According to Wiersbe in his commentary on the Gospel of John states several reasons why the world system and the religious system hate Christians.³⁹ Firstly is because of the Christians identification with Christ (15:18, 20). Secondly is due to the fact that Christians do not belong to the world (15:19), and thirdly is that the world is spiritually ignorant and blind (15:21).

Furthermore, if we continue this idea by connecting it with the purpose behind the Gospel of John as found in Chapter One, it is easy to understand the world's hatred

³⁷ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 485.

³⁸ Richard A. Burridge, "Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to the Ethics of the Historical Jesus and John's Gospel," in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, S.J and Tom Thatcher, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 287.

³⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 288.

as not something new, but something expected because after Jesus' performs the signs as recorded in the Gospel of John, there are only two reactions possible, to believe or not to believe. For Nofoaiga, Morris, Tenney, and others this is the root cause for the hatred of the Christians, because the world represents the unbelief that is juxtaposed with the belief of the Christians.⁴⁰ This conflict drives the narrative between Jesus and the Jews, Jesus and the Romans, Jesus and world. In addition, the conflict is further exacerbated by the fact that those who believe have life and those who do not, like the world, incur the opposite of life which is death.

Summary

To summarize this chapter, the placement of John 15:18-16:4 serves as a need or a reason why Jesus' disciples and followers must stand together in unity as the new commandment of 'love your neighbor as you love yourself' insist. Jesus knows that his disciples would not survive alone and individually so therefore they have to unite and work together as the branches of the vine has to attach to the vine in order to bear fruit and be fruitful. On the other hand, they must also unite to strengthen themselves as they will likely face the oppression from the world of unbelievers, who persecuted and crucified their Lord Jesus. As mentioned above, the hate of the world over Jesus and his disciples was no ordinary event; it was foreseen and expected since the world did not believe Jesus as the divine Son of God. In order to fully understand these traditional interpretations from a Samoan perspective, the next chapter will now provide foundational information on my reading lens, the Samoan saying, "*O au o matua o fanau*" and my methodology of choice: Socio-Rhetorical Criticism by Vernon Robbins.

⁴⁰ Nofoaiga, *Class Notes*; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*; and Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*.

Chapter Three

Samoan Saying and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the Samoan saying, “*O au o matua o fanau*” as a Samoan cultural lens to aid in the socio-rhetorical reading of John 15:18-16:4. Firstly I will explain the significance and the importance of the Samoan sayings in the study of the Samoan language (*kalama o le gagana*) before explaining the etymology and the interpretation of *O au o matua o fanau* that will be used as a hermeneutical lens to explore Jesus’ relationship with his disciples. Also in this chapter I will discuss my selected methodology of biblical criticism which is socio-rhetorical criticism and how it is used to exegete and interpret my chosen text.

3.1 Samoan Saying

A Samoan saying or *muāgagana*⁴¹ represents an important tradition of the Samoan culture wherein language art forms communicate the inter-connectedness of the Samoan people with the land, the sea, and the sky. These sayings highlight the relational nature of the Samoan culture. For Samoans are rarely defined individually but rather collectively in its basic relations to family, land, and God. In addition, these sayings

⁴¹ *Muāgagana* in Samoan refers to the sayings that were constructed by our ancestors from within our culture and tradition including our surroundings and our everyday experiences. It is different from Samoan proverbs or *alagāupu* which is extracted from Samoan myths and ancient stories (*tala tu’u ma tala o le vavau*). A Samoan saying is different from a proverb because the proverb are more like quotes which are only said to remember and acknowledge our ancient myths and stories. As for the Samoan sayings, they convey a message and the reality of our life experiences as it happened in the past. On the other hand, some of our Samoan sayings are similar to some of the English sayings; an example is the English saying, “What comes around, goes around.” In Samoan, “*O le mea e sau i le vete, e toe alu i le vete.*” What it meant and interpreted in Samoan is that, “what you steal from others will also be stolen from you.”

provide life's lessons to teach and train a Samoan to be the best representation of himself or herself as an overall reflection of family, land, and God. Thus, Samoans are nurtured by these sayings, in order to bring great honour to the family, to the land, and to their God. "*O au o matua o fanau*" is one such saying⁴².

3.1.1 Etymology

"*O au o matua o fanau*," can be literally translated "the joy and the accomplishment of the parents are their children."⁴³ In other words, the children represent the success and the future of their parents. They are their parents' greatest accomplishment and represent that success for generations to come well after they are gone. The word *au* has many meanings⁴⁴, depending on how the word *au* is used and pronounced. With a rough breathing mark '*au* (*a-oo*) can mean a 'team' as in *o le 'au lanu moana* (the blue team), or it can also mean a 'handle' as in *ua gau le 'au o le faitoto'a* (the door handle is broken). With a smooth breathing mark '*au* (*ha-oo*) means 'successful', 'complete', or 'accomplish' as in *ua 'au la'u tama i le kolisi* (my child has successfully made it into college). The *au* is also a tool that is used in the Samoan art of

⁴² Filemoni Crawley who was a student and now a lecturer at Malua Theological College, translated "*O au o matua o fanau*" as "children are precious to parents". This saying or statement shapes the position of children within the Samoan family or *aiga*, reminding the Samoans that their culture and future depends on the upbringing of their children that they ought to be nurtured and brought up well in a respectful, healthy and a secure environment. It is why this saying is the cause and reason of Samoan belief in nurturing children verbally, due to the fact that the significance of spoken words are sensitive and easily absorbed into the hearts and minds of humans when said. Because through words it will be remembered, expressed, experiences and lived. Filemoni Crawley, "*Talanoa*: A Disciplinary Framework for a Samoan Child – An EFKS Pastoral Perspective." (BD, Malua Theological College, 2014), 23.

