

**SUFFERING IN DISCIPLESHIP:
READING 1 PETER 4:1-19 FROM
THE TOFA MAMAO A LE AU-
MATUTUA HERMENEUTICS**

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ABSTRACT

One of the ways that will help broaden biblical interpretation in Samoa is the ability of a Samoan reader of the Bible to explore the Bible using his/her questions from his/her Samoan world. It is not to impose the reader's situation on the text but to guide an exploration of the biblical text seeking in the text answers to the reader's questions. The belief that any question about how to live in this world according to the will of God is found in the Bible remains steadfast in our Samoa Christian world. This is the belief behind this study. We experience struggle and suffering in trying to live everyday life by serving God in and through undertaking our duties and roles as church members. We consider this experience as part of our existence in this world. We look at ourselves as Christians and must lead our lives as faithful Christians by becoming and being true followers of Christ in everything we do. In this way of life, we encounter suffering, and at times we ask questions whether how we understand suffering as part of being a Christian. Therefore, this study's task is to find some answers to Peter's first letter. We learn from experience, and Peter, the disciple of Jesus, is undoubtedly very experienced. Reflected in the words of his letters the experience of an elderly disciple who, despite his denial of Jesus, became one of the true leaders in spreading the Gospel when Jesus ascended to heaven. We respect the Elders of our Samoan families and villages, for they have the wisdom about living and facing life in our Samoan worlds. Their wisdom is the platform of learning upon which our young people learn from the ways of approaching life within particular social, cultural, and religious boundaries. This wisdom called *Tofa a le Au-Matutua* would be used in this study as an understanding and experience of the life of serving our families and villages to guide the exploration of 1 Peter 4:1-19, seeking answers about what suffering is in discipleship or serving God. It is an exercise of interpreting the Bible using our knowledge and experience of our worlds and contexts.

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

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, Simi and Liupapa Reupena. You were not able to witness the dream you had for anyone of us to be a Faifeau. I thank you for everything you taught me about life and in serving God.

I would also like to dedicate this study to my wife's parents, Fepuleai Muagutu, Ofeira, Faavaoga Eperu, and Faafetai. Thank you for allowing me to serve your family as a chief and to be caring parents for me, my wife, and my children. We will forever cherish and remember you in our hearts.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS THE STUDY AND CHAPTERS OUTLINE	1
1.1 Introduction: My Inspiration to do this study is my Location as a Reader	1
1.1.1 Discipleship and Suffering is an Integrated Experience and Knowledge	1
1.1.2 Traditional Understanding about Discipleship in the Gospels	4
1.1.3 Peter the Disciple and Elder – A study of Suffering in Discipleship	4
1.1.4 Study guided by the Samoan Hermeneutics, <i>Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua</i>	5
1.2 Reasons for this study	6
1.3 Why Letters of Peter	8
1.4 Definition of Discipleship used in this Study	9
1.5 Outline of Thesis	12
1.6 Conclusion	12
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY – <i>TOFA MAMAO A LE AU- MATUTUA</i> HERMENEUTIC WITH THE HEURISTIC INTERPRETIVE ANALYTIC OF SOCIORHETORICAL CRITICISM	14
2.0 Introduction	14
2.1 Locating the Study in the World of Biblical Hermeneutics	14
2.1.1 The word <i>Hermeneutics</i>	15
2.1.2 Brief history of hermeneutics:	16
2.1.3 Gadamer’s Aesthetic Theory:	20
2.1.4 Fusion of Two Horizons	21
2.2 The Location of My Samoan Hermeneutics in the Islander Criticism Approach	23
2.3 Defining <i>Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua</i> as a Hermeneutics	28
2.3.1 Hermeneutics with lenses to guide the Interpretation of the text (Peter 2:13-25)	28
2.3.2. How <i>Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua</i> as a Hermeneutic approaches the reading of the Text (1 Peter 4:1-19)	35

2.3.3 Sociorhetorical Criticism as the Heuristic Interpretive Analytic to interpret the text:	37
2.3.4 Sociorhetorical criticism and why I have chosen this interpretive analytic	38
2.4 Conclusion	42
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW OF 1 PETER 4:1-19	43
3.0 INTRODUCTION	43
3.1 First Letter of Peter: Author; Occasion and Date; and Content	43
3.1.1 Author	43
3.1.2 Occasion and Date	46
3.1.3 Content	47
3.2 Literature Review: Structure of 1 Peter and Scholars' Interpretations of 1 Peter 4:1-19.	48
3.2.1 Structure of 1 Peter	48
3.2.2 Literature Review of the selected passage (1 Peter 4:1-19)	53
3.3 Conclusion	55
CHAPTER FOUR: IDEOLOGICAL AND INNERTEXTUAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SELECTED TEXT (1 PETER 4:1-19) FROM TOFA MAMAO A LE AU-MATUTUA	56
4.0 Introduction	56
4.1 Analysis of the Ideological Texture of the progression of the letter from <i>Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua</i>	57
4.1.1 Innertextual Analysis	61
4.1.2 Innertextual Analysis of the Progression of the " <i>O le Pologa i le Avea ma Soo Structure.</i> "	61
4.1.3 Innertextual Analysis of 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit	65
4.1.4 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit from <i>Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua</i>	66
4.2 Conclusion	74
CHAPTER FIVE:	76
INTERTEXTUAL AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS	76
5.0 Introduction	76
5.1 Intertextual Analysis	76
5.2. Social and Cultural Analysis	82
5.2.1 Jesus ascribed honour	83
5.3 Conclusion	84

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	86
Glossary	90
Bibliography	93

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List of Abbreviations

EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa
LMS	London Missionary Society

CHAPTER ONE:

WHAT IS THE STUDY AND CHAPTERS OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction: My Inspiration to do this study is my Location as a Reader

1.1.1 Discipleship and Suffering is an Integrated Experience and Knowledge

The study presented in this thesis seeks more understanding of the First Letter of Peter about suffering in discipleship. The experience and knowledge of discipleship relative to suffering in a world where making disciples of all nations is carried out is an integrated experience and knowledge of the different cultures, values, and customs of the places and environments in which a so-called disciple or follower of Jesus Christ grew up in. This is seen in the elders of our families and churches sharing their life wisdom in encouraging our generations to continue their works or missions. The results were passed onto them from their parents – our ancestors. For example, they are teaching us ways of becoming a good *tautua* (servant) for God through our roles as family and church members.¹ They often say that becoming a good servant begins with knowing who we are concerning the families and churches we belong to. Knowing our sense of belonging to our families and churches evokes the feeling of fulfilling that role to the best of our ability in and through our actions and good manners. And by doing that, the sureness of blessing awaits us.

When the elders of our families and churches make decisions, their blended experience and understanding of the Samoan culture and Christianity are seen to have

¹ Examples of our family elders' are Nuetolu Fia Gagaeolo (72 years old) and Laitimalu Valovalo (71 years old)

influenced their decision-making. According to Vernon K Robbins, the language of the New Testament are Christian invention of discourses that came from the blending of the Jewish religious understanding and belief; their rhetorical language; and the Greek culture and language in the First Century.² This study believes that, that blending is also seen in our viewing life in today's Samoan world.³ For example, when we talk about living life in Samoa in today's world, we are talking about God's existence in our Samoan world, according to our theological understanding and belief. In other words, our life in our Samoan world is meaningless without its connection to our knowing God in living the life of serving God in and through our roles and responsibilities in our families, churches, and villages.

For example, one of the sayings that are usually said and heard among members of our churches, families, and villages when talked about serving God in and through the works they do for the church, such as the offering of time, money, and gifts to the church is: "*O le tautuaina o le feau a le Atua, e le faigofie, ae matagofie* (Serving God is not an easy task but a joyful undertaking)." Embedded in this saying is the unheard voice of our people encountering pain and suffering in their efforts and attempts to fulfil that service, as reflected in the words of '*e le faigofie*' (not easy, hard, painful). Thus, from the perspective of discipleship, we can say that putting into practice following Jesus by serving God in and through any life situation in our Samoan worlds is an undertaking of

²See Vernon K Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse* (Blandford Forum, Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2009).

³Kirisimasi Sala'a Fiti saw the impact of Christianity on Samoan Oratory as an example. For Fiti, heard in the speeches spoken by the Samoan chiefs on special occasions in our Samoan social and cultural worlds in today's world is the blending of Christianity teachings and values with our Samoan proverbs and sayings. Kirisimasi Sala'a Fiti, "The Impact of Christianity on Samoan Oratory" (BD Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2006), 32-50. See also Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "Explore the rhetology and the rhetography of *Lauga* and *Pese FaaSamoa* (Paper presented at the Oceania Biblical Studies Association Conference in Tonga, 2012).

making disciples of all nations.⁴ It is not voicing or letting the world know about any good works we have done or do for God but talking about the reality of facing pain and suffering in doing those works, which, after all, bring us joy. Suffering in discipleship is accurate, and questions about it need to be answered, such as: “How does suffering as part of discipleship bring joy?” “How does facing suffering fulfil our roles and responsibilities in discipleship?”

Furthermore, there is an understanding among our people as family members, villagers, and church-goers that we learn and experience facing hardship and suffering in life from how long a person or a Samoan lives. The life emphasized in this study is the life of doing the work of discipleship or *tautua i le Atua* in our Samoan world – the world that is made up of our families, churches, and villages. Discipleship in our Samoan world follows Jesus Christ’s teachings and works, as revealed in the Gospels⁵ embraced by our *faa-Samoa*⁶. Our Samoan world has its values, expectations, and way of life; considered the ultimate way of living that every Samoan life is a Christian life that brings blessings to us, our families, our villages, and our churches. We look up to the elders of our families, churches, and villages as people who have experienced that life or those who have the wisdom of the life of serving God in that way of living in our Samoan world.

⁴This thought relates to Jesus’ commissioning of disciples to go and make disciples of all nations in Matthew 26:16-20.

⁵For example, Jesus calls the fishers in Matthew 4:18-25 to leave their nets and families and follow Jesus. The traditional interpretation of this calling of the anglers is that this was Jesus’ first action of calling his disciples, which reflects the importance of submission and sacrifice to the ministry of spreading the good news of God’s salvation of the world. It is a work and commitment where those who choose to do it are prepared to face the pain and suffering of doing it.

⁶Our Samoan way of living life as Samoans are now in our families, churches, and villages. It is a Samoan way of living life guided by our blending of our Samoan families’ and village’s values and customs with our Christian values and beliefs. This is reflected in our understanding of living that blending as reflected in the Samoan sayings: “E vaavaalua le Talalelei ma le Aganuu” (The Gospel and our Samoan Culture work closely together hand in hand or side by side); “E malu le Aganuu i le Talalelei – E malu le Talalelei i le Aganuu” (Our Culture is guided and protected by the Gospel so as the Gospel by our Culture).

Our elders' wisdom and understanding of life are vital in guiding the communities to live in peace and harmony despite their facing suffering in some situations in our Samoan world. In other words, our elders' understanding and knowledge of suffering in serving our families and our villages in today's world are essential for us in our generations so that we may be able to blend that understanding with our understanding of suffering and pain faced by the disciples and Early Christians as shown in the New Testament.

1.1.2 Traditional Understanding about Discipleship in the Gospels

When we seek more understanding about discipleship, we first examine the Gospels. The choosing of the twelve disciples called by Jesus to be His disciple and how they shall do the task of proclaiming the good news of salvation are mentioned in the Four Gospels. From the Four Gospels came the traditional definitions of discipleship that are widely accepted as church traditions proper from the early church. This study will explore more understanding of discipleship in the Bible from the experience and understanding of the disciples who practiced and carried out the work of making disciples of all nations, such as Peter. It is a study to explore more characteristics of discipleship that makes more sense in our attempts as followers of Christ in our worlds to serve God in and through our works as members of our families, churches, and villages. One of those characteristics is encountering pain and suffering in our attempts to serve God.

1.1.3 Peter the Disciple and Elder – A study of Suffering in Discipleship

Scholars widely consider the first letter of Peter as the letter talking about suffering in following Christ or believing in Christ.⁷ Peter as a disciple of Jesus surely in

⁷The comparison of suffering in the time of Peter serving God as an apostle to suffering in our time is another subject of debate in the study of the first letter of Peter. Scholars such as J. H. Elliot says that the

his writing would reflect his experience and understanding of becoming and being a disciple of Jesus amid problems and struggles he faced during his ministry. It is, therefore, the purpose of this study to seek in the first letter of Peter biblical and theological meanings of suffering in serving God as a disciple or servant of Jesus. It is finding out from the words of Peter, the disciple, the wisdom of one of the church Elders, in the beginning, an experience of encountering pain and suffering in being a disciple of Jesus when he was with Jesus, and also when continuing the work of making disciples without Jesus.

1.1.4 Study guided by the Samoan Hermeneutics, *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*

In doing this exploration, this study employs the use of a Samoan Hermeneutics called *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* (the profound wisdom of the elders) to guide an investigation of 1 Peter 4:1-19, seeking whether the function and role of Church elders as reflected in the teachings and words of Peter about suffering in following and believing in Christ, helped the development of the Early Church. It is an attempt to make sense of Peter's teachings about suffering in the work of discipleship in the Early Church's ministry in our partaking in the ministry of the EFKS church in contemporary Samoan society.

more he studies the first letter of Peter, the more he finds the first letter of Peter's message of suffering far distant from mainstream Christianity. Elliott's argument is based on his consideration of the different environments between the early church and our time. In other words, suffering in our time is not compared to the suffering faced by the members of the early church in the 1st century. See John H. Elliott, "The Church as Counter-Culture: A Home for the Homeless and a Sanctuary for Refugees," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 25 (1998): 176-185. However, Jobes, in her commentary on 1 Peter, says: "The social ethos of the first-century Greco-Roman setting of 1 Peter is undoubtedly substantially different from of those cultures today.... Nevertheless, the principles upon which Peter offers his original readers consolation, encouragement, and guidance in their specific situation apply to all Christians at all times." See Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 2.

1.2 Reasons for this study

There are several reasons for this study. First, there are many studies about discipleship in the Four Gospels, for discipleship is one of the major themes. This study aims to seek more about discipleship not from the Four Gospels but the experience and understanding of the chosen disciples of Jesus. They continued the ministry of proclaiming the gospel when Jesus ascended to heaven. One of the twelve's chosen disciples and the leading disciple is Peter. Peter's experience and understanding of making disciples of all nations as Jesus commissioned him to do (Matthew 28: 16-20) are considered by this study embedded in his words in his letters in the New Testament, such as the first letter of Peter studied in this thesis. It is a study to explore the experience of Peter not only as one of the disciples of Jesus but as one of the Elders of the Early Church.

Second, despite the various studies about discipleship, I still have not found a study that goes deeper into what discipleship means concerning the reality of pain and suffering in our Samoan world. I am not saying that there is so much abuse and suffering in our church in our Samoan world. Not, what I am talking about here as an example is the reality of the struggles to deal with the criticism from other people about our efforts and our attempts in doing our roles and responsibilities – the work of enduring that pain of bottling in the many bad things that other people do to us as we try to do the best we can for God's ministry. This study aims to find answers in the first letter of Peter about dealing with suffering in serving God or in the work of discipleship.