⁴³ Merini Mauga translates "*O au o matua o fanau*" as "The pinnacle of the parents eye are their children" in her thesis for the Degree of Master of Education (Med) at the Auckland University of Technology. Merini Mauga, "The Full Expression of *Talanoa alofa*: A Pedagogy to Enrich the Spiritual Wellbeing of Pasifika children in Early Childhood Education from a Samoan Perspective" (Med, Auckland University of Technology, 2020), 44.

⁴⁴ George Pratt, *Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*. (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1960), 126.

tattooing (*tāina o le tatau*), used to imprint the ink to the skin of the person receiving the *tatau* or tattoo. However, since the *au* in our Samoan saying is pronounced with a smooth breathing mark, ‘*O au...*’ can mean, ‘the successful achievement...’ The word *matua* means parents⁴⁵, therefore, ‘...*o matua...*’ is translated ‘...the parents...’

Finally, the word ‘...*o fanau*’ means ‘...the children⁴⁶...’ In reference to their parents it can also mean ‘...their children.’ Altogether, “*O au o matua o fanau*” can also be translated, “The successful achievement of parents are their children”. Further nuances of the word *au* have seen this Samoan saying translated as “The pride of parents is their children” as in “the greatest joy of parents is their children”. The happiness of successfully accomplishing or achieving a task is further expressed in the emotional output of that act which is complete happiness as symbolized by the word “Joy”. These meanings can be lost in translation but goes to show how rich the interpretation of these Samoan sayings can become with a greater wealth of English terms to translate literally, figuratively, or colloquially its Samoan equivalent.

3.1.2 Interpretation

The interpretation of “*O au o matua o fanau*” that will be used in this thesis is the latter, “The greatest joy of parents are their children”. For me, this English equivalent captures the essence of meaning found in this Samoan saying. As mentioned earlier regarding how a Samoan is identified collectively in relations to family, land, and God. This English equivalent “The greatest joy of parents are their children” captures all three relationships important to a Samoan. In relations to family, joy is seen in an heir to continue the legacy of the family for generations to come. For the land, it

⁴⁵ Ibid, 628.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 410.

represents the future caretaker to nurture, provide, and protect the land. Finally, for God it represents the promise of the covenant of blessings to multiply and make fruitful. Thus, “*O au o matua o fanau*” (The greatest joy of parents are their children) represents the reading lens by which to compare and contrast Jesus’ Farwell Discourse of John 15:18-16:4 demonstrates how this conference between Jesus and his disciples and Jesus and his Father can be understood from the Samoan context.

3.2 Socio-rhetorical criticism

This interpretational tool seeks to identify the marginalized in the text, such as the followers of a new faith, like the disciples and how Jesus as the protagonist brings out of the margin this oppressed group. Socio-rhetorical criticism was developed by Vernon K. Robbins combining social science with more literary based methods in biblical studies.⁴⁷ His aim was to create a rhetorical method that integrated literary, social, cultural and ideological issues in different and a variety of texts.⁴⁸ Socio-rhetorical criticism integrates the world of the text, the world behind the text and the

⁴⁷ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1.

⁴⁸ Using Socio-rhetorical as a methodology for exegesis has already been undertaken by some other theological students in their studies. Like Latu Foti Afioga who graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity from Malua Theological College in 2016, where he uses his experience of ‘tuagane’ to read Jesus’ conversation with the Syrophoenician woman. Latu Foti Afioga, “A *Tuagane* Reading of Jesus’ conversation with the Syrophoenician woman: Mark 7:24-30.” (BD, Malua Theological College, 2016). Clarke Stowers, who also graduated from Malua Theological College with a Bachelor of Theology, also wrote a thesis on Samoan names as hermeneutics to read biblical texts. Clarke, Stowers, “Names as Hermeneutics to read texts: *Fofogaolevai* and John the Baptiser (Mark 1:1-15)” (BTh, Malua Theological College, 2017). Kuresa Talavani who also graduated with a Bachelor of Theology from Malua has also interpreted the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John from his *tuagane* perspective. Kuresa Talavani, “Jesus’ Encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:16-30) from *Tuagane* Perspective.” (BTh, Malua Theological College, 2016).

world of the reader.⁴⁹ According to Robbins, this approach searches the meaning of the text, by investigating the values, convictions and beliefs, in the texts' world/s.⁵⁰

Furthermore, examination of these values helps to shape meaning. Thus as readers of these texts, we compare and/or contrast them with the world in which we live in order to make meaning more relevant for us.⁵¹ For this thesis, my Samoan reading perspective will inform a socio-rhetorical reading of John 15:18-6:4.⁵²

3.2.1 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 three stages. These are 'inner texture', 'inter texture' and 'social and cultural texture.'

3.2.1.1 Inner texture

Inner texture looks at how a text uses language to express ideas and thoughts found within. According to Robbins, this includes but is not limited to linguistic patterns within a text (*progressive* and *repetitive textures*), structural elements of a text (*narrational* and *opening-middle-closing textures*), the specific manner a text attempts to persuade its reader (*argumentative texture*) and the way the language of a text evokes feelings, emotions, or senses that are located in different parts of the body (*sensory-*

⁴⁹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1-2.

⁵⁰ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1.

⁵¹ Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 26.

⁵² Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 11. Robbins states here, that this is one of the goals of socio-rhetorical criticism.

aesthetic texture).⁵³ For this thesis, exploring the inner texture is examining whether John's narration of telling and showing Jesus' conversation with the disciples in a progressive and sensory-aesthetic texture displays Jesus' recognition and reward of his disciples for their belief in the face of conflict and adversity by the world.⁵⁴

These questions will guide the analysis. From the lens of "*O au o matua o fanau*" (The greatest joy of parents are their children) I ask these questions: How are the *matua* and *fanau* roles encoded in the language of the text? Who are the *matua* and who are the *fanau*? How do these members relate to each other? What are the needs of these members? How are these roles viewed by the outside world? How have these members achieved the promise of life to bolster the proclamation of God's kingdom?

3.2.1.2 Inter texture

According to Robbins, the intertexture of a text is the interaction of the language in the text with the outside material, physical objects, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions and systems.⁵⁵ It requires the exploration of other texts in order to interpret the aspects that are internal to the text. Intertexture covers the spectrums of (1) oral-scribal intertexture; (2) historical intertexture; (3) social intertexture; and (4) cultural intertexture.⁵⁶ Robbins describes the intertextual analysis as showing how the interpreter works in the area between the implied author and the text, meaning that the interpreter thus looks at how other phenomena speaks through the

⁵³ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

⁵⁴ "Progressive texture resides in sequences (progressions) of words and phrases throughout the unit... [while] sensory-aesthetics looks at how feelings and emotions are located in the different parts of the body." In this situation, the heart, mind, and soul." See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 9-15.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 40.

⁵⁶ Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 96.

selected texts and how these phenomena outside the text are encoded in the texts.⁵⁷ The intertextual analysis of John 15:18-16:4 will show how Jesus' recitation of Psalms 35:19 and Psalms 69:4 affirms the sin of the world concerning their hatred without reason.

The questions I ask within this section, How does the Old Testament text encode the sagely advice of the *O au o matua o fanau*? Who are the portraits of the *matua* and *fanau*? Is their relationship the same as in the New Testament? What are their roles? Finally, how do they achieve the purpose of life to promote the proclamation of the kingdom of God?

3.2.1.3 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 knowledge of the 1st 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.⁵⁸ 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 presents the social and cultural values of "honour and shame."⁵⁹ This might present John's resisting of the social and cultural values of the first century Mediterranean society influenced by Roman imperialism and/or Jewish legalism.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 142.

⁵⁸ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 76. Honour has a male and female component...honour is a claim to worth, a male component, while shame a female component refers to a person's sensitivity to what others think, say, or do with regards to one's honour.

These questions will guide the social and cultural analysis. From “*O au o matua o fanau*” reading lens: How does the language of the text show the belonging of Jesus and his disciples (characters) in the text to the world or context encoded within the text? Does this sense of belonging or not belonging reflect the “honour and shame” social-cultural value of the 1st century Mediterranean world? How does Jesus as the protagonist deal with this social and cultural value in his conversation with his disciples and with his Father? Where do the *matua* and *fanau* go from here?

Summary

All in all, the English translation of the Samoa saying *O au o matua o fanau* that will be used to explore the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is that “The greatest joy of the parents are their children”. It is the parent’s joy that they make sure their children do not suffer at any cost. I believe this is why Jesus not only teaches and shows his disciples everything but also encourages and reassures them that there will be oppressions and persecutions in the future. Jesus would not want his disciples and his followers to stumble and fail but to conquer and be victorious as He would be victorious over death.

The following chapter will concentrate on the exegesis of John 15:18-16:4 using the two stages of socio-rhetorical which are ‘inner texture’ and social and cultural’. Therefore, we will be able to compare and contrast Jesus’ relationship with his disciples and the relationship between parents and their children from the Samoan perspective, as a new interpretation to understand and relate to the selected text. By doing so, the questions that were constructed and mentioned above will guide the analysis of the text.

Chapter Four

Exegesis of John 15:18 – 16:4

Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyze John 15:18 – 16: 4 as a rhetorical and narrative unit⁶⁰, to explore how Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples as encoded in the text, can be read through the lenses of *O au o matua o fanau* (The greatest joy of the parents are their children), considering the importance of Jesus' relationship with his disciples. The first section of this chapter discusses the inner texture of the text and section two deals with the inter texture of the text. Last but not the least, section three will discuss the social and cultural texture of John 15:18-16:4 which will enable me to explore Jesus' relationship with his disciples in the context of *matua* and *fanau* as encoded in the text.

4.1 Inner Texture.

The following questions from the methodology as mentioned in the previous chapter will guide the inner texture analysis. How are the *matua* and *fanau* roles encoded in the language of the text? Who are the *matua* and who are the *fanau*? How do these members relate to each other? What are the needs of these members? How are these roles viewed by the outside world? How have these members achieved the promise of life to bolster the proclamation of God's kingdom?