Third, it is prompted by my experience and understanding that our Church elders' (*Au Toeaina*) contribution to the physical and spiritual growth of our EFKS church is vital. I have witnessed how their wisdom makes reasonable control and runs our church, especially in how the church ministers shall do their duties and roles as parish ministers. It is the church elders' sharing of their experience of serving God with other church

ministers – such as the experience of facing the pain and suffering of looking after parishes.

Fourth, before Christianity arrived in Samoa, the culture of considering the wisdom of our elders in our Samoan families and villages was paramount. Our elders in our families and villages were considered the essential source of wisdom that taught our young generations the knowledge of life in looking after our families in connection with the land and the sea. Part of this passing on of our elders' wisdom teaches how to be leaders of the families and villages as chiefs (*matai*). Thus, this study will show whether our elders' wisdom in our Samoan social and cultural worlds is reflected in our church's elderly ministers' dealing with problems and situations in our Churches. The transition from the LMS missionaries' control of our church to our people in 1962 was easily made because our people considered the importance of the church elders (*Au Toeaina*), who were responsible for looking after the church and begin running the church for our people. They were given the responsibility by the *Au Matutua* (The LMS European Ministers who looked after the church before the handover).

Fifth, most of the studies on the letters of Peter use traditional methods of interpretation. This study offers another interpretation that focuses on the interaction between the world encoded in the text and my world as a reader or interpreter of the Bible in contemporary Samoan society.

Sixth, the contextual study of the Bible and its interpretation in biblical studies and hermeneutics allows me to undertake this study.⁸ Despite the contextual and cultural

⁸ Contextual interpretation of the Bible is one of the more recent ways of reading the Bible, mainly among readers who consider important their worlds as readers such as the African, Asian, and Pacific Islands readers of the Bible. Various and different terms were coined and used by some scholars to define their readings from their worlds as readers. For example, the African scholar Justin Ukpong uses “inculturation hermeneutics.” See Justin Ukpong, “Inculturation Hermeneutics: An African Approach to Biblical Interpretation,” in *The Bible in a World Context*, eds. Walter Dietrich and Ulrich Luz (Grand Rapids:

peculiarities of my Samoan world, I hope this work might contribute not only to the significant studies undertaken by other scholars on the letters of Peter but also to the development of theories and methods of biblical interpretation in Samoa.

1.3 Why Letters of Peter

One of the questions asked about the importance of Peter as a disciple of Jesus in the New Testament is that if he was a disciple of Jesus, his writing should be somewhere at the beginning of the New Testament canon. That was a fair question for Peter as a disciple of Jesus and an apostle who was with Jesus and witnessed Jesus' ministry. However, from the point of view of considering essential the wisdom of the elders of the Early Church, placing the letters of Peter toward the end of the New Testament was the proper placement. The letters of Peter as teachings and words of someone with whom Jesus founded the church in Jerusalem and led the establishment of the church in the first century, the place near the end of the Bible and New Testament canon, makes sense.⁹ It is essential for the reader of the Bible and the New Testament to read and understand the teachings and words of the church's elders before reaching the Book of Revelation, which shows the revelation of the New Jerusalem or the paradise where all withstanding and keeping in faith will go. Moreover, the teachings and words of the elders, from the letter

Eerdmans, 2002), 17-32. Another example is R. S. Sugirtharajah's use of "vernacular hermeneutics." See R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Vernacular Resurrections: An Introduction," in *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 11-17. Ukpong's and Sugirtharajah's terms define how they see and interpret texts from their worlds as readers seem to have depicted their locations as if readers are not open to changes in the reality of the world we are encountering. Because my use of the contextual dimension in my reading considers my existence in today's world, I prefer the terms 'contextual' as it accurately defines the type of reading I am doing. Contextual interpretation of the Bible can be viewed as having two ways of interpretation: "contextualizing interpretation and contextualizing the Bible. The former is about employing contextual or, more specifically, indigenous categories of analysis for interpretation. In contrast, the latter is about applying the insights from reading to one's situation or tracing correspondence between a text and one's context. One is about methodology; the other is application."

⁹This is the comment made by Vaitusi Nofoaiga, a New Testament Scholar – a Samoan, on his consideration of the writings of the Jewish Elders – Hebrew to Jude. Vaitusi Nofoaiga wrote a book on discipleship in the Matthean Gospel. See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in the Matthean Gospel* (Atlanata: SBL Press, 2017).

to the Hebrews to the letter of Jude, including Peter, say that faith is nothing without actions. Thus, the importance of this theology from the point of view of elders and Peter as one of the leading disciples of Jesus makes this study choose Peter's letters.

Choosing the first letter of Peter for this study was not a hard decision to make because Peter is a chosen disciple of Jesus, and his writings, as shown in his first letter, reflect the experience of a disciple doing the work of spreading the good news of God's salvation in the reality of the world. In other words, the experience of suffering, as shared by Peter, a disciple of Jesus, is accurate. As such, it makes the exploration of suffering in discipleship more interesting, especially when analyzing Peter's experience from the perspective of suffering and pain encountered in today's Samoan world.

1.4 Definition of Discipleship used in this Study

According to Wes Howard-Brook and Sharon H. Ringe in their introduction to the book called *The New Testament - Introducing the Way of Discipleship*, there is “something” that has been missing in the variety of introductory books written about the Bible.¹⁰ For Howard-Brook and Ringe, “[t]hat “something” was the link between the struggles of our ancestors and our struggles; between the challenge of discipleship in Jesus’ time and our own.” Howard-Brook and Ringe do not explicitly mention those struggles. For this study, one of those struggles is discussing the reality of suffering and pain in discipleship. I believe that one of the barriers that hold back Christians from talking about suffering and pain in discipleship is the restriction of the disciples of Jesus to the chosen twelve, who are men only described in the Gospels as the considered disciples of Jesus who have been accepted the traditional interpretations of discipleship. In itself, a Christian now could see the sufferings and pain that the twelve chosen disciples

¹⁰Wes Howard-Brook and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *The New Testament – Introducing the Way of Discipleship* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), ix – x.

faced as different from the struggles the followers of Christ encountered when the twelve disciples left this world for our time. The work of spreading the Gospel as carried out by the twelve disciples continues as we do in our time and generation. Thus, the definition of discipleship needs to be looked at to bring forth a meaning that makes more sense of the reality of what discipleship is all about in our time and, of course, the future.

Vaitusi Nofoaiga's study of discipleship in Matthew's Gospel that utilizes a Samoan hermeneutics called *tautuaileva* preferred the definition of discipleship described by Fernando F. Segovia in Segovia's study of discipleship according to Matthew's Gospel. For Segovia, discipleship has two general definitions.¹¹ One is discipleship as a tradition of following Jesus, as described in the historical master-disciple relationship between Jesus and his followers. Two is looking at discipleship as Christians' understanding and experience of the teachings of Jesus lived in and through their daily lives. Although Segovia's definition of discipleship evoked from his understanding of discipleship in Matthew, I find his definition appropriate and relevant to my study of suffering in the first letter of Peter with discipleship.

Segovia's definition of discipleship as a work carried out to fulfill one's following Christ at any time and in any world reflects the importance of the use of my Samoan hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* (the Profound Wisdom of Elders) to seek in the first letter of Peter what is suffering in discipleship and how to deal with it. Thus, one of the goals of this study is to look deeper into the definition of discipleship, which

¹¹Segovia speaks of discipleship as having a narrower and broader definition. The narrower definition describes discipleship from the perspective of the "teacher"/"disciples" relationship. In this definition, all the terms accompanying becoming and being a disciple of Jesus, as in Jesus' relationship to his twelve chosen disciples, are emphasized, such as "following" and "on the way." The broader definition looks at discipleship from the perspective of the existence of a Christian in his/her time or generation and the world. It emphasizes the self-understanding of a Christian as a believer. The latter definition considers important how a Christian in his/her world lives the life and teachings about being an obedient follower of Jesus Christ. Fernando F. Segovia, "Introduction: Call and Discipleship – Toward a Re-examination of the Shape and Character of Christian Existence in the New Testament," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 2.

considers one's experience and understanding of pain and suffering in practicing discipleship as necessary. The experience and understanding of pain and suffering emphasized in this study as a perspective or a hermeneutics to see and explore suffering and pain in the first letter of Peter are that of our families, churches, and village elders. Thus, this study aims to explore a greater understanding of discipleship about the reality of suffering and pain encountered by Christians in today's world. It is an understanding that considers essential, a blending of the Christian understanding of serving God and the Samoan social and cultural understanding of serving the family and the village as shown in doing the role and responsibility of *tautua* (service/servant/serve) in our *faa Samoa* (Samoan way).¹² This understanding will be expanded by my learning of the suffering nature of becoming and being a follower of Jesus as reflected in the words and teachings of Peter the elder in the first letter of Peter.

¹²*Fa'aSamoa* means 'Samoan way.' There are various definitions of *fa'aSamoa* as the Samoan way, depending on the emphasis of *fa'aSamoa* a particular person focuses on. *Fa'aSamoa* can be regarded as Samoan cultural practices and rituals such as the bestowal of title names, the Samoan social and cultural system such as the Chief system, and the Samoan expected and accepted ways of behaving oneself towards other people such as 'treating other people with respect (*fa'aaloalo*)' regardless of who they are. For this study, I see *fa'aSamoa* to have included all those things based on my understanding that all the cultural rituals, systems, and accepted ways of behavior show the connection between nature and culture in the Samoan natural, social, and cultural world. Moreover, this is shown in the meanings of *āmio* and *aga*, as described and discussed by Bradd Shore in his article, "Sexuality and Gender in Samoa: Conceptions and Missed Conceptions," in *Sexual Meaning: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, eds. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 192-215. The definitions of the Samoan concepts *āmio* and *aga* as described by Shore are: "Aga refers to social norms, proper behavior, linked to social roles and appropriate contexts. *Āmio* describes the actual behavior of individuals as it emerges from personal drives and urges. [Thus] the ...term *āmio* focuses attention on the personal qualities of an act, whereas *aga* emphasizes its social dimensions." Reflected in Shore's defining of the concepts *āmio* and *aga* is how I see the meaning of *faa Samoa*. It is any behavior of a Samoan (*āmio*) under the Samoan social, cultural, and religious norms, roles, and statuses, such as being a *tautua* or a *matai* (chief). This is what I look at as *fa'aSamoa* as utilized in this study.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

The thesis will be divided into six Chapters. Chapter One describes what is the study. Chapter Two lays out the methodology used in this study, which is using the Samoan hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao* with Sociorhetorical Criticism to read and interpret the First letter of Peter. Chapter Three will be an overview of the background of the first letter of Peter with a literature review of the scholars' interpretations of the selected text (4:1-19) about the debate on the consideration of the putting together of the first letter of Peter as a composite document. Chapter Four begins the sociorhetorical interpretation of 1 Peter 4:1-19 with the analysis of the Ideological and Inner Textures of the Text. Chapter Five follows it with the Intertextual and social, and cultural Interpretations. Chapter Six will be the Conclusion of the Study.

1.6 Conclusion

I have explained in this Chapter how this study evoked and what is expected to find from the task shown herein. It is about continuing the exploration of discipleship in the reality of today's world, such as the reality of pain and suffering faced by the followers of Christ or Christian in our time. As mentioned, undoubtedly, discipleship continues, and the roles and responsibilities of those who carry on discipleship should do so as described in the Bible. In other words, although we face different experiences in serving God through our ministry in today's world from the ministry of the first chosen twelve disciples of Jesus, we do encounter the same and similar experiences of facing pain and suffering. Thus, it is important to look again at the reality of suffering and pain in the work of discipleship. As said, it is not to find blame but to seek more understanding of how to deal with pain and suffering in the reality of our world today. For this study, I will start from our Samoan experience and understanding of how our elders in our Samoan

worlds deal with pain and suffering from their blended or hybridized life experience of the faa-Samoa and Christianity as they always share with young people and young generations in our families, churches, and villages. That blended or integrated experience and understanding are used as a hermeneutic to guide the interpretation of the text, 1 Peter 4:1-19.

CHAPTER TWO:
METHODOLOGY – TOFA MAMA O A LE AU-MATUTUA
HERMENEUTIC WITH THE HEURISTIC INTERPRETIVE
ANALYTIC OF SOCIORHETORICAL CRITICISM

2.0 Introduction

This chapter lays out the methodology used in this study. It uses a Samoan hermeneutic called *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* with the sociorhetorical criticism as the heuristic interpretive analytic to explore the wisdom of the church elders in the first letter of Peter. The chapter is divided into the following sections. Section one locates this study in the world of hermeneutics. I consider the Samoan hermeneutics used in this study as part of the Islander criticism approach in section two. Section three defines the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics. Section four describes what sociorhetorical criticism is and how it is used together with the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics to read the text. The Conclusion follows the Chapter in the last section.

2.1 Locating the Study in the World of Biblical Hermeneutics

Biblical hermeneutics is the world of different and various ways of reading and interpreting the biblical text. Despite those varieties and differences, they all seek to do two things in undertaking an interpretational task. One is to explore the meaning of a text, and the other is to find the relevancy of that meaning to the reader's context and situation. Before discussing and interpreting the text studied herein using the Samoan hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, it is essential first to explain what hermeneutic is, and its function in dealing with texts in today's world, such as the world of the reader now.

This explanation is necessary because it shows why the use of hermeneutics in biblical interpretation is significant in bringing forth the relevancy of the biblical interpretation to the reader now in his or her situation and context. The explanation is also necessary for leading the study in this part towards defining the Samoan hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* used in this thesis and how it will be used. Thus, the explanation of biblical hermeneutics begins with the definition of ‘hermeneutics.’

2.1.1 The word *Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics is the English translation of the Greek word *hermeneus* which means the person who interprets things or the interpreter. According to Greek mythology traditions, the Greek word *hermeneus* came out of the name Hermes, the messenger of gods.¹ As the messenger of gods, Hermes is responsible for passing all messages from the gods of Olympus to the people of the earth. It is significant for Hermes, the messenger of gods, to make a significant connection between the divine and human realms. Thus, any mysteries in the messages from gods are to be described clearly by Hermes to the people of the earth. Hermes' role is essential to ensure that the people on earth fully understand the messages from the gods above. This function of Hermes is embraced in the meaning of the word hermeneutics, emphasizing the importance of bridging the gap of knowing and understanding between the reader and the text. Relating this function to my study, the reader is to come up with a hermeneutic that he or she thinks and believes will be able to connect the reader and the text. This study will use a Samoan hermeneutic called *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* (*the profound wisdom of our elders*) to connect my understanding of the wisdom of elders in our Samoan world and the Bible by exploring

¹David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 7-8; Werner G. Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 1-2.

the wisdom of the elders embedded in the language of the text of the first letter of Peter. Before doing that, it is essential to look at the brief history of hermeneutics in the history of biblical interpretation.