⁶⁰ A rhetorical unit has a "beginning, a middle, and an ending". George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 33-34.

4.1.1 Repetitive-progressive texture.

Repetitive-progressive texture focuses on the repetition of words and phrases, and their progression in the text or unit. This can signal out the overall or important themes in a text. The following table shows the repetition and progression of some of the words that are found in John 15:18 – 16:4.

Table 1: Repetition and Progression in John 15:18 – 16:4							
15:18	world	hates	hated	hated			
15:19	belonged	world	world	not belong	world	world	hates
15:20	remember	word	persecuted	persecute	kept	word	keep
15:23	hates	hates	Father				
15:24	hated	Father					
15:25	word	hated					
15:26	Advocate	Father	Spirit of truth	Father	testify		
15:27	testify	beginning					
16:1	I have said	these things					
16:2	hour	is coming	kill				
16:3	Father						
16:4	But I have said	these things	hour	comes	remember		

In verses 18 and 19, the word ‘world’ is repeated five times and it is translated from the Greek word ‘κόσμος’ which means ‘universe’ or in some sense refers to ‘all mankind’ or ‘humanity’. However, the word ‘belonged’ and ‘not belong’ as in verse 19 divides the ‘world of humanity’ into two: those who ‘belonged to the world’ and ‘those who do not belong to the world’. This causes the ‘hate’ which is repeated eight times in

verses 18 to 25, as the reaction or response of those who ‘belonged to the world’ over those who do ‘not belong to the world’. It is this ‘hate’ which is translated from the Greek word ‘μισεῖν’ meaning ‘to hate’ that progress and leads those who ‘belonged to the world’ ‘to persecute’ (verse 20) and ‘kill’ (verse 16:2) those who do ‘not belong to their world’. However, verse 20 introduces a new verb which is ‘remember’ translated from the Greek word ‘μνημονεύετε’ which also means to ‘keep in mind’ or ‘to think of’⁶¹. It is expressed and used by John as an imperative or an instruction to two or more people. It is used together with the noun ‘word’ translated from the Greek word ‘λόγον’ meaning that Jesus had taught his disciples before about how they will be treated as they become his disciples.

In verses 23 to 26 the word ‘Father’ or ‘πατέρα’ and ‘Advocate’ or ‘παράκλητος’ in Greek are introduced as witnesses of the world’s hatred. The word ‘testify’ is used twice in the text and it illustrates judgment to the two worlds. This means that the Father and the Advocate or ‘the Helper’⁶² are both witnesses who will testify against the world. This therefore progresses to the mentioning of the ‘hour’ where it is used twice in the text. Firstly it says that ‘an hour is coming’ meaning that the ‘hour is not here yet’ but at the end of the text it says the ‘hour has come’ or in other words ‘this is the hour’. This shows that the hate of the world is not a prediction but an actual situation. Hence why the verb ‘remember’ is repeated once again as an imperative meaning that it should be considered as it will happen.

⁶¹ Michael H. Burer and Jeffrey E. Miller, *A New Reader's Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008), 196.

⁶² Ibid.

The repetitive-progressive texture therefore displays that the major concern of the text is the ‘hate or hatred’ of those people who ‘belonged to the world’ over those who ‘do not belong to the world’. As a result, the text is specifically for those who ‘do not belong to the world’ in order to remind them of the words of the Father and the work of the Advocate as the hour of judgment has come.

Clearly from the aforementioned discussion, the roles of parents are played by Jesus and the Advocate, whom provide guidance and support for the children, whom are the followers: disciples, believers, or simply those hated by the world. They are related to one another based on the world’s hatred of them, for they represent everything that the world does not stand for according to the repetitive-progressive texture. Furthermore, the play on words and the emphasis that John places on them in this narrative unit provides the setting/environment upon which Jesus’ final words of encouragement to propel his disciples forward is the context by which “*O au o matua o fanau*” (The greatest joy of parents are their children) is an appropriate analogy. In addition, the setting of this saying for a Samoan family on a Sunday evening after family prayer and before school, work, and all other activities for the week begins resonates loudly as an act of love and care for the children as they continue to move forward. So as Jesus prepares his disciples for the next steps of the mission, so too are the parents preparing their beloved ones for the challenges that await them in the new week(s), months, years, and the rest of their lives.

4.1.2 Opening–middle–closing texture.

Opening-middle-closing texture concerns with the way in which the plotted time and the story time of the text frame the world of the text, and it resides in the nature of

the beginning, body, and conclusion of the text⁶³. This allows the use of rhetorical analysis as it emphasizes the relations among the opening, middle and closing⁶⁴. Therefore, regarding the repetitive-progressive texture discussed above, John 15:18-16:4 can be divided into the following threefold structure.

- i. Opening (15:18–25) – The hate of the world.
- ii. Middle (15:26–27) – The help of the Holy Spirit
- iii. Closing (16:1-4) – The coming persecutions.

Opening (15:18-21) – The hate of the world.