2.1.2 Brief history of hermeneutics:

The history of Biblical Interpretation emphasized in this study began with two important ways of interpreting the Bible, considered the main interpretational methods emphasized by two significant schools of thought of the church in history in the first century.² One school based in Alexandria in Egypt is the School of Alexandria emphasizes *allegorical* (or symbolic meaning of Scripture). The other school, based in Antioch, Syria, is called the School of Antioch and emphasizes *the literal*. The School of Antioch is much more of a Jewish city. These two schools were famously known for their great scholars before the 1700s. Early Christian thinkers had to decide before the 1700s to 1900s whether the interpretation of the Bible should be *allegorical* or *literal*. Some of the most outstanding known scholars of the School of Alexandria include Clement of Alexandria, Philo of Alexandria, and Origen. According to Origen:

“The Scripture contains the ultimate mystery which can never be expressed other than in symbols, and symbols can never be properly understood when taken literally. Therefore only an allegorical approach can provide the key needed to unlock the mystery hidden in the text.”³

One of the great scholars of the School of Antioch named, Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected the notion of hidden meanings and regarded the Bible as transparent and open to all who cared to read it. Theodore denounces Origen and the Alexandrian scholars for failing to understand that the Bible is *literally and historically accurate*. We see here that how we read and interpret depends on how we see the world and our place in it. This is

²Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 36-37.

³Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 37.

as true for us as it was for these ancient Christian hermeneuts. We bring to the text our prior beliefs – whether they be of God or transcendence or materialist and literal. For some of us, the world is just the world. For others, it is a sign and a symbol, a kind of window on a more significant and other “reality.” From the 1700s to the 1900s, both literal and allegorical were widely accepted, with more discussions on ways to broaden the importance of interpretation. It is the time in history when the importance of the hermeneutical circle is encountered.

The hermeneutical circle, as a phrase, means the parts can only be understood from an understanding of the whole, but that the whole can only be understood from the parts.⁴ For example, as a Samoan reader of the Bible, I read the Bible from who I am (either as *a’oa’o* or as *tautua*) about the Elders of our Samoan community. As an individual, my *a’oa’o-ness* or *tautua-ness* can only be defined by being in the Samoan community. Without the Samoan community, where I serve my Elders as *a’oa’o* and *tautua*, I cannot understand the wisdom of the Elders in the text.

Another example of this relationship in language form is where the parts are the words of a sentence, and the whole is the sentence itself. Indeed, if I do not understand an essential word in a sentence, I will not understand the sentence. Conversely, I would not have understood certain words correctly if I did not understand the whole sentence. Schleiermacher argues that we can break the circle by first obtaining a general impression of the whole in a preliminary reading and then moving back and forth from part to whole and back to the part until everything fits together. As raised by Schleiermacher, this point is significant, reminding the reader and interpreter that an understanding of the whole is a must to understand the parts. In connection to my use of the Samoa hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, I will not be able to completely understand the wisdom of elders

⁴Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 20-22.

in our Samoan world without understanding our Samoan community's social and cultural structure that considers necessary the status and role of our elders.

For Schleiermacher (1768-1834), any expression in language is related to the totality of language and the author's thinking. Schleiermacher divided hermeneutics into two practices – Grammatical Interpretation and Psychological Interpretation.⁵ According to Schleiermacher, grammatical interpretation concerns understanding the author's language, and psychological interpretation concerns the author's thinking. The psychological interpretation explores how the author develops his thoughts and the form in which these reach expression. This interpretation explores why the author chose particular words and what he or she aimed to accomplish by that choice.

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) added another critical thinking into hermeneutics that later hermeneutic scholars carried on. Dilthey carried on the importance of hermeneutics as the art of understanding developed by Schleiermacher, arguing that understanding is the method for human sciences, not a causal explanation, which belongs to natural science.⁶ Dilthey attempted to challenge reasoning in the 18th Century. Dilthey's argument suggested that the natural scientific method is inappropriate for the human sciences. Dilthey's contribution is essential for his analysis of understanding and incorporates several elements from Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Dilthey's theory of understanding maintains the importance of historical criticism as Schleiermacher, where the author is considered very important in finding the meaning of a text. Dilthey asserted the importance of human beings, unlike physical objects. They have an inner mental and emotional life. The importance of signifying the understanding of the human being as

⁵Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 21; Heinz Kimmerle, "Hermeneutical Theory or Ontological Hermeneutics," in *History and Hermeneutics*, eds. Robert J. Funk and Gerhard Ebeling (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), 107-121.

⁶Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 51-52.

human science influences the further development of hermeneutics or the shift of the emphasis of hermeneutics to consider the importance of the reader's world. The scholars like Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer led this shift.

The continuous changing of cultures and the ways people think about the world brought about a new change in the world of hermeneutics. This time, Martin Heidegger⁷ and Hans-Georg Gadamer⁸ brought into hermeneutics the significance of recognizing readers' contemporary issues, social status, and location. This shifted from the classical hermeneutical approach to the structuralist, humanistic, and critical approaches.⁹ 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. It is where each person brings his/her questions to the interpretation of the text and thus shapes his/her interpretation. It is not to allow the reader to impose his/her meaning on the text but to recognize that meaning-making is shaped by the questions and issues that the reader brings from his/her contemporary situation and takes back to that situation. For this study, to find the meaning of the text, we begin with Gadamer's aesthetic theory, a philosophical approach.

⁷Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 104-106. Here, Jasper states two of the significant points of Martin Heidegger's contribution to the humanistic approach. Firstly, Heidegger emphasizes "Being and Time." Heidegger used the German word *Dasein* which means being there. Secondly, Heidegger states the significance of language; language indicates 'being.' See Anthony C Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutical Philosophical Description with particular reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), 24-47.

⁸Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (trans. Barrett Barden; John Cumming. New York: Seabury, 1975), 356-357.

⁹The historical outline of the progress of hermeneutics is briefly explained in David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*. See Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticism and their Application*. Revised edition (Leiden: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 183-283.

2.1.3 Gadamer's Aesthetic Theory:

The new change in biblical interpretation signifies the interaction between the text and the reader as a vital moment in the search for meaning in the text. It is a significant moment in evoking the meaning of the text. According to Gadamer, we compare the question of meaning to the experience of art. Gadamer asks how we can find the meaning of the art or the true beauty of the art. Gadamer says that the artwork has the world behind it, the artist's world, for he/she produces the art. Art is left by itself, and it has its world. When it is experienced aesthetically by a spectator, it is viewed from the world of the spectator. This art experience is called 'play.'¹⁰ The spectator has brought to the artwork his/her pre-understanding of the art, the human experience in general, and at the meeting point, the art is transformed into reality at the present moment. Gadamer talks about 'play' as a contemporary movement that brings out the present meaning of art.¹¹ In connection with the literary text, Gadamer suggests that like the experiencing of works of art, reading and understanding is also a practice of art at the moment when the 'play movement' occurs. Thus, today's task is to free ourselves from the influence of classical hermeneutics, which restricts our interpretation to one direction.¹² Encountering a work of art and a text we are experiencing about our present situation and location.

Relating the theory to my situation, I understand the letters of Peter, an understanding based on the Christian tradition of considering the Elders as having the wisdom that guided the works of the Early Church. Growing up in a church and a community that considers essential the wisdom of Elders, I have accepted the tradition. I wanted to learn more about this great wisdom of the Elders, especially their many duties and roles in the church and community in the first century. To find answers, I will have

¹⁰Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 101-102.

¹¹Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 112-116.

¹²Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 147.

to approach the text with a pre-understanding of the influence of Elders in looking after our communities. At a moment of 'play,' more meaning should be made, giving more understanding and recognition to Elders' contribution to our communities. However, how can that moment of 'play' produce the relevant meaning? Gadamer's idea of the 'fusion of two horizons' can provide a resolution.

2.1.4 Fusion of Two Horizons

Gadamer's idea of the 'play movement' is an essential part of Gadamer's theory of the 'fusion of two horizons.'¹³ The 'play' occurs in a dialogue between the text and the reader. Dialogue forms the understanding of the text, and that understanding is the converging of the interpreter's horizon and the horizon of the text.¹⁴ In other words, Gadamer suggests that at a point, understanding brings about the fusion between the text's horizon and the reader's horizon. There will be a 'play' between the textual and traditional understanding of who the Elders are and the horizon of understanding of Elders in *faa-Samoa*. However, fusion toward a new understanding of a subject cannot exist unless the subject's problem or critical element is identified. The problem will be identified in my world as the reader of our study. However, how can we identify the critical element in the text? There is a need for another approach to identify the critical element in the text before reaching a 'fusion of two horizons.' This will be by way of a critical biblical methodology.

The 'fusion of two horizons' has weak points. E. D. Hirsch argues that Gadamer's discussion of horizons shuts out the fusion of horizons.¹⁵ Hirsch thinks that obtaining an understanding can only be done within or beyond our horizons. If we choose the latter,

¹³Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 273-281. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 307-310.

¹⁴Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 273.

¹⁵Richard E. Palmer John Wild et al., eds., *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (ed. John Wild et al.; Evanston: Northwestern University, 1969), 60-68.

we will not be able to get an understanding, for it is beyond our horizon. If we choose to be within our horizon, there is only one horizon. So, the ‘fusion of two horizons’ is impossible. Jürgen Habermas challenges Gadamer's idea by saying that fusing two horizons nicely is impossible.¹⁶ He argues that for two horizons to fuse in new meaning will ignore other essential claims. There is a position where communication does not happen. Paul Ricoeur says that you need to have a critical element; you cannot just fuse horizons neatly.¹⁷

For this study, the critical elements will be the barriers reflected in the text that have challenged the Elders’ attempts to fulfill their roles and duties as leaders in the communities. They are barriers to achieving the unperishable inheritance or the true identity of becoming a faithful Christian or a genuine member of the Church. To find what these barriers are and how to deal with them, according to Peter, one of the early church elders’ wisdom of what unperishable inheritance is in the Christian belief, hermeneutical lenses are needed to guide the search for answers in the text. The hermeneutical lenses will be taken from our understanding of our elders’ wisdom about the importance of our inheritance in identifying who we are as Samoans in our Samoan social and cultural worlds. These hermeneutic lenses reveal that hermeneutics is never static. They show that how we read and understand the nature of a text is changing all the time, just as we change our self-understanding.

For this study, I will be using the Samoan hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao o le Au-Matutua* (The profound wisdom of the elders) as the hermeneutics to guide my seeking in the text of the First Letter of Peter more understanding of the wisdom of the elders

¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, “Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences,” In *The Hermeneutics Reader*, edited by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 293-19. See Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*, 129f.

¹⁷ Roger Lundin et al., *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 26-27.

reflected in the text and their messages which are essential in a church member identifying of his or her becoming a member of the Church (Ekklesia) as in the church community in the early Church. That hermeneutics exhibits an integrated understanding and experience of the life of our elders as a blended life experience and understanding of the social and cultural values of the Samoan family and village and the Christian values. Later I will explain the Samoan hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao o le Au-Matutua* used in this study that will guide the reading and interpreting of the first letter of Peter. Before doing that, I will explain the location of that Samoan hermeneutics in the Islander Criticism Approach in the next section. This is important because it will show that the Samoan hermeneutics shown here is a hermeneutics from an island world, Samoa.

2.2 The Location of My Samoan Hermeneutics in the Islander Criticism Approach

Islander criticism is an interpretational approach that approaches and interprets a text using an islander's experience, understanding, and perspective. I can refer to this approach as one of the approaches to reading the text in the postmodernism¹⁸ era. The use of island perspectives in reading the Bible, called 'islander criticism,' emerged from recent attempts by island readers to read the Bible.

The Islander criticism approach is used in various ways by our Pacific Island biblical scholars to interpret the Bible. One is an intercultural interpretation of the text. Intercultural reading of a text is a type of interpretation that utilizes a cultural value or aspect from the world of the text and the world in the text and fuses it with a cultural value or aspect from the world of the reader now (such as an island reader in his/her

¹⁸Postmodernism I refer to here is after the modernism era, the period after the 1960s and 1970s. It is considered after rejecting the Victorian era's traditions and exploration of the industrial age, sometimes for political purposes – the so-called modernism period. Postcolonialism and poststructuralism, like postmodernism, also emerged after modernism.

island) to bring forth a resolution to a question or an issue raised from life situations in today's world. For example, is an interpretation of ethnic tensions in the worlds of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles with the issue of land claims in Samoan society Peni Leota.¹⁹ Leota, in this study, brings together the cultural understanding of land tenure and claims in the worlds of the Persian-Period and Samoa, developing a Samoan hermeneutic to deal with land tenure and claims in Samoan society. Another example of an intercultural reading of a Bible text is Frank Smith's reading of the Johannine Jesus from a Samoan perspective.²⁰ Smith, in this study, develops a way to bring the social and cultural worlds of the Johannine community and the Samoa community together. For Smith, it is challenging to understand the Bible text, such as the Johannine text, because what is told and shown in John's Gospel is an event that happened long ago. However, making a dialogue between our own experience of our world/s and the world of the text would lead us to understand its meaning and relevance to our context/s.

Another way of using Islander criticism is using our island experience and perspectives as hermeneutical lenses to guide an exegesis or an analysis of a text.²¹ This is twofold. First, the island reader's experience and perspective are used to raise questions from the reader's world to guide the exploration of the text seeking answers to those questions. Vaitusi Nofaiga's reading of discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew is an

¹⁹Peni Leota, *Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud: A Samoan Postcolonial Hermeneutic*, (PhD Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2005).

²⁰Frank Smith, "The Johannine Jesus from a Samoan perspective: Towards an Intercultural Reading of the Fourth Gospel," (PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2010).

²¹ Other examples, see Arthur John Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good? Reappearing Earth in Genesis 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan *Gafataulima* Perspective" (PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2016). Makesi Neemia, "The priestly ger (alien) meets the Samoan tagata ese (outsider)," in *Sea of Readings: The Bible in the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018); Martin Wilson Mariota, "Moses, both Hebrew, and Egyptian: A Samoan Palagi reading of Exodus 2-3," in *Sea of Readings: The Bible in the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018); Vaitusi Nofaiga, "Jesus the fiaola (opportunity seeker): a postcolonial Samoan reading of Matthew 7:24-8:22," in *Sea of Readings: The Bible in the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018).

example.²² Nofoaiga, in his study of discipleship in Matthew, utilizes his discipleship experience in his Samoan world to revisit discipleship in Matthew's Gospel. Nofoaiga argues that considering the critical need of people in a local place as part of the work of a *tautua* in the Samoan world contradicts the globally-emphasized traditional view of discipleship in the First Gospel as asserted by traditional interpretations of discipleship. Islander criticism, in this case, does not impose the island perspectives on the text. Instead, the perspectives are used only to raise questions on particular issues, guiding the exploration of the text in the search for answers to those questions. In this way, the basis of the interpretation is the text.