Considering the repetitive-progressive texture discussed above, verses 18 to 25 of John 15 identifies the reasons why the world hated Jesus and his disciples. In verse 18, the word ‘*εἰ*’ (if) that begins the verse can also be translated as ‘Since’,⁶⁵ links and connects my selected text to Jesus’ last “I am” saying (John 15:1-10), and His greatest commandment to love one another (John 15:11-17). This is where Jesus claimed Himself as the true vine and his Father as the vinegrower, that whoever abides in Him will be fruitful but those who do not will be gathered and thrown into the fire and burned. Jesus also gave his disciples the greatest commandment to love one another as He has loved them and calling them His friends instead of servants (verse 15).

This illustrates the kind of relationship that Jesus had with his disciples, and it is that relationship that leads Jesus to prepare and strengthen them for what lies ahead when they become separated. This interpretation coincides with my Samoan

⁶³ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 19.

⁶⁴ Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 50.

⁶⁵ Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation, 1978), 116.

understanding and experience of *O au o matua o fanau*. Looking from the lenses of *O au o matua o fanau*, Jesus' relationship with his disciples is the same as with the parents' relationship with their children. As Jesus has concerned for his disciples' wellbeing when he returns to his Father, so too do the parents' have concerns as they love and care for their children as they are their greatest joy.

For this reason, verse 18 begins with an imperative, where Jesus is warning his disciples that since they have abided and have become His friends, the world will certainly hate them just as they first hated Him. The word 'aware' as in verse 18 is translated from the Greek word 'γινώσκετε' which is an imperative, meaning 'to know' or 'come to understand'⁶⁶. This means that Jesus is saying to his disciples that they should not be surprised when the world⁶⁷ hates them, because they hated Him first. Thus, why the world is hostile to Jesus' disciples, since they now belong to Jesus, they no longer belong to the world (verse 19).

In verse 20, *μνημονεύετε τοῦ λόγου οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὑμῖν* (Remember the word that I said to you) is another imperative that Jesus demands from his disciples, to recall and remember the word (*λόγου*) that he once told them. The word *ἐδίωξαν* or 'persecute' in Greek is an indicative aorist active verb⁶⁸. In other words, if they did it before, what is to stop them from doing it again? Jesus knows that his persecution has now fallen upon the disciples, whom carry out his work into the world, and if the world did it him, they

⁶⁶ Ibid, 80.

⁶⁷ In John's gospel, the word 'κόσμος' or 'world' is used 79 times, and it represents the "hostile Jews" who do not believe in Jesus. J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John*. Vol.2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1928), 490.

⁶⁸ In Greek, indicative is a verbal mood used to make a statement about something that exists. Aorist is a verbal tense which indicates an undefined action that occurs one time in the past, and sometimes it indicates the background of the action. Active is a verbal voice used in where the subject acts on others. See James M. Eiford, *A Grammar for New Testament Greek*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 7-58-69.

would definitely do it again to his disciples. John somehow refers to the dating background of his Gospel in the late first century, during the expulsion of the Christians from the synagogues as a result of the conflicts with the Jews⁶⁹. The saying “Servants are not greater than their master” was also said by Jesus after he washed his disciples’ feet (13:16) as a lesson of the true dignity of service. Unfortunately, Jesus has now said it as a warning to his disciples, saying that they will find no exception from persecutions as they will all be persecuted.

In verses 21 to 25, Jesus however claims himself as the cause or root of the world’s hatred apart from his disciples. Verse 21 begins with the conjunction *ἀλλὰ* (but) which indicates the relation of the persecutions to the account of Jesus’ name and the ignorance of the world towards God who sent Jesus. Verse 22 implies that if Jesus had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. This can be referred to the seven “I am sayings” of Jesus as written by John, where Jesus claims himself as: the Bread of Life (6:35), the Light of the World (8:12), the Gate (10:9), the Good Shepherd (10:11), the Resurrection and the Life (11:25), the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6); and the True Vine (15:1). Nevertheless, Jesus also stated the works that He did which no one ever did as another cause of the world’s hatred. This illustrates the world’s complete rejection of Jesus’ teachings and ministry without knowing that they too are rejecting God. As a result, the Scripture has proven their sin as they failed to keep and obey their law (verse 25).

⁶⁹ Bernard. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John*. 492.

Middle (15:26–27) – The help of the Holy Spirit.

The middle part of the unit speaks of the help of the Holy Spirit as a witness to the disciples on behalf of Jesus. In verse 26, Jesus made it clear to his disciples that He will send the Advocate from the Father, whom is the Spirit of truth to testify on his behalf. Jesus' sending of the Holy Spirit shows the equality of Jesus as the Son and God as the Father. Jesus identifies the Holy Spirit in two ways: 'Advocate' and the 'Spirit of Truth' which both emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit.

The word Advocate which also means Helper is translated from the Greek word 'παράκλητος' (Paraclete⁷⁰) and it is used five times in the New Testament, which are all in John's writings. Thus, Jesus calling to the Holy Spirit to aid and help his disciples shows His compassion and major concern for them, where the help of the Holy Spirit is therefore explained by mentioning the Spirit of truth who will testify as witness for his disciples. On the other hand, the words 'witness' and 'testify' both illustrates judgment which implies that the world's hatred will not go unnoticed as God will provide justice for those who believes in His Son Jesus Christ.