Second, the island perspective is used to respond to an interpretation of a text. This type of reading is also called a reader-response approach, a response based on the text. In this type of reading, an issue from the reader's context is raised to analyze an interpretation of a text. This reading approach begins with an exegesis of the selected texts, followed by the analysis of that interpretation using the island experience or issue raised in the beginning. Kaititi Tokaia's reading of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14 from his experience and understanding of *te baka* (feasting in the Kiribati social and cultural world) is an example.²³ In this study, Tokaia uses his experience and understanding of feasting in the Kiribati social and cultural world to analyze his exegesis of Matt 22:1-14. This use of an island experience and perspective to read a Bible text considers the text the basis of the interpretation. Thus, the basis of interpretation is not the Bible text.

²²Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017)

²³Kaititi Tokaia, "A Kiribati Reading of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 2:1-14," (BD Honors Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2019). Other examples: Clarke Stowers, "Names as hermeneutics to read texts: *Fofogaolevai* and John the Baptizer (Mark 1:1-15)," (BTh Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2017). Caesar Samuelu, "Head Covering for Women in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, (BD Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2008). Samuelu brings into his interpretation the head covering of women in 1 Cor 11:1-16, the Samoan understanding of the sister-brother relationship.

As seen in this overview, ‘islander criticism’ is an approach to reading and interpreting the text that can be carried out in different and various ways depending on the reader’s interest/s. For this study, I will use my island experience and understanding of Elders in our Samoan community to guide my seeking in the first letter of Peter more understanding about the wisdom of Elders. In this way, the texts are the basis of the interpretation.

I consider the following Samoan biblical studies that have just been completed as other examples of Islander criticism works. They are studies by Fatilua Fatilua and Brian Kolia. Their works add more examples of Samoan scholars who read the Bible influenced by their locations and situations as Island readers from Oceania or Samoan readers of the Bible. These scholars’ works not only contextualize the reading of the text but also the reading framework of the approach of the text. Fatilua Fatilua’s PhD study, which is a biblical reading of Luke 18:18-30, is guided by his understanding and knowledge of the political and economic context of the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs).²⁴ In this reading, Fatilua considers important the context of the biblical text and particular phenomena from outside that are embedded in the text. Part of Fatilua’s exploration of the text is his dialogue with scholars from Asian and African contexts. The reading brings forth an approach that will be applied as a biblical approach to dealing with poverty in Samoan society. It re-considers locating the ruler in Lukan presentation of the story of Jesus in the context of the household and how it is run and managed in the environment in which the household exists. Fatilua’s text reading is guided by a contextual biblical reading framework based on the Samoan proverb: *Seu le manu ae taga’i i le galu* (Catch the bird and watch the wave). This Samoan approach is a

²⁴ Fatilua Fatilua, “*Seu le Manu ae Taga’i i le Galu: A Sociorhetorical Inquiry of the Political Economic Context – Steering a Pacific Island Reading of Luke 18:18-30*” (PhD Thesis, PTC Suva Fiji, 2021).

contextualization of the reading framework or approach of the Bible, and it speaks about being aware of the strengths and limitations of any reading approach. Fatilua, at the end of his study, suggests that the rich ruler shows another way of following, which is knowing how to live with wealth.

Brian Kolia's study is a reading of the book of Ecclesiastes from his Australian-Samoan background perspective is unique.²⁵ Kolia's diasporic perspective speaks of a Samoan born in Australia understanding and knowledge of *Maota Tau Ave* (the house to carry) or a Samoan taking abroad of their sense of belonging to his inheritance of land and chief titles in his families and villages in Samoa. Kolia's study aims to answer where the voice of defiance against Jewish ideals, as reflected in the wisdom explained in the Book of Ecclesiastes, comes from. According to Kolia, this could be the voice of someone living in a diaspora who does not support the way of life or wisdom of the homeland. To answer this question, Kolia utilizes the method of intertextuality to explore the relationship between texts – the text of the Bible and the text of his diasporic perspective of *Maota Tau Ave*.

As mentioned, various biblical scholars use different reading approaches in their search for the meaning of the Bible. Undoubtedly, traditional methods have been the most popular and accepted approach to reading the Bible. As we experience in the work of biblical interpretation, any reading is determined by who the reader is in terms of his/her background as a person in his/her world of living. Interestingly, that has been the enigma behind traditional Bible reading methods. However, who the interpreter or reader is with his/her background is seen and reflected in their interpretations of using traditional methods. They did not have to describe who they were. Their interpretations reveal their

²⁵Brian Fiu Kolia, "*Maota Tau Ave: Towards an Australian-Samoan Diasporic Understanding of Wisdom in Ecclesiastes*," (PhD Thesis, University of Divinity, Australia, 2021).

hidden point of view of hermeneutics. The interpreters and readers now of the Bible seem always to consider describing who they are as readers and interpreters. This is why I like the work of biblical interpretation now on our side of the world. More Pacific Island readers and interpreters of the Bible, such as the Samoans, talk more about who they are as readers of the Bible before they read the Bible. Moreover, I want to follow that as shown in this part of this study. The Samoan hermeneutics used in this study express my horizon as a reader and will be defined and explained in the next section.

2.3 Defining *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as a Hermeneutics

2.3.1 Hermeneutics with lenses to guide the Interpretation of the text (Peter 2:13-25)

Any follower of Christ utilizes his or her experience and understanding of different worlds in which he or she grows up to make sense of his becomingness and being a disciple in that world. This was one way to define being a follower or a disciple of Jesus in the first century. For example, the disciple of Jesus as Jews used their Jewish understanding of the prophets as recorded in the Scripture with the knowledge of the Greek world and language to invent discourses that describe their understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how to live that Gospel in places and spaces they proclaimed the Gospel to. We do the same to define our Christian existence in our Samoan worlds, which is Christian existence as the integration of cultures, and this is how I see the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* described as our Elders' profound wisdom of their experience and understanding of how the integration of our Samoan cultures and Christian values and teachings make meaningful their living life as Samoans in today's world. It is also important to realise that the integration of those different cultures was all part of any Christian vying for survival in the world he or she lives.²⁶

²⁶ For example, the Christians vied for survival in the Roman imperial rule in the first century.

Another question is how those understanding and experiences of different cultures and beliefs were put together. This study argues that it is embedded in the word of the elders of the early church, such as the words of Peter the Elder or Disciple in the first letter of Peter. The first letter of Peter is a compilation of different sources, as shown in its consideration as a composite document that was put together according to theological interests and to make theological arguments. I will elaborate on this point later in the thesis. Furthermore, one of those arguments explains suffering as a characteristic of discipleship. Thus, this view reflects the reality of how Christians make sense of the meaning and purpose of the gospel in the life they encounter within the contexts they inhabit. This study pays special attention to Peter's use of his experience and understanding of facing suffering in his discipleship work in relation to the recitations from the Old Testament to define his Christian existence as a church member in the first century. Reflected in this claim is the thought that a Christian understanding and experience of the world come from integrating his/her understanding of the gospel and other cultures and values. Bill Ashcroft defined the integration of cultures as "cultural transformation."²⁷ For Ashcroft, the integration of cultures as cultural transformation is a process whereby cultures use other cultures in ways that benefit them. The first letter of Peter is one example that this study will elaborate upon.

Another example is our Christian existence in our Samoan worlds, such as the Christian existence of our elders in our families, villages, and churches called the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* considered in this study as the hermeneutics to read the selected text (1 Peter 4:1-19). Despite the pain and suffering we face, we consider serving (*tautua*) our families, villages, and churches, as part of fulfilling our following Jesus Christ. This

²⁷Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation*, 14-17.

study compares *tautua* in our Samoan social and cultural world to the role of discipleship. We live the life of *Kerisiano tautua faamaoni* (courageous Samoan Christian²⁸ servant) guided by values that we learn from the symbiotic relationship between the gospel and the Samoan culture. This relationship makes the church and Samoan culture partners in history in our Samoan Christian world and is expressed in the following common expression in our Samoan society:

E vaavaalua le Talalelei ona o le Aganuu,
The Gospel and Culture work together hand in hand.

This expression exhibits the integration of the Gospel and the Samoan culture that defines our Christian existence in Samoan society, as witnessed in the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*. *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* Hermeneutics is a Samoan contextually-based hermeneutics that is culturally, religiously, and people-centered. How it will be used in this study to read and interpret the text will be explained later.

The section will explain the *Tofa Mamao a le Au Matutua* hermeneutics and its characteristics that will be used as the lenses to guide the interpretation of the text. *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as a phrase is translated as “The Profound Wisdom of the Elders.” To elaborate on what this hermeneutics is about, it is essential to discuss the meaning of the words *Tofa Mamao* because they embrace the significance of the wisdom of the elders concerning the culture, life, and well-being of our people in our Samoan social, religious, cultural, and economic world.

The word *tofa* has various meanings. The word *tofa* is the formal or polite word for *moe* (sleep). We speak of the sleep of a person with high status in a family, such as the Chief of the family, as *tofa*, not *moe*. The word *tofa* is the name given to the fine mat assorted for the paramount chief or the church minister. *Tofa* is the Samoa word for

²⁸I use “Samoan Christian” in this essay to state the integration of the two cultures of Samoa and Christianity.

goodbye and farewell. Furthermore, *tofa* is the translation of wisdom. By coincidence, the use of *tofa* as the word for sleep and wisdom has a significant connection. According to some elders in our family, the elder with sound wisdom in the family is the one who in the time of sleep does not sleep but closes his eyes and thinks deeply about things and ways that would help make better the development of the family in the following day or days. The elder's deep thinking in his sleep is where the following Samoan sayings come from *E tofa ae le ma-tofa ina ia maua se manatu lelei aua le aiga mo a taeao* (He seems to be sleeping but not. Instead, he is thinking for better ways that would help the family for the future). That sound wisdom of the elders is reflected in these words of Tupua Tamasese Efi from one of his speeches about the wisdom that conducts and takes care of the functioning of a Samoan *fale*:

Samoa e, e tusa pe matagofie le fale ma faatumulia e tagata, ae a vasi le tofa ma faaletonu le utaga, ou te molimau o se fale tuufua. Ae pe faatauva'a le fale, ma to'agaogao tagata, a o maopopo le tofa ma le uta, o le fale o loo tu ai le mau – mau i oloa, mau i mafaufau²⁹ (Samoa, a big house full of people is non-functional and unworkable if led by less wisdom or foolishness. But a small house of fewer people led by positive wisdom is a house with an abundance of blessings)

Those words of Tupua Tamasese Efi can also be applied to the running and taking care of a Samoan family, a church, and a village by their elders. Our Samoan Christian community always expects that the good functioning of families, churches, and villages depends on the leaders' superior wisdom, such as the elders who lead them. Moreover, that *tofa* and wisdom are not learned and attained overnight. It is *tofa* and wisdom learned and realized from becoming and being a servant or *tautua* to the family, church, and village, for a long time.³⁰ They are life experiences evoked from living life as a Samoan

²⁹ Tupua Tamasese Efi, *Fa'aganaina oe le Atua Fetala'i* (Apia: Commercial Printers, 1989), 8.

³⁰This is the knowledge and understanding about living life as a *tautua* (servant to the family and village) shared by Vaitusi Nofoaiga in an interview with him (Principal of Malua Theological College)

Christian as expressed and depicted in the following Samoan sayings. These sayings embraced a blended experience of the Samoan culture and the Christian theological sense of serving God in and through a servant's or *tautua*'s fulfillment of his or her role as a member of his or her family, church, and village. The Samoan sayings such as:

“O le ala i le pule o le tautua (The way to authority is through service); E leai se mea e maua ma le filemu (Nothing is received without pain); O le pologa e i'u i le sa'olotoga (Suffering ends with freedom); O le tagata manuia, le tagata pologa. (The blessed is the person who suffers).”

According to Nofoaiga, the suffering expressed in these Samoan sayings is not abusive treatment of the untitled men or *tautua* in the family or village. It is suffering from doing good and hard work for the family, church, and village. It is part of becoming and being a Samoan in order to fulfill his or her role and responsibility as a member of a Samoan family, church, and village – it is called *fatu-aiga tausi*; *fatu-ekalesia tausi*, *fatu-nuu tausi* (caring for the family, church, and village from the heart). Nofoaiga adds that submission to the parents', the *faiifeau*'s, and the chief's commands are essential in this suffering itself. Where did we learn this way of life? We learn it from the elders of our families, churches, and villages, for they came through a similar way of life. For them, the blessings now happily received by our generations are the fruits of the excellent and challenging works of our parents and ancestors.

Reflected in the wisdom of our elders as they shared is the significance of a servant's or *tautua*'s commitment and loyalty to his or her family, church, and village. Thus, suffering in serving one's family, church, and the village is a life commitment that cannot be abandoned or disregarded. Furthermore, as mentioned, this wisdom is not something that happens overnight. It is a God-given gift to a *tautua* who gave all his or her best ability to serve his or her family, church, and village as expressed in these Samoan sayings:

O le tofa e fili i le ao ma le po (The wisdom is like a sennit (*afa*) made by plaiting strands of dried coconut fibers that the elders weave at day and night); *E le tatau ona moenoa le tofa* (This wisdom should not sleep in). *O le tofa e teu ai le aiga, lotu, ma le nuu* (For it is the wisdom that keeps the peace and living in harmony within the family, church, and village).

These sayings reflect the importance of our elders' profound wisdom in leading members of our families, churches, and villages to continue living in peace and harmony. The elders, as mentioned, have been practicing the lives of serving families, churches, and villages.

Moreover, from that experience, they have realized that fulfilling the role and responsibility of becoming and being a servant or *tautua* is a characteristic of a *tautua's* sense of belonging (*faasinomaga*) to a family, church, and village. Knowing that sense of belonging evokes the importance of behaving appropriately and upholding the good name of the family, church, and village. It is walking on the pathway of practicing the Samoan and Christian values of *faaaloalo*, *tautua*, and *alofa*. *For our elders, doing so brings* blessings to the family, church, and village. Those are some examples of our elders' wisdom shared with our generation as teachings about life that we must learn to continue their excellent work.