In verse 27, Jesus instructed his disciples to testify for him because he was with them since the beginning. From this point forward, Jesus knew that his earthly relationship with his disciples would be coming to an end. This is why it was important for him to gather together his disciples during this 'period of conference' to warn and exhort them to abide in Him so that they may continue to receive life.

⁷⁰ "Paraclete" is the translation of the Greek word *παράκλητος*, which means "to call alongside for the purpose of helping, to exhort, to console, or to encourage." Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard Frederic Vos and John Rea, *The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*. Vol 2. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975).

Looking from the lenses' of '*O au o matua o fanau*', it is also the same reason why parents prepare and shape their children for what the world has prepared for them in the future. Parents know and understand well that that their relationship with their children will not continue together forever. There will come a time when parents will move on from this life, and on that day, their children will have to be prepared to fend for themselves based on the foundational trainings, knowledge and understanding providing by their parents to endure and succeed in this world. Therefore, parents take it upon themselves to provide the best nurturing and preparation for their children to face the challenges in life.

Closing (16:1-4) – The coming persecutions.

The closing part of the unit reveals the persecutions that Jesus disciples will experience. The beginning of verse 1 links the closing unit of the text to the opening and the middle unit of the text. Jesus explained to his disciples the reason why he told them everything in order to keep them from stumbling (*μὴ σκανδαλισθῆτε*). The word '*σκανδαλισθῆτε*' in Greek is a subjunctive verb meaning that Jesus does not wish for his disciples to stumble. But since the word '*μὴ*' is placed in front and it then becomes a subjunctive prohibition where Jesus tells his disciples everything, so as to solidify their belief, and prohibit them from stumbling and giving up on believing in him and his Father.

As a result of Jesus prohibiting his disciples from stumbling, Jesus has now prepared them by foretelling them the chaos that will be seen with the coming persecutions. They will be put out of the synagogues and would be killed as the world

believes what they are doing is right.⁷¹ However, to be put out of the synagogues and to be killed means that the disciples would be totally excluded from continuing the works of Jesus and proclaiming him as the Son of God. In verse 4, Jesus once again told his disciples that all the things that he has said are for them to remember what already spoken to them about, so that they are fully prepared when the hour comes. So instead of the disciples relying on Jesus, they must rely on themselves and the Holy Spirit as the Advocate when facing persecutions.

Looking from my perspective of *O au o matua o fanau*, the preparation of Jesus' disciples from stumbling is the same as the parents teaching and preparing their children not to fail and stumble in life. It is because the failure of the children is the reflection of the parents, hence why Jesus does not want his disciples to stumble. Also when the children become successful and have accomplished great things in life, it reflects the success of the parents from raising and teaching their children. Therefore this is why the success and the accomplishments of the children would bring great joy to their parents.

4.2 Inter Texture

The following questions from the previous chapter will guide the inter texture analysis. How does the Old Testament text encode the sagely advice of the *O au o matua o fanau*? Who are the portraits of the *matua* and *fanau*? Is their relationship the same as in the New Testament? What are their roles? Finally, how do they achieve the purpose of life to promote the proclamation of the kingdom of God?

⁷¹ According to William Hendriksen, "to put out of the synagogues" means that Jesus' disciples and followers would be excommunicated from their religious and social life. They would also be cut off from the hopes and prerogatives of the Jews, and would be viewed by their former friends as worse than pagans. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 321.

The intertextual analysis of John 15:18-16:4 shows how Jesus' recitation⁷² of Psalms 35:19 and 69:4 affirms that the world's hatred towards him and his disciples has no cause. These psalms are psalms of affliction, prayers for God's deliverance and for comfort when everything seems to be going wrong. As mentioned above, the Jews' hatred over Jesus and his disciples causes them to sin as a result of not keeping their law. Jesus recites both Psalms 35:19 and 69:4 when He was revealing the reasons of the world's hatred to his disciples. Jesus uses this recitation as confirmation to his disciples that the world's hatred towards them is against the law. The law mentioned here refers to the Old Testament as part of the Scripture instead of the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses⁷³

Psalm 34: 19⁷⁴ (LXX)

- *μη ἐπιχαρείσάν μοι οἱ ἐχθραίνοντές μ οἱ ἀδίκως οἱ μισοῦντές με δωρεάν καὶ διανεύοντες ὀφθαλμοῖς*

Psalm 68: 5⁷⁵ (LXX)

- *ἐπληθύνθησαν ὑπὲρ τὰς τρίχας τῆς κεφαλῆς μου οἱ μισοῦντές με δωρεάν ἐκραταιώθησαν οἱ ἐχθροί μου οἱ ἐκδιώκοντές με ἀδίκως ἃ οὐχ ἤρπασα τότε ἀπετίννον*

John 15: 25 (Greek)

- *ἀλλ' ἵνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν ὅτι Ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν.*

⁷² “Recitation is the transmission of speech or narrative, from either oral or written tradition, in the exact words in which the person has revealed the speech or narrative or in different words.” (Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 41).

⁷³ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. 527.

⁷⁴ In the LXX Septuagint Bible, Psalms 35:19 is classified as Psalms 34:19.

⁷⁵ Psalms 69:4 is classified as Psalms 68:5 in the LXX Septuagint Bible.

I have underlined in the LXX texts above the words of the psalmist that were recited by Jesus. In comparison, both LXX texts show no difference in the wordings of the text. However, Jesus' recitation as the final part of the opening unit of John 15:18-16:4 serves as a shift from Jesus warning his disciples into exhorting and encouraging them regarding the world's hatred.

In attending to the resonances in the cited texts, the psalmist prays and pleads to his God for deliverance from his enemies. In Psalm 35, the psalmist is faced with his enemies striving and fighting against him as they pursue to kill and destroy him even though it is unjust and without cause.⁷⁶ Therefore, the psalmist asks the Lord for both protection and deliverance by saying "Let them not rejoice over me, nor let them wink with the eye" (verse 19) as his enemies plot against him secretly and unjustly. In Psalm 69, David is also praying to the Lord for deliverance as he is surrounded by his enemies who are eager to destroy him without cause.⁷⁷ Both Psalms reveal affliction on the part of the supplicant, appealing and needing help and comfort as they deal with the hatred and oppressions from their enemies.

So therefore, Jesus' recitation of Psalm 35:19 and 65:4 shows that David who was the ideal king of Israel was also oppressed and hated without cause by his enemies and rivals. Hence why David petitioned God, with full confidence in God's steadfastness and righteousness to intervene on his behalf. On the other hand, Jesus' confidence in his disciples' success moving forward can be expressed by his promise to his disciples of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit who will help and counsel them when facing the world's hatred. Furthermore, after his conference with the disciples, Jesus too

⁷⁶ Donald Williams, *The Preacher's Commentary: Psalms 1-72*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 279. "Most commentators have identified this psalm as an individual lament."

⁷⁷ Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*. (Wheaton: SP Publications Inc, 1991), 366.

has a conference with his father and petitions on their behalf. “I am asking on their behalf...And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one,” (John 17:9-11). Jesus love as a *matua* (parent) continues to find expression in his true love for his *fanau* (children) or disciples in this case, and the challenges that lay ahead for them without him, but with the Advocate and his Father.

4.3 Social and Cultural Texture

In the inner texture and inter texture analysis, Jesus’ relationship with His disciples in John 15:18-16:4 can be seen from the lens of *O au o matua o fanau*. Jesus’ preparation of his disciples shows Jesus’ compassion as a parent preparing his children to stand against and overcome the hate and persecutions from the world. Therefore, in this social and cultural analysis, I will use the lens of *O au o matua o fanau* to explore how the language of the text reveals “the belonging of Jesus and his disciples (characters)” in the text, to the world or context encoded within the text. Furthermore, this sense of belonging or not belonging reflects the “honour and shame” social-cultural value of the first (1st) century Mediterranean world. This cultural nuance or gap allows for my cultural expression to reinforce or reevaluate such understandings for me, a Samoan reader of this text. Moreover, it will also show how Jesus as the protagonist deals with this social and cultural value in his conversation with his disciples and with his Father.

In the first century Mediterranean world, the values of honour and shame were pivotal values of antiquity that influenced the way people related to each other socially

and culturally.⁷⁸ They were the social and cultural anchors that were first learnt in family units before it was carried into all other levels and spaces of society. Honour was basically the *public recognition* of one's social standing, which comes in one of two ways. One is called 'ascribed honour' as it is inherited from the family at birth, and the other one is called 'acquired honour', as it was gained from struggling for public recognition.⁷⁹ Shame, on the other hand meant the failure to value or uphold one's honour. However, the 'honour' status follows the expectation of honourable behavior.

For the Samoan, honour and shame is not about public recognition or something that one receives from the outside. Rather, it is the value that is instilled in a child from birth and is closely associated with *fa'aaloalo* (respect). In the Samoan culture, *fa'aaloalo* is learned by the *fanau* (children) from their *matua* (parents). It is within the *fa'aaloalo* that honour and shame is brought upon the family. *Fanau* are taught to honour their *matua* within the family unit. As the *fanau* move beyond these units into the larger society, they show *fa'aaloalo* to their elders, their peers, even to children as a sign of great honour that was instilled in them at a very young age. Thus honour and shame is not ascribed or acquired, rather it is learned in the *matua-fanau* dynamic.

Jesus in the Gospel of John is presented as a person with honour. He is known as the Word in the beginning or the Incarnated Word (1:1), the Son of God (3:18), the Rabbi (3:2), and the Messiah (4:15) as his messianic honour is reinforced by his baptism by John the Baptist. In John 15:18-16:4, Jesus as a person with honour is revealed throughout the selected text. For example, the belonging of the disciples to Jesus apart from the world shows Jesus' honour considering the disciples relationship with Him.

⁷⁸ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kingship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2000), 23-94.

⁷⁹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 76

Also Jesus mentioned his relationship with his Father by saying that whoever hates Him hates also hates his Father as an indication of ascribed honour. This is also supported by Jesus' sending the Holy Spirit as the Advocate to counsel his disciples; and as a Spirit of Truth to testify on His behalf. Manifestly, Jesus' honour will give honour to his disciples as He had encouraged and prepared them for their future ministry.