Furthermore, another example of those teachings and practices is the elders' accentuation of one's knowledge of his or her inheritance of land about his or her family's title names. For the elders, knowing one's inheritance or one's sense of belonging to his family, church, and village teaches a *tautua* about the importance of the social and cultural relationships that form a strong bond between elders and the young generation; between men and women; and between the leaders and the rest of the members of families, churches, and villagers. It is an understanding put into action in and through living the culture of *va-fealoai* and *va-tapuia* (the Samoan etiquette and protocols of relating to one

another) that embraced the relationship of one Samoan to another within the religious, social, and cultural boundaries of the *Aiga Samoa* (Samoan family),³¹ *Aulotu* (Samoan parish)³² and *Nuu* (Samoan village).³³

According to the wisdom of our elders, living that Samoan religious, social, and cultural way of life brings blessings to our people, our families, and our villages – and those blessings are bestowed upon us by God. Thus, the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics characteristics are: One is *Avea ma Tautua* (*Becoming a servant*). According to the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, any Samoan must know the importance of becoming and being a *tautua* to his/her family, church, and village. That knowledge and understanding embrace how the fulfillment of the *tautua* role and responsibility is to be carried out. According to the wisdom of our elders, as mentioned, one's becomingness as *tautua* knows of his/her sense of belonging to his/her family, church, and village, for it gives him/her excellent self-esteem and confidence to live life. In that sense of belonging, there is a sense of security and good well-being as in the belief that you have a right as a member of a Samoan family to a customary land and title names inherited by the Samoan family you belong to. Two, is *Faatinoga o le tautua* (*Servant in Actions*). Being a Samoan is not just described in words. It is to be shown in actions like the Samoan way of serving one's family, church, and village, which is *tautua*. The undertaking of the *tautua* role is not an easy task, as shown in the experience of our elders explained above. It is a task where a *tautua* will face suffering and pain. However, it is all worth it in the end, according to the experience of the elders. Thus, the third element of hermeneutics

³¹The cultural boundaries of the *Aiga Samoa* as examples include the *feagaiga o le tuagane ma lona tuafafine* (the covenant in the sister-brother relationship); the *tautua* (serving) of the untitled men of their families – their parents and sisters; and the *tautua's* (untitled man) serving of the Chief of the family.

³² The cultural boundaries in the church are shown in the different statuses between the Elders of the church and the young generations; and between the church minister and the rest of the church's members

³³ The cultural boundaries of the *nuu* include the relationships between the paramount chiefs of the village and the untitled men; the paramount chiefs' wives and untitled men's wives as examples.

evokes *Manuia o le Tautua* (Blessings of being a servant). Sometimes, those blessings are voiced by our elders. There is a Samoan belief that the blessings from our Elders will not go unnoticed. They will be seen and witnessed in the future.

These characteristics will be the hermeneutical lenses that will guide the reading and interpreting of the first letter of Peter. The following questions from the hermeneutics will help guide the reading of the texts: Is *Avea ma Tautua* seen and reflected in the language of the text? If it is, what is *Avea ma Tautua* described by Peter as shown in the text? How is *Avea ma Tautua* as a sense of belonging to a particular community described in the language of the text? Is *Faatinoga a le Tautua* reflected in the description of the follower of Christ or the chosen servant emphasized in the text? How does the language of the text describe *Faatinoga a le Tautua*? Are their *faamanuiaga* (blessings) revealed in the text? Where are the blessings from? Are the people explained as *Avea ma Tautua* and *Faatinoga o le Tautua* the recipients of those blessings? The following description of the sociorhetorical criticism as the heuristic interpretive analytic that will be used to read the text using the hermeneutics described above will show how those questions will be answered. Before coming to describing the sociorhetorical criticism as the interpretational analytic to explore the text using the hermeneutics explained above, it is essential to show that the Samoan hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* can also be considered not only as a hermeneutics to explored the text but also as a hermeneutical approach to approach the interpretation of the text (Peter 2:13-25). As an approach will be explained in the following section.

2.3.2. How *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as a Hermeneutic approaches the reading of the Text (1 Peter 4:1-19)

Approaching the text explained here is how the fusion of the reader's perspective in the use of hermeneutics and the text is made, which brings forth the Interpretation of

the text. The latest example of doing that by Samoan biblical scholars are Arthur Wulf's use of his Samoan hermeneutics of *Autalaga* to approach and read God's Creation in Genesis 1,³⁴ and Fatilua Fatilua's use of the Samoan proverb, '*Seu le manua ae taga'i i le galu.*'³⁵

Any reader firstly approaches the text before the interpretation of the text means the interpretation using the hermeneutical lenses from the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics is part of the approach. In other words, the approach is the process by which how the reader goes towards the text to interpret the text. The *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics is also the reading approach to interpreting the text. In the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, hermeneutics itself is *Tofa Liuliu* which is the wisdom of thinking deeply about something using one's life experience. Such deep thinking is an elder's interpreting of something that he sees needs to be interpreted. Thus, exploring the text using the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* can be looked at as *Tofa Liuliu*. The interpretation of the text or the *Tofa Liuliu* of the text could be used as a message that needs to be applied to the reality of the context of the reader's interpretation. It is pouring out that wisdom as embraced in the *Tofa Liuliu* or interpretation of the text to how we should live life as Christians in our Samoan world. This type of action or the application of the *Tofa Liuliu* in the context of the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* is called *Tofa Sasaa* or application of the interpretation. The word *Sasaa* means 'to pour out.' So the interpretation of the text as wisdom is poured out in the sense of applying it to the reality of life in the context of the reader now.

In our Samoan world, we do not use polite or informal words to describe ourselves. Using polite words is to be by someone talking about us, not us talking about

³⁴See Arthur J. Wulf, "Anthropogenic Climate Change Un-Creates God's Creation in Genesis 1," *Samoa Journal of Theology* vol. 1 (2022): 1-10.

³⁵See Fatilua, "*Seu le Manua ae Taga'i i le Galu.*"

ourselves. That is the limitation of my use of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* when referring to my approach to the text, as shown here. Hence, I can use *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as an approach to reading and interpreting the text described above to talk about interpretations by other scholars. Thus, I will use the familiar words mentioned in Samoan for this study carrying the exact meaning of wisdom as described in the informal and polite language shown above.

The interaction between the reader and the text, when *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as a hermeneutic meets the text, is called as mentioned *Tofa Liuliu* or *Tofa Saili* in the polite form of the Samoan language. In the regular use of the Samoan language, I call that interaction of the hermeneutics and the text *Sailiga* (Exploration). Out of the *Tofa Liuliu* or *Sailiga* comes the interpretation with messages that will be applied to the life situations of the reader now. As described, this part of the process is regarded as *Tofa Sasaa*, or pouring out of the interpretation upon the reality of life the reader faces now. From the regular use of the Samoan language, *Tofa Sasaa* is *Faatatau*. Thus, *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* (Profound Wisdom of Elders) as the hermeneutics with its other characteristics as mentioned, which are *Tofa Liuliu* or *Tofa Saili* or *Sailiga* (Interaction between the reader and text) and *Tofa Sasaa* or *Faatatau* (*Application*) as approaching tools, will be used together with the Sociorhetorical criticism as the way of reading to read and interpret the text.

2.3.3 Sociorhetorical Criticism as the Heuristic Interpretive Analytic to interpret the text:

Sociorhetorical criticism, according to Vernon K. Robbins, is not a method but a heuristic interpretive analytic.³⁶ If it is called a method, then it has already got the

³⁶Vernon K. Robbins' lectures about the sociorhetorical approach via zoom with the students of Malua Theological College

expected results as determined by the aims and objectives set at the beginning of a method. However, as a heuristic interpretive analytic, its purpose is to find or to seek in the text what needs to find. That is one of the reasons why I consider using the sociorhetorical approach to read the text with the guidance of the hermeneutics described above. I will elaborate on other reasons why I have chosen to use the sociorhetorical criticism, followed by an explanation of how the sociorhetorical criticism will be used with the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics to read and interpret the text.

2.3.4 Sociorhetorical criticism and why I have chosen this interpretive analytic

The perspectives of readers now influenced and affected by the life situations they have encountered in their worlds have been long overlooked. However, Vernon K. Robbins' Sociorhetorical approach has shown that the reader's situation now is vital in the process of interpretation. Sociorhetorical criticism allows interpreters to examine how the text's language shapes meanings and allows readers to connect those meanings with their worlds to make meaning relevant.³⁷ Any text is open to different and various interpretations from different insights and diverse situations. Thus, the heuristic interpretive analytic of sociorhetorical criticism does not negate other methods and interpretations but creates a dialogue with those interpretations to make more new meanings relevant to other locations and situations. The sociorhetorical approach's emphasis on the reader's situations and locations is essential in two ways.

Firstly, the sociorhetorical approach's consideration of the reader's situation now, in the process of interpretation, gives me the chance to bring my Samoan world into the interpretation of the text. Secondly, it gives affirmation that my interpretation of the text does not need to negate traditional interpretations. Thus, the sociorhetorical approach as

³⁷Robbins, *Exploring Texture of Texts*, 1.

a heuristic interpretive analytic that considers essential the reader's situation now is not to impose the reader's location and the situation on the text but to create a dialogue with the text to find how the text can answer one's questions. In this way, in interpreting the text, primary attention is given to the text itself.

The sociorhetorical criticism, as explained, has shown its significance allowing the reader-now's situation and location as part of its interpretation process. The following substantial question is how does the sociorhetorical approach allow the reader's situation now to be part of the interpretation process of the text? The definition of the term sociorhetorical, according to Robbins, reveals how this heuristic interpretive analytic allows the reader's location now in the interpretation of a text. Robbins wrote that the meaning of the word sociorhetorical is shown in the definition of the two words that make up the word sociorhetorical: "socio" and "rhetorical." The word "socio" shows the anthropological and sociological factors and characteristics of sociorhetorical criticism, such as "social class, social systems, personal and community status, people on the margins, and people in the position of power."³⁸ The word "rhetorical" indicates how the language in a text is used as a tool of communication.³⁹ Thus, the sociorhetorical approach as a heuristic interpretive analytic seeks how the language of a text reflects and communicates the influences of social and cultural values and beliefs on the lives of people. I analyze these values and beliefs using hermeneutics from my Samoan world, such as the hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* used in this study.⁴⁰

³⁸Robbins, *Exploring Texture of Texts*, 1

³⁹Robbins, *Exploring Texture of Texts*, 1.

⁴⁰Other examples of studies by Samoan scholars that utilize sociorhetorical criticism in that way are Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*; and Fatilua, "*Seu le Manu ae Taga'i i le Galu*. It is also important to look at Elekosi Laitaga's work, another Samoan scholar using sociorhetorical criticism in his study of the apocalyptic textures of the Bible. Elekosi Laitaga's work is a study on the gospel of Matthew and apocalyptic. He used an integration of a nuanced definition of apocalyptic with conceptual metaphor theory and sociorhetorical analysis of New Testament to explore Matthew's apocalyptic discourses about eschatological judgment.

From exploring the subject of the importance of the wisdom of Elders about suffering in discipleship in the first letter of Peter, I see that the sociorhetorical approach, as explained above, allows interaction between my Samoan world about the importance of our Elders' experience of becoming and being a servant or *tautua* in our Samoan social, cultural, and religious world, and the Christian teachings about the importance of the wisdom of Elders about discipleship or serving God as reflected in the world encoded in the first letter of Peter. In this way, the sociorhetorical criticism facilitates how I, in the Samoan world, with the vital contribution of Elders in our Samoan communities, might read the world encoded in the first letter of Peter. More importantly, it provides a way to explore the wisdom of the elders in the early church as it is encoded in the text. Therefore, sociorhetorical criticism offers a framework that can facilitate consideration of the vital contribution of Elders at the beginning of the Church as embedded in the Biblical text. This will bring my Samoan world into dialogue with the selected texts toward producing other interpretations alongside the traditional interpretations.⁴¹

There is a temptation to bring the reader's location or situation into the process of interpretation which is an imposition of the reader's context/s on the interpretation of the text. Regarding temptations to contextualize and appropriate, my use of the sociorhetorical approach with a hermeneutics from my world as a reader of the Bible does not deliver the usual contextual reading whereby something from my culture is appropriated to make sense of and thereby authorized (for my social and cultural world), biblical texts. Instead, my reading approach negotiates the rhetorical world encoded in the text with the sociohistorical world of the first century CE. In this way of approaching the text from my situation as a reader of the Bible in our Samoan context, the focus of the whole process of interpretation is the text. Thus, the function of my reader's situation in

⁴¹Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 11.

the process is not to impose my situation or context on the text but only to raise questions that guide the exploration of the selected texts—in this way, signifying my location as a reader provides the lenses to see and approach the text, therein exploring the text with my Samoan lenses in order to take advantage of the multifaceted and interdisciplinary function of sociorhetorical criticism as the interpretational tool. This is my approach or use of sociorhetorical criticism in this study.

The sociorhetorical reading interpretive analytic has five stages: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture. For this study, I will begin with the ideological texture, which departure point is the reader's understanding, knowledge, or ideologies of our elders' wisdom as their life experience of becoming and being a *tautua* in the Samoan social and cultural world. Any reader of a text approaches a text with his or her presuppositions of the text or ideologies about a text. It means that the reader is not blinded by what the text means in terms of its traditional interpretations and also some of the questions raised from his or her own dealing with the text. It is the same situation I, as a reader, faced when reading the first letter of Peter in trying to find more understanding about its important function as one of the letters of the church elders. I found the letter fascinating, which evoked my interest to make a further exploration of Peter's writings. The scope of this thesis allows me to focus only on the first letter of Peter. This approach to reading the text, among other accepted ways of reading the Bible in biblical interpretation, now is allowed by the shift from the classical emphasis to the consideration of the reader's location/s.⁴²

⁴²The historical outline of the progress of hermeneutics is briefly explained in Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*; See also Kimmerle, "Hermeneutical Theory or Ontological Hermeneutics," 107-121.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter lays out the methodology or reading framework used to interpret the text explored in this study. The methodology emphasizes using Samoan hermeneutics to guide the exploration of the text. It is where our elders' experience and understanding of suffering in the undertaking of *tautua* or becoming and being a servant in our Samoan world in the social and cultural contexts of our Samoan families and villages are used to guide observation and exploration of suffering in the undertaking of becoming and being a disciple or a follower of Jesus in the early church as reflected in the words of Peter the disciple of Jesus in his letters. That hermeneutics is used with the heuristic interpretive analytic of sociorhetorical criticism as the interpretational tool to interpret the selected text (1 Peter 4:1-19). The use of sociorhetorical criticism is a heuristic interpretive analytic, not a method. What this means, as mentioned, is that a method has objectives that determine what needs to be found. For a heuristic interpretive analytic, the interpretation is determined not by any set objectives but by the actual exploration of the text.

CHAPTER THREE:

LITERATURE REVIEW OF 1 PETER 4:1-19

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with a literature review of 1 Peter 4:1-19. This review is essential to this study because it raises other questions from the first letter of Peter and the selected text that need to be answered. One of those questions is finding more understanding about suffering in discipleship in the language of the text of the first letter of Peter, considered as an example of the wisdom of the elders of the early church. Before reviewing the selected text, it is essential to briefly describe the background of the first letter of Peter, focusing on the authorship, background, and content of the letter, setting a platform upon which the literature review of the selected text and the following interpretations will be based. Thus, this chapter will be divided into two parts. Part One is about the overview of the background of the first letter of Peter, followed by the literature review of the selected passage (1 Peter 4:1-19) in Part Two. A conclusion at the end will indicate the direction in which the interpretation part of the thesis is guided by the Samoan hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*.