From the perspective of *O au o matua o fanau*, Jesus' honour is taught to his disciples, by way of their *fa'aaloalo* (respect) of him as their rabbi, their Master, their Savior, and as their *matua* (parent). Jesus teaches and trains them for the challenges ahead and they acquire this honour by way of the 1st century Mediterranean social and cultural textures. However, his honour is passed onto his disciples by way of their conduct and behavior before the world. Even though the world will hate and despise them, even considering them shameful for not adhering to its way, their honour is maintained through *fa'aaloalo* as *fanau* of the Messiah, to go forth and spread his Gospel so that others may come to believe and live. Thus they too will receive his honour and be glorified before the father, as Jesus was glorified in his life, death and resurrection.

Summary

In summary of this chapter, the interpretation from the lenses of *O au o matua o fanau* has shown that Jesus' relationship with his disciples can be seen as the relationship between *matua* (parents) and *fanau* (children) in the Samoan perspective. As Jesus prepares his disciples to stand against the coming persecutions, so as Samoan parents prepare their children through family conferences and meetings on how to

survive and deal with the challenges in life. Thus, Jesus did not want his disciples to live in shame and without honour, but be glorified as he too was glorified by his Father.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In exploring Jesus' farewell discourse and his relationship with his disciples as in John 15:18-16:4, the main question of this work revolved around the idea of whether Jesus' relationship with his disciples can be seen and understood from the relationship between Samoan parents (*matua*) and their children (*fanau*). Upon completion of the exegetical chapter, such relationship is very possible based on the textual evidences of the text.

The inner texture analysis examined how the narrative text grouped together its words, with the use of specific words that were repeated throughout the text to describe Jesus' concerns for his disciples. A concern that stemmed from his own experiences with the world. Now that the disciples have declared themselves followers of Jesus, it is understood that the same treatment will befall the disciples. This is the past life experiences in which the parents had faced, which sets the tone for their exhortation and encouragement of their children. To ensure that their children will not have to endure the hardships they (the parents) have faced alone. As the *matua* (parent) have already tasted the ill-treatment by the world, this ensures their *fanau* (children) will not be afraid once they come face to face with the cruelty of the world.

The inter texture analysis discussed Jesus' recitations of Psalm 35 and 69, psalms of lament or affliction, to let it be known that the ill treatment of the people of God by the world is not anything new. Recalling and revisiting these past traumas reinforces the reality of what the *fanau* (children) will face. As the *matua* (parents) speak of their own experiences, it is grounded in a historical reality to help the *fanau*

with their experiences in the future and to remove any elements of surprise to deflate and discourage the *fanau* as they move forward with the words of their *matua* together with those of their ancestors.

Finally, the social and culture texture looked at honour and shame of the 1st century Mediterranean world and how honour is acquired and or ascribed. This provided the important conduit by which to insert my Samoan understanding of *fa'aaloalo* (respect) which is taught by the *matua* to the *fanau* from an early age. It is something they continue to carry with them and becomes the foundation of honour and shame for the Samoan. This *fa'aaloalo* is the basis of the moral and ethical behavior of the *fanau*. It is how honour and shame is revealed to others. Thus as Jesus teaches, exhorts, and encourages his disciples, he passes along his honour to them to carry forward, likewise, as the *matua* teaches, disciplines, and encourages the *fanau*, they too pass on their honour by way of *fa'aaloalo* onto the *fanau* to take forward with them as a representation of their *matua* to the world.

The Samoan concept of “*O au o matua o fanau*” is inherent in the interactions between Jesus and his disciples. It is a relationship that brings the past and present together, with great hopes of a bright future for tomorrow. However, it understands that not everything will work out to the disciple’s likings and not everything will work out as hoped for. Those are the words of encouragement and exhortation that are further supported by the sending of the Advocate and petitioning the Father, to ensure the disciples’ well being. Just like how the *matua* gather’s their *fanau* together on Sunday evening after evening prayer to provide guidance and support for the journey of the *fanau* as they face a new week of challenges and growth in becoming who they were meant to be.

In conclusion, this thesis explored Jesus' "Farewell Discourse," in particular John 15:18-16:4 from the Samoan reading perspective of "*O au o matua fanau*" using the methodology of Socio-Rhetorical Criticism to unravel and enrich my understanding of this pivotal moment for the Christian reader. Dividing the thesis into five (5) chapters, I hoped to methodically weave together a thesis that demonstrated my foundational understanding of the Gospel of John; Biblical scholarship conducted on the "Farewell Discourse"; a discussion of my Samoan reading lens, "*O au o matua o fanau*" and the methodological approach of Socio-Rhetorical Criticism to read John 15:18-16:4; finally my exegetical analysis based on my methodology in dialogue with my hermeneutical lens rounded out my thesis.

After conducting this rigorous analysis of the Biblical text, I am pleased to say that the ends definitely justify the means. Working with Biblical text was very daunting as one has to be cautious not to assert more than what is given. However, within the gaps and spaces of the narrative text, wherein questions can be posed, suppositions were made with a fidelity to the text so as not to promote my own Samoan reading upon the text, but allow the two, the text and my reading lens to dialogue and provide the necessary answers. Indeed, the answers were rewarding as I have come to appreciate how to conduct such readings in order to not lose my Samoan identity when reading text that have for so long promoted cultural oppression under the guise of religious unity.

In moving this thesis forward, I hope to continue to use Samoan Hermeneutics as a reading lens to conduct additional inquiries of the Biblical text. By doing so, contributing to the further expansion of Biblical scholarship in the name of cultural diversity.

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