3.1 First Letter of Peter: Author; Occasion and Date; and Content

3.1.1 Author

Peter's speeches about the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles have linguistic and literary parallels with the language of the first

letter of Peter.¹ Some examples shown below are revealed in the comparison of Peter's Pentecost address and the first letter of Peter:

First, Acts 2:23 and 1 Peter 1:20 speak about Jesus Christ's death and resurrection as a foreordained sacrifice. Second, the resurrection of Jesus Christ with ascension as glory is described in 1 Peter 1:21 and Acts 2:32-35. Baptism as forgiveness of sins is described in the words of Peter in 1 Peter 3:21 and Acts 2:38. Those examples suggest that the language of the first letter of Peter is considered similar to the language of Peter's speeches in the Book of Acts. Thus, we can say that Peter, the disciple of Jesus or the apostle, is the author of the first letter of Peter.

Paul J. Achtemeier suggests otherwise by saying that there is difficulty in such a claim.² For Achtemeier, the general similarities between 1 Peter and the Acts of the Apostles emphasize baptism and resurrection, which are also emphasized in the rest of the New Testament. For example, those emphases are also the characteristics of Pauline's speeches. According to Achtemeier, the difficulty of evidence could question the legitimacy of Petrine authorship. However, this study considers necessary the evidence revealed in the letter itself. It is mentioned in the letter that the apostle Peter wrote the letter (1 Peter 1:1), and this evidence of Peter as the author was not challenged in the early church.

Interestingly, the later generation of scholars challenged that view by arguing that the first letter of Peter is the work of an interpreter.³ For example, Elliott considers the author of the first letter of Peter as someone of the Petrine group living in Rome between

¹See Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 14-15; Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, Revised Edition (Grand rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 328 - 329.

²Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 14.

³See Charles Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987), 4-6.

75 and 95 AD.⁴ Who that interpreter was, was another question in that debate. Moreover, the scholars widely accepted the consideration of Silvanus⁵ as the interpreter because Peter speaks of Silvanus as a faithful brother whom he has given to this letter (First Letter of Peter) as mentioned in 1 Peter 5:12 to encourage Silvanus in serving God in his ministry. According to Bigg, Silvanus as the bearer of Peter's letter mentioned in 1 Peter 5:12 can be interpreted as describing Silvanus as "the mouthpiece or interpreter" of Peter's letter.⁶ Elliott in accentuating his claim of the author of the first letter of Peter as an interpreter interprets 1 Peter 5:12 as showing Silvanus as a valid carrier and interpreter of the first letter of Peter.⁷ Thus, Silvanus as one of the fellow travellers of Paul in Paul's second missionary journey was likely the person who put together the first letter of Peter. Such a claim could explain the polished Greek style of the letter.

The debate about whether the apostle Peter or an interpreter wrote the first letter of Peter continues. For this study, it considers important the following words of Bigg:

"...there is nothing to prevent us from supposing that the points handled [in the First letter of Peter], how they are developed, the general tone of thought, are those of St. Peter himself."⁸

From the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, I see the "points handled" that Bigg speaks about in his words in the above quote are the messages of the Gospel embedded in the language of the first letter of Peter as the message of dealing with the reality of pain and suffering in the work of discipleship. Thus, this study considers Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus, and one of the church's elders at the beginning of the church, as the author of the first letter of Peter.

⁴John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 127-130.

⁵For more information on who this Silvanus is, see Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 83-87.

⁶Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 5.

⁷John H. Elliott, "Peter, Silvanus and Mark in 1 Peter and Acts: Sociological-Exegetical Perspectives on a Petrine Group in Rome," in *Wort in der Zeit: Festgabe für Karl Heinrich Rengstorf zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. W. Haubeck and M. Bachmann (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 250-267.

⁸Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 6.

3.1.2 Occasion and Date

Peter, as one of the apostles leading the early church spreading from Jerusalem to various parts of Asia Minor, was writing to the church members at the time to encourage them why it was worthy to withstand the suffering they encountered through their rejection of their beliefs in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (4:1-4, 12-16). Peter reminded the intended readers of his first letter; the imperishable and undefiled and unfading heavenly inheritance kept in heaven for them (1:3-5). It was to encourage them to be in peace as they faced and encountered the reality of following Christ in this world, the reality of suffering in the hands of those who did not believe the Gospel.

The apostle Peter received news of the churches in Asia Minor facing rejection and persecution and delivered to them the message of being the ‘pilgrims of dispersion’ (1:1), a phrase that embraced the exiled Israel in the Old Testament. It was appropriate for them to be called the ‘pilgrims of dispersion,’ for most of them were converted Gentiles. Once before, they were looked upon as “not a people” in the eyes of the Jews (2:10) for their lewdness, drunkenness, and idolatries (4:3). But they now live a different life (4:4) – the life of believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in and through their endurance and acceptance of suffering and pain in the hands of those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. It is not suffering as a “fiery trial” (4:12), but suffering for doing the right thing for its outgrowth is a blessing after all (see 3:13-14; 4:16). According to the church traditions, Peter was martyred in Rome during the time of the Emperor Nero’s persecution of Christians after the burning of Rome in 64 AD. Hence, the first letter of Peter was likely to be written toward the end of Peter’s life. Thus, the early sixties could be considered the time of the composition of the first letter of Peter.

3.1.3 Content

Although the word *ekklesia* is not mentioned in the first letter of Peter, this study supports Achtemeier's claim that Peter wrote his first letter to the Christian community of the first century. For Achtemeier, it is clearly shown in the letter that the Christian Community is of central importance.⁹ That importance relates to the understanding of Christology concerning the suffering of the risen Lord. In other words, the content of Peter's first letter is about the Christian community members undertaking their roles and responsibilities as disciples or servants of God in this world.

Thus, from the ecclesiological point of view, Peter, in his first letter, like any apostle in the early church, gives exhortations for the faithful followers of Christ living in a non-believing society centered on the message of the promise of salvation.¹⁰ It is the future salvation awaiting the followers and believers of Christ as told and shown at the outset of the letter (1:3-13). It is the Christian "hope," as mentioned in 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15. Peter reminded the Christians in Asia Minor that Christ suffered and then was glorified. Thus, the Christians who remain faithful despite persecution will receive the glory ahead (1:6-7; 4:12-13). In other words, patience and endurance in the course of unjust suffering has "God's approval" (2:20). It is Christology emphasizes the suffering of Christ as the way to exaltation as its core.¹¹

Peter also emphasizes the significance of believers leading a good life or godly lifestyle that makes others believe in God. Those Christians proclaim the mighty acts of God that called them out of darkness into light (2:9), influence pagans by their honourable deeds to glorify God (2:12), silence foolish people by doing good works (2:15), and make their spouses become believers of Christ by obeying and doing their roles in their

⁹Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 36; See also Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 331 – 332.

¹⁰Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 36-37.

¹¹Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 37.

husband-wife relationships (3:1). It is Peter's teaching or the ethical admonitions about the right attitude and the proper manner that a follower of Christ or a disciple of Jesus must do in order to fulfill becoming a faithful servant of God amid pain and suffering. Hence, Christians, although they suffer, shall be the redeeming force in the world.

The picture depicted in the words of Peter in his first letter is the picture of dealing with the reality of suffering and pain in the work for Christ or discipleship. Exploring the deeper meaning of undertaking and experiencing that type of discipleship is the task of the exegesis ahead. To begin that exegesis guided by the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* – a hermeneutics explaining the experience and understanding of elders about what suffering is and how to deal with it in the Samoan social and cultural worlds – they study now looks at the structure of the first letter of Peter that identifies the literary significance of the placement of the selected text (1 Peter 4:1-19), as a text about suffering as reality in discipleship and how to deal with it. That structure will be stated in the literature review of the structure of the first letter of Peter that will be discussed in the next section, which also discusses the literature review of the scholars' interpretations of the selected text; 1 Peter 4:1-19.

3.2 Literature Review: Structure of 1 Peter and Scholars' Interpretations of 1 Peter 4:1-19.

3.2.1 Structure of 1 Peter

There has been a debate among scholars of the first letter of Peter concerning the unity of the literary shape of 1 Peter. This debate is essential in discussing the structure of 1 Peter in this study. The two aspects of that debate are, on the one hand, discussion based on evidence regarding the composite origin of the letter and, on the other hand, the variety of theories concerning the present shape of the letter.

The first aspect is the discussion on the unity of the literary shape of 1 Peter based on considering the letter as having two parts. One is 1:3-4:11, and the other is 4:12-5:11. Scholars who support the composite origin of the letter argue that those two parts have different emphases. For example, the references to suffering in the first part (1:3-4:11) that ends with a doxology show suffering as a characteristic of living the Christian life (1:6; 3:13, 14, 17), whereas in part two, suffering is shown happening as a reality of becoming and being a servant or *tautua* of God as revealed in 4:19. In other words, the second part seems to show the real turn of events in the sense that after all suffering as described in 1:3-4:11 is real and is now faced by the Christians.

In addition to that argument, the scholars who argue for the composite origin of the first letter of Peter consider the first part of the letter as teaching about baptism. This claim regards the importance of the multiple allusions to baptism scattered throughout the first half of the letter. As examples are shown in the use of the word baptism in 3:21 and references about the characteristics of baptism such as “...*new birth into a living hope....*” (1:3, 23), “...*newborn infants long for the pure, spiritual milk....*” (2:2), and “...*out of darkness into his marvellous light...*” (2:9). F. L. Cross added to that argument the connection of the use of the word suffering to baptism in 1:3-4:11. According to Cross, the frequent appearance in 1 Peter of the word for “suffering” (πασχω) in conjunction with the word “Passover” (πασχα) describe not actual suffering but mystical suffering of the Christian in relation to Christ. That emphasis is appropriate for baptismal service.

The second aspect of the debate is that the consideration of 1 Peter as a composite document has been challenged. One of the arguments that challenged the composite origin of 1 Peter is that the presence of the doxology at the end of the first part (1:3-4:11) does not indicate the end of the letter. Although such doxologies can end a New Testament letter, they also appear frequently in the body of a letter as a reference describing God.

Thus, the doxology in 4:11 does not indicate the end to the letter but a description of God in that part of the first letter of Peter.

Another argument that challenges the composite origin of 1 Peter is that the difference between suffering as something that could happen described in the former part (1:3-4:11) and suffering as an experience described in the latter part (4:12-5:14) is not clear. According to scholars who support this challenge, the explanation of suffering on both parts has a similar result – it is an experience faced by any follower of Christ at any time and in any situation. Thus, 1 Peter is not a composite document but one whole letter in its final form.

The argument about baptism being the central theme of the letter mentioned above is not revealed according to the evidence provided, such as the references to new birth (1:3) and baptismal themes (2:2; 2:9). Baptism as the subject that these verses refer to are not explicitly mentioned. Hence, baptism is not the central theme of the letter. Thus, 1 Peter is not a composite document but a literary unit in its final form as it was put together in the beginning.

After all, the widely accepted consensus that this study also accepts is that the first letter of Peter is an academic unit in its final form as Peter first put it together as the author in the beginning. This is seen in the many scholars' discussion of the structure of the first letter of Peter, such as the structure by Paul J. Achtemeir that this study will discuss below. This study considers the discussion of suffering in serving God important as the leading theology of the first letter of Peter. That argument raises the importance of explaining the identity of a follower of Christ as a disciple or the chosen servant of God and putting into action that becomingness and beingness of the chosen servant. Thus, the first letter of Peter is about identifying the chosen servant of God as a disciple and the fulfillment of becoming and being that chosen servant in actions. It is one reason why I

chose the text 4:1-19 for this study. It explores the reality of suffering as described and culminates in doxology or glory in the middle part of Chapter 4. In this way, this study contributes to the study of discipleship by exploring becoming and being a disciple reflected in the first letter of Peter, one of the letters of the elders of the church that are placed towards the end of the Bible. It is seeking in the experience and understanding of Peter as a disciple as embedded in the language of his first letter how the disciples of Jesus as chosen servants of God dealt with the reality of suffering in doing the work of discipleship. Finding more understanding about discipleship, pain, and suffering gives us more courage and strength to serve God. In other words, it is to remind us that all the pain and suffering we encounter in our try to serve God is all worthy.

The divisions of the first letter of Peter that are widely accepted by scholars are 1:1-2; 1:3-2:10; 2:11-4:11; 4:12-5:11; 5:12-14. The scholars give these divisions different names according to the subjects and emphases of their studies. For example, Peter H. Davids¹² names those five divisions as “Greeting (1:1-2); Foundational Themes of the Christian Life (1:3-2:10); Relating to Societal Institutions (2:11-4:11); Coming to Grips with Christian Suffering (4:12-5:11); Conclusion and Greetings (5:12-14).” Another example, Karen H. Jobes¹³ names those five divisions as: “A greeting to the Christian Diaspora of Asia Minor (1:1-2); The opening of the letter: reassurance for God’s people (1:3-2:10); As God’s people, live godly lives (2:11-4:11); Consolation for the suffering flock (4:12-5:11); The letter is closing: final words and greetings (5:12-14).”

From the Samoan perspective of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics, becoming and being a servant or *tautua* in a Samoan family, church, and the village is

¹²Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), 28.

¹³Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 56-57; See also Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 20.

putting into action being a disciple or follower of Jesus or becoming and being a servant of God. In that way, this study from the hermeneutic of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, also emphasizes those five sections of the first letter of Peter under the following sub-titles:

1:1-2 (*Avea ma Tautua i le Atua* – becoming a servant of God)

1:3-25 (*O le tofi o le tautua filifilia a le Atua* – the inheritance of the chosen servant of God)

2:1-3:22 (*Faalautele le avea ma tautua e ala ia Keriso* – Elaboration on becoming a servant in Christ)

4:1-5:11 (*Olaina o le Avea ma Tautua ma lona Faatinoga i le lalolagi* – Living the becomingness and the beingness of God’s servant in the reality of the world)

5:12-14 (*Alofaaga* – Closing of the letter).

A literary progression of the structure mentioned will guide the exploration of 1 Peter 4:1-19 using the *Tofa Mamao a le Au Matutua* – the wisdom of the elders that emphasized becoming and being a servant with blessings as his or her reward. Verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter describe the identity of a disciple of Jesus considered as the chosen servant. It is followed by the explanation of the inheritance of the chosen one or the *tofi o le tautua filifilia* that is kept in heaven in the next part of the letter, which is from verse 3 to verse 25.

After the explanation of the inheritance of the chosen servant comes the elaboration of the identity of the chosen servant in light of the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ in 2:1-3:22. This part of the structure is important. It reveals the connection of the identity of the chosen servant of God to the work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Living the reality of being the chosen servant as a Christian existence in the reality of life in this world is the leading theology and message in the next part of the structure, which is 4:1-5:11. And one of the realities of living the life of the chosen servant of God in this world is facing the reality of pain and suffering. It is followed by the closing part of the letter (5:12-14). This brief interpretation of the literary progression or flow of the first letter of Peter in light of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* that emphasizes becoming and

being a servant or *tautua* will guide the interpretation of the selected text later in this study.

3.2.2 Literature Review of the selected passage (1 Peter 4:1-19)

The predominant interpretation of 1 Peter 4:1-19 falls in consideration of chapter 4 having two parts marked by regarding 4:11 as the end of the first part of the letter (1:3-4:11) and the next part begins from 4:12 and ends with 5:11. I will give examples of the interpretations of the first letter of Peter chapter 4 within that claim. It leads to this study's consideration of 1 Peter chapter 4 as a rhetorical unit.

Within the selected passage (4:1-19) is the part that marks the division of two major parts of the letter (1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:11) considered to be parts that make the letter a composite document. According to that view, the latter part (4:12-5:11) of the first letter of Peter was a later addition to show the theological application of the importance of being baptised explained in part one of the letters (1:3-4:11). It reveals that baptism, as described in 1:3-4:11, is carried out for those who are considered the newborn Christians who are facing the reality of suffering in the persecution which is the emphasis of 4:12-5:11.

Karen H. Jobes¹⁴ likewise divides 1 Peter 4:1-19 within the widely accepted divisions of the first letter of Peter into two main parts of 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:11. For Jobes, 4:1-11 belongs to the description of God's people as those living godly lives from 2:11-4:11. In this interpretation, Jobes interprets 4:1-11 as part of Peter's explanation of "Suffering unjustly for the name of Christ." According to Jobes, Peter speaks of 4:1-6 as "Living out Christ's victory in an unbelieving world (4:1-6) and 4:7-11 as "Living out

¹⁴Jobes, *1 Peter*, 56-57.

Christ's victory in the Christian community." Jobes interprets the second part of chapter 4, which is 4:12-19, as part of 4:12-5:11 he called "Consolation for the suffering flock (4:12-5:11)" or the reward for the suffering flock. Jobes interprets 4:12-19 as comprising two final thoughts about suffering for Christ. They are "The Blessing of Suffering (4:12-16)" and "Suffering Now as Eschatological Judgment (4:17-18)."

Paul J. Achtemeier also divides his interpretation of 1 Peter chapter 4 into the two traditional divisions of 1 Peter – 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:11. Achtemeier interprets 4:1-11 as the middle part of the body of the letter that talks about the "Right Conduct among Unbelievers" and the "Right Conduct among Believers." According to Achtemeier, 4:12-19 is about "Christian Suffering in Eschatological Context part of 4:12-5:11; the closing part of the body of the first letter of Peter.

Achtemeier speaks of 4:1-6 as suffering concerning living within their contemporary culture, and 4:7-11 is about the life of living with one another. The conclusion to the middle body of the letter (2:11-4:11) introduces the theme of judgment as anticipation of what the closing body of the letter (4:12-5:11) is about. For Achtemeier, the suffering Peter talks about is not the suffering in the hands of the Romans but the suffering of those who became Christians experienced for their refusal to take part and participate in un-Christian cultural activities or lifestyles that they used to partake.¹⁵

The scholars of the first letter of Peter widely consider the interpretation of chapter 4 with the tradition of the division of the letter into two divisions marked by 4:11 and 4:12. This study considers important chapter 4 as a rhetorical unit. The exploration of the progressive texture of the flow of the text from one chapter to another and the interpretation of the opening and closing signs of chapter 4 as an *inclusio* will show that

¹⁵Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 276-277.

1 Peter 4:1-19 is a rhetorical unit. Thus, the traditional interpretation of 4:11 and 4:12 as an indication of the end of part one and beginning of part two divisions of the letter will be interpreted in this study as the literary indication marking the middle part (4:7-11) and ending part of the unit (4:12-5:11). The following interpretation will give an elaboration of this claim.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of the background of the first letter Peter and a literature review of the interpretations of the selected text. The background, as explained above, looks at the authorship, occasion, purpose, and structure of the letter. It reveals that the literary structure of the letter was predominantly based on the consideration of the letter as a composite document. This tradition of the structure of the first letter of Peter is also the literary platform upon which the interpretation of 4:1-19 was based. In other words, 4:1-19 was hardly interpreted as a unit in itself. For this study, the sociorhetorical criticism with the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics considers 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit. The following interpretations will explore this claim.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
 IDEOLOGICAL AND INNERTEXTUAL INTERPRETATIONS OF
 THE SELECTED TEXT (1 PETER 4:1-19) FROM TOFA MAMA O
 LE AU-MATUTUA**

4.0 Introduction

Approaching the selected text is dealing with seeking in the text answers to questions about suffering in becoming and being a servant of God. From the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, approaching the text is finding the wisdom of the elders of the early church embedded in the language of the text about suffering in discipleship. It is called in Samoan, *Saili le Tofa o loo i le Tusitusiga*. It is important to remember that the purpose of the interpretation is to explore how the language of the first letter of Peter as a Christian discourse enclosed with the integration of cultures, understandings, and life experiences of the first-century Mediterranean world exhibits more understanding of doing discipleship in the reality of suffering and encountering pain in this world.

The questions from the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* to analyse the exploration of 1 Peter 4:1-19 are: Is *Avea ma Tautua* seen and reflected in the language of the text? If it is, what is *Avea ma Tautua* described by Peter as shown in the text? How is *Avea ma Tautua* as a sense of belonging to a particular community described in the language of the text? Is *Faatinoga a le Tautua* reflected in the description of the follower of Christ or the chosen servant emphasized in the text? How does the language of the text describe *Faatinoga a le Tautua*? Are their *faamanuiaga* (blessings) revealed in the text? Where are the blessings from? Are the people explained as *Avea ma Tautua* and *Faatinoga o le Tautua* the recipients of those blessings?

4.1 Analysis of the Ideological Texture of the progression of the letter from *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*

The sociorhetorical criticism usually begins with the analysis of the innertextual interpretation of the text. For this study, the interpretation will begin with the ideological texture stage.¹⁶ Robbins states that the “ideological texture concerns the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes of a particular reader.”¹⁷ Here, I will show the biases and opinions of becoming and being a disciple or a servant (*tautua*) reflected in the text. I will attempt to compare my belief as a *tautua*, a servant in our Samoan Christian world, to the chosen servant of God portrayed in the first letter of Peter. This part of the reading framework will define systems of becoming and being servants that make servants of God in dealing with suffering in discipleship. This section will discuss the similarities between ‘*Avea ma tautua*’ (*Becoming and being a servant*) in the Samoan Christian world and the chosen servant as a disciple in the early church, where God in and through Christ is the head of all people. Those similarities will show what becoming and being a servant means by Peter’s explanation of God’s chosen servant.

The reason to begin with the ideological texture stage is that the Samoan hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* is an ideology about the wisdom of the elders in our Samoan Christian community. It is an ideology that embraces the life experience and understanding of serving the Samoan family, the church in Samoa, and a Samoan village. It is an ideology embraced with the integration of life experiences and understandings of encountering pain and suffering in fulfilling the roles and

¹⁶See the use of ideological texture in Robert Myles, *The homeless Jesus in the gospel of Matthew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014). For Myles, Jesus’ status as a displaced outsider as portrayed in the gospel of Matthew is a consequence of the economic, social and political realities of his day. Myles begins his interpretation of the homeless Jesus in Matthew by using that ideology about the becomingness of Jesus as a displaced outsider in the story of his ministry.

¹⁷Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts*, 71.

responsibilities of becoming and being a member of a Samoan family, a church, and a village, or becoming a member of the Samoan Christian community. It is where the carrying out of serving the Samoan Christian community is guided by one's understanding of the Samoan culture and Christian teachings. And this understanding is guided by these characteristics of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics: *Avea ma Tautua* (becoming a servant or disciple); *Faatinoga a le Tautua* (Actions of a servant or disciple); and *Faamanuiaga o le Tautua* (blessings of the servant). Thus, *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* as a Samoan Christian ideology of serving God in the Samoan world will be used as a hermeneutic to interpret the structure of the first letter of Peter and the literary significance of the placement of 4:1-19 in the progression of the letter.

The *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* emphasized in this study sees serving God in the Samoan world as a work of discipleship based on the definition of discipleship accentuated in this study. That definition is that discipleship is 'Christians' understanding and experience of the teachings of Jesus lived in and through their daily lives, such as their lives as Samoan Christians¹⁸ in the Samoan worlds. The hermeneutics of *Tofa a le Au-Matutua*, as the wisdom of our elders, sees Christian existence or discipleship in the Samoan world as an undertaking of *tautua* in the Samoan Christian community made up of one's family, village, and church. This undertaking is carried out according to a life pattern depicting the similarity between living the life as a servant in the Christian teachings and living the life of a *tautua* in the Samoan social and cultural world. That life pattern first identifies a Christian or a Samoan as the chosen servant or *tautua* of God or a disciple – or *Avea ma tautua*. Secondly, it is followed by an explanation of how becoming a servant or *tautua* and being a servant, or *tautua* of God is to be undertaken

¹⁸The use of Samoan Christian in this thesis emphasizes the blending of Christian teachings and understanding with the *Faa-Samoa* or Samoan values and understanding of life in the way of life lived by the Samoan people in their families, churches, and villages.

or *Faatinoga faa-tautua* according to the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics. Thirdly, the excellent work of the chosen servant or *tautua* of God is blessed or *Manuia o le Tautua*. Thus, a *tautua*, as a disciple of Jesus, is considered the chosen servant whose good work and service will be rewarded. How that service is carried out is no easy task, for it faces the reality of pain and suffering. Hence, facing suffering in fulfilling the roles of becoming and being a servant or a *tautua* in one's family, church, and village is the common task that is to be done by any so-called servant or *tautua* of God. The structure of the first letter of Peter that will be used to guide the interpretation made herein will be interpreted and analysed in light of that life pattern according to the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics.

From the perspective of discipleship as *tautua i le Atua* reflected in the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao o le Au-Matutua*, this study adapts the structure of the first letter of Peter that emphasizes the five sections of the first letter of Peter as widely accepted by scholars. The structure is called "Suffering in Discipleship" and is translated in Samoan as "*O le Pologa i le Avea ma Soo.*" The five sections of that structure will be described under these sub-titles:

1. 1:1-2 *Avea ma Tautua a le Atua* – the servant of God or the disciple
2. 1:3-25 *O le tofi o le Tautua i le Atua* – The inheritance of the chosen servant of God
3. 2:1-3:22 *Faatinoga o le Tautua i le Atua* – Serving God in actions
4. 4:1-5:11 *Faalautele le Faatinoga o le Tautua i le Atua* – Elaboration on serving God
5. 5:12-14 *Alofaaga* – Closing of the letter

A literary progression of the structure mentioned above will guide the exploration of 1 Peter 4:1-19 using the *Tofa a le Au Matutua hermeneutics*. Verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter describe the becomingness of a follower of Christ as the chosen servant or *tautua* of God. It is followed by the explanation of the inheritance of the chosen one, the *tautua* or disciple that is kept in heaven in the next part of the letter, which is from

verse 3 to verse 25. That inheritance is the blessing or *manuia* to be received by the chosen servant if he/she lives in this world according to the will of God. After the explanation of the inheritance of the chosen servant comes the explanation of how becoming a servant or *avea ma tautua* is to be carried out in light of the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ in 2:1-3:22. This part of the structure is essential because it reveals the connection of the identity of the chosen servant of God to the work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It shows that how Jesus undertook his ministry reveals becoming a servant by way of encountering the reality of suffering in the hands of other human beings. Thus, *avea ma tautua* becoming and being a *tautua* is not an easy undertaking. This is the expectation of how the role of *tautua* is carried out in a family member's looking after of his or her family in the Samoan village. He or she is expected to endure the pain of working hard in the plantation or in fishing in the hot sun or pouring rain to provide food for the family. It is also the expectation to respond to words of hatred and words of gossiping belittling the name of the family by other villagers. It is the way of humility so that peace and harmony is maintained. The reality of being the chosen servant, a *tautua* or disciple as Christian existence in the reality of life in this world is the leading theology and message in the next part of the structure, which is 4:1-5:11. And one of the realities of living the life of the chosen servant of God in this world is facing the reality of pain and suffering. It is followed by the closing part of the letter (5:12-14).

From this analysis of the structure of the first letter of Peter in light of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics, the chosen servant of God, the *tautua* or disciple as mentioned in the first verses of Chapter One, is a follower or believer or Christ or called a disciple. In other words, he or she had already being considered a disciple or a *tautua*. What he or she supposes to do to fulfill being the chosen one is also described. However, how other cultures elaborate upon that, as revealed in using recitations as

examples, needs attention. Thus, it is the task of the following interpretations of the selected text – innertexture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture – to show that.

4.1.1 Innertextual Analysis

An innertextual analysis focuses on exploring the ways the text uses words, such as word structures, devices, contraries, and modes of text.¹⁹ For this study, exploring the innertexture is revealing that “Suffering in Becoming and Being a Servant or Disciple” structure of the first letter of Peter from the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, shows a progressive texture that displays dealing with suffering in discipleship as fulfilling of becoming and being a Christian.²⁰ It will look at the use of contraries in the text (1 Peter 4:1-19) in the form of an enthymeme, to find what the language of the text presents.

4.1.2 Innertextual Analysis of the Progression of the “*O le Pologa i le Avea ma Soo Structure.*”

The analysis of the intertexture of the text is based on the structure, “*O le Pologa i le Avea-ma-Soo*” structure mentioned above. Exploring the innertexture of the text using this structure is guided by the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics. It is important to look again at the three characteristics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics considered the hermeneutical lens.

They are: Firstly is *Avea ma Tautua* (Becoming a Servant) – the Elders in our Samoa community who have experienced and understood the importance of who we are as Samoans in our families, churches, and villages consider important our becoming

¹⁹Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

²⁰“Progressive texture resides in sequences (progressions) of words and phrases throughout the unit.” See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 9.

a *tautua* to our families, churches, and villages as our sense of belonging to the place we called our homes, our families, our churches, and our villages.

Secondly is *Faatinoga o le Tautua* - putting into actions our understanding and knowing our becoming a *tautua* or *Avea ma Tautua* is carried out by doing our *Tautua* roles and responsibilities as members of our families, churches, and villages. Becoming and being a *tautua* is submitting our bodies, minds, and souls, regardless of any situation we encounter in life, to serve, care for, and look after our families, churches, and villages. That good *tautua* is given many labels in our Samoan world such as *tautua alofa*, *tautua tuavae*, *tautua faamaoni*, *tautua le faalogologotiga*, *tautua toto*, and *tautua oti*. For the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, those *tautua* make families, churches, and villages strong and well.

Thirdly, according to the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*, those *tautua* in the *faa-Samoa* will unquestionably be blessed for their excellent works – blessed with leadership roles and a good mouth in speaking; blessed with good decision making; blessed with good wisdom. Thus, the Samoan who knows well his sense of belonging to the place he or she belongs (family, church, and village) will show that in fulfilling his or her role as a good servant or *tautua lelei* to his family, church, and village. Moreover, beyond that, there are blessings or *manuia*. The analysis of the structure's innertexture will be guided by those three elements as hermeneutical lenses. The innertextual analysis will begin with the interpretation of the structure as a whole, leading to the placement of the selected text in that structure. It will be followed by the innertextual analysis of the selected text as a rhetorical unit with a beginning, middle, and ending.

The “Suffering in Discipleship” or “*O le Pologa i le Avea ma Soo*” structure of the first letter of Peter shows another characteristic of becoming and being a disciple or a follower of Christ, as experienced by Peter. That is, becoming and being a disciple is a

responsibility and role that faces suffering and pain. It is a responsibility to serve God in and through doing the will of God as practiced by Jesus in his ministry regardless of any situation of pain and suffering encountered in this world, and with it is a reward. To elaborate on that claim, I will explain that interpretation guided by the three hermeneutical lenses of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics mentioned above. In Part one of the structures (1:1-2) labelled as “*Avaea ma Tautua a le Atua* – the servant of God or the disciple,” Peter, as the author, shows the identity or the *faasinomaga* of the chosen servants or the *Tautua* of God. They are the chosen servants who belong to the Christian community in the areas of Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. In other words, the chosen servants of God are Christians. Their becoming Christians is characterized by how God chose them: “[they were] ...destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood.”

The place or space the Christian belongs to is the Christian community in the world, and it is in that place where he or she shall carry out his role and responsibility as a servant or *tautua* in the Christian community or as someone who was destined by God, sanctified by the Spirit and be sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ. The elaboration of the chosen servant and the place that he or she belongs to is shown in the next part of the structure – Part two (1:3-25), which is called “The inheritance of the chosen servant of God – *O le tofi o le tautua filifilia*.” This second part of the structure further explains the place of belonging of the chosen servant of God. The place is called the inheritance that is “...imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven... (1:4)” revealing the extension of the place a Christian as a faithful servant of God belongs. It is not only on this earth but also in heaven. How the chosen one should carry out his responsibility of belonging to that place as a Christian is also explained in this part. He or she must be obedient to the will of God in and through Jesus Christ (1:10-16). Part Three (2:1-3:22)

continues the explanation of the chosen servant of God in Jesus Christ or living as a servant of God as Christ lived who belongs not only to the earth but also to heaven. Here shows another important element of being a servant of God or *Avea ma Tautua* which is obedience. He or she is to live like a living stone abandoned but used later as the cornerstone. Those who accept and endure pain while suffering unjustly. In other words, those who endure pain and suffering for doing the right thing or being in good manners and a good attitude (2:19; 3:8-12). Not like those who suffer for committing crimes as an example (2:20). It emphasises the importance of the message of suffering with culture or the ways and values accepted by a particular group of people to live their lives, such as the social and cultural values of the husband and wife relationship in the first-century Mediterranean world. Thus, the chosen servant, identified at the beginning as a Christian that belongs to earth and heaven, is the humbled chosen servant.

Being a humbled chosen servant of God is extended upon in the next part of the structure, where the selected text is placed (4:1-5:11) called *Olaina o le Avea ma Tautua ma lona Faatinoga i le lalolagi* or Living the becomingness and beingness of God's servant in the reality of the world. Repetition of suffering concerning the suffering of Christ is mentioned again in this part of the structure in 4:1-11. It has a literary significance which is literary anticipation of why suffering as a Christian is something that is to be endured with the sure hope that there is joy at the end, as revealed in 4:12-5:11. In other words, it shows that doing the work of serving God or *Avea ma tautua a le Atua* in and through our families, churches, and villages, is all worthy. It is not that the chosen servant works for reward. Instead, he or she wants to make sure that what she or he does in serving his family, church, and village can provide help for them. The joy from seeing them happy is the most rewarding feeling. Part five (5:12-14) closes the letter with final greetings called *Alofaaga*. Thus, Part four of the structure where the selected passage

(4:1-19) is placed is where the apostle Peter emphasizes suffering and pain as an undeniable part of discipleship. Most scholars consider this chapter where the division of the two significant parts of the first letter of Peter is placed as not a unit. For this consideration, the first part ends with 4:11, and the second begins with 4:12. Thus, it is a chapter of two parts. However, this study suggests that this Chapter is a rhetorical unit, and this claim will be explained in the next part of the innertextual interpretation, which is the innertextual interpretation of the selected text (4:1-19).

4.1.3 Innertextual Analysis of 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit

This part of the interpretation will analyse 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit,²¹ finding how the words of Peter as one of the disciples and elders of the church in the first century, might be read through the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*. It is a reading of the selected text guided by the lenses of *Avea ma Tautua i le Atua* (Becoming a servant of God), *Faatinoga o le Tautua i le Atua* (Being a servant of God), and *Manuia o le Tautua* (Blessings of becoming and being a servant of God), exploring how suffering and pain could be explained as characteristics of discipleship. The analysis gives primary attention to the Christian existence of the followers of Christ, such as the so-called disciples, in the development of the early church in the first century.

These questions from the methodology explained above will guide the innertextual analysis: How do literary features of 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical and narrative unit show the chosen servant or *tautua* belonging to the Christian community in Asia Minor? How do the literary features of this unit show Jesus Christ and the chosen servant of God as a Christian as the main characters of the letter? How do literary features

²¹“A rhetorical unit must have a beginning, a middle, and an end.” George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 33-34.

of this unit show suffering as a characteristic of discipleship during the persecution under Roman Imperial power? How do the literary features of this unit show the experience of becoming and being a disciple or a follower of Jesus Christ as upholding the inheritance as promised that is kept in heaven for all Christians?

4.1.4 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit from *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*

The various and different structures of the first letter of Peter that consider the letter as a composite document and those who challenged it regard chapter four of the first letter of Peter as not a unit. They interpret chapter four of the first letter of Peter as where the division of two major parts of the first letter of Peter is placed – the first part begins from 1:3 and ends with 4:11, and the second part begins with 4:12 and ends with 5:11. The main argument for this claim is the interpretation of the doxology in 4:11 as an indication of the first part coming to its end. This study argues that chapter four of the first letter of Peter is a rhetorical unit, and the following interpretation will prove this claim.

1 Peter 4:1-19, as a rhetorical unit, has opening and closing signs. One of the questions from the hermeneutics of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* is how features of a text could show the chosen servant of God as the main character of the letter belonging to the Christian community. In the following interpretation, the opening and closing signs of the selected text (4:1-19) as a rhetorical unit are considered as an *inclusio*²² that explains the chosen servant or the faithful follower of Jesus Christ as someone who endures the reality of pain and suffering in doing the will of God as Jesus Christ did in his ministry. The opening signs of the rhetorical unit are shown in verse 1: *Since, therefore*

²²'Inclusio' are catchwords that begin and end a piece of writing or passage to attract the attention of the readers or hearers to the purpose of a passage. See Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 34, 82.

Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin). They are: first, the conjunction coordinating *ouu* indicates a rhetorical shift from the previous chapter, which is about the suffering of Christ as the suffering of the non-sinner, to chapter four, where the accentuation of that suffering as a weapon to living the life of a Christian is emphasized. Chapter 3 shows Jesus Christ, the righteous, treated as the unrighteous, or Jesus Christ, the example of a good person, treated as the bad person. In other words, Chapter 3 portrays the image of how to become a *Tautua* for God or *Avea ma Tautua a le Atua*. The shift indicates that the beginning of the rhetorical unit continues on Peter's emphasizing of suffering in following Christ as part of becoming and being the chosen servant of God or *Avea ma Tautua a le Atua*. Secondly, the connection of 4:1 to the previous connection shows Jesus Christ as the main character of the letter of Peter and the chosen servant or the follower Christ as the other character. In other words, the connection reveals Jesus as the servants of servants or "*o le Tautua i Tautua*." This is shown in the mention of Jesus Christ as the main sufferer. Thirdly, the words "arms yourselves" reflect that the place where suffering is encountered is a place of war or where the chosen servant is enduring the pain of suffering in the hands of the persecutors in the first century. Thus, the persecution of Christians in the first century is the rhetorical space where the intended readers of the first letter of Peter will be found.

According to *Tofa a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics, an excellent *tautua* learns from the hard way which is the way of pain and suffering. The hard way of getting up before the morning light to walk to the plantation and return at night time after doing good work with a heavy load of food baskets on the shoulders. It is the normal task of each day of the week and Sunday is the only day to have some rest. It is a different kind of pain in a

different context from the first century but a struggle that needs a lot of courage and strength physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The unit's closing signs are seen in verse 19: *Therefore, let those suffering following God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while continuing to do good.* Firstly, the conjunction $\kappa\alpha\iota$ at the beginning of this final verse of the unit indicates that the unit is coming to its ending. Secondly, the words “*suffering in accordance with God's will*” imply Jesus as the one who shows that suffering, as revealed in verse 1. Thirdly, v. 19 shows a picture of the persecution of Christians in the sense of a word of encouragement in the form of a command. It says that those who suffer because of God's will, as Jesus Christ did, will be in God's hands while they continue to suffer for God's name or do good for God. Here reveals the blessings or *manuia* for the chosen *tautua*, or the one who does the role of being a *tautua* or *Avea ma Tautua*.

The analysis will be based on the following structure of 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit divided into three parts. It reflects the significance of the Christian existence of the follower of Christ as the chosen servant of God encountering suffering for being good Christians – such as Christian under persecution by the Romans.

Beginning (vv. 1-6): “Suffering in Christ – *Pologa ia Keriso*”

Middle (vv. 7-11): “Suffering is humbleness – *Pologa o le Loto Maulalo*”

End (vv. 12-19): “Suffering is a blessing – *Pologa o le Manuia*”

The conjunction ‘*therefore*’ in verse 1 shows the connection of chapter 4 to the previous chapter, chapter 3. Chapter 3 speaks of the importance of the suffering of Christ culminating in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God. Moreover, the suffering of Christ was the suffering of the son of God, who did not sin. It is suffering for doing good or the suffering of the righteous for the unrighteous (3:17-18). Thus, *Avea ma Tautua* is simply being a good servant. Chapter 4 continues this focus on how the intention of the suffering of Jesus, as explained, could help ease the pain of the

reality of living life as a Christian in the world of suffering and pain, such as the world of persecution. Thus, 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit, starts with the author continued-telling readers that Jesus' suffering in the flesh as a sacrifice to save the sinful world. In other words, Peter presses the significance of *Avea ma Tautua* as a sacrifice. It is also the important expectation of doing the role of *tautua* in our Samoan families and villages as emphasized by our Elders who did it themselves. There is a saying that "*E iloa gofie lava le tagata tautua*" (You can easily tell the person who did the work of being a servant). He or she is known by the way he or she talks and acts.

Furthermore, that sacrificial intention should equip a faithful follower of Christ who lives that life of enduring any suffering in the flesh as fulfilling his or her role and responsibility of becoming and being a servant of God. In other words, chapter 4, as a rhetorical unit, is the literary assertion of why the suffering of Christ shall be the spiritual weapon to equip and arm the so-called chosen servant of God in encountering any suffering in the flesh in being a servant of God. In itself, the word '*therefore*' marks the shift of Paul's words on suffering from the explanation of suffering in chapter 3 to the function of Jesus' suffering to the life of the chosen servant or the follower of Christ in the reality of the world. That reality is living that life of suffering, which is Jesus' life of suffering, as explained in chapter 3 by the author.

The function of the suffering of Christ begins in the first verse of the rhetorical unit. It is spoken to the individual followers of Christ or the chosen servants of God. For the author, that person or that Christian is the one who encounters the life of suffering because of doing the good and the right thing, which is doing the will of God. Moreover, he or she is considered as the one who has finished with sin (v.1). He or she has chosen to live the rest of his or her life not by human desires but by the will of God (v.2). In other words, he or she, the chosen servant of God, will not live the life of sin that he or she

lived before such as living in licentiousness, passions, and drunkenness (v.3). Thus, *Avea ma Tautua* is doing and maintain good manners to oneself and to others. But the chosen servants or the faithful followers of Christ will not be left alone by his or her friends of the past sinful life. They will not rest but continue to find a way to bring down the chosen servant by doing God's will (vv. 4-5). Some of the chosen servants will be judged in the flesh for doing the will of God, but their living faith in God makes them live in the spirit of God (v.6).

After focusing on the individual chosen servant, the author then moves on to how living the suffering of Christ helps strengthen the relationship of each servant to one another. This emphasizes the middle part of the unit (vv. 7-11). Living the suffering of Christ as a community brings courage and strength to each other, making them live in harmony. Furthermore, this is undertaken in community prayers. This is important for it implies the significance of community worship or praying together as a community in times of suffering (v.7). Hence, *Avea ma Tautua* is relational. In other words, becoming and being a servant is meaningless without your family and village. Community worship and praying together are times when the chosen servants of God as a community are carrying out their other important roles of becoming and being servants of God which are speaking about God and serving others and God with all the God-given strength to them (vv. 10-11). It reminds the community that their suffering as individuals and as a community of believers is all to glorify God in and through Jesus Christ (v.11). It reminds the *tautua* as well that their roles of serving God through their families and communities are to glorify God.

The ending of the unit (4:12-19) shows the blessing or the *manuia* of upholding believing in God through faith and actions in enduring suffering and pain in becoming and being a servant of God. In this part of the unit, the author, in verse 12, calls upon his

intended readers as the beloved, indicating the application of becoming and being a servant of God. According to the author, living suffering is a test and should not surprise the chosen servants of God. This is also reflected in the teachings of the *Au-Matutua* or elders of our families, churches and villages. For them, *o le pologa* or suffering challenges the ability and the courage of a *tautua*. It is to make a *tautua* a better *tautua*. It is a test of love of a *tautua* for the people he belongs to. Those who were able to live that type of life are faithful followers of Christ. In other words, they were the ones who lived the suffering of becoming and being a servant of God in light of the suffering of Christ. As such, they rejoice in sharing Christ's suffering (v.13). Thus, the blessing of becoming and being a servant of God is a joy, for in itself reveals the glory of God. The eschatological blessing (4:19), as promised in 1:1-2, is repeated here.

The beginning and ending parts of the rhetorical unit are two enthymemes²³ that show the type of suffering needed in becoming and being a servant of God. An enthymeme is a brief and pointed argument from contraries. It begins with a central premise, followed by a minor premise, and ends with a conclusion. The contraries of the suffering of Christ in the flesh as shattering of sin as doing God's will and living life by human desires. Suffering for Christ and suffering for human desires is an example of an enthymeme. Its central premise is; *Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever suffered in the flesh has finished with sin)* (1 Peter 4:1). The main premise is the central statement the apostle Peter wants the readers to know because the traditions of becoming and being a servant of God or being a Christian handed to them, were the teachings of the truth about God's revelations in and through the suffering of Jesus Christ. With regards to the relationship between the

²³An 'enthymeme' is a rhetorical syllogism deduced from general and special truths. See Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, xxxvi-xxxvii; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 7; Paul Holloway, "The Enthymeme as an Element of Style in Paul," *JBL* 120 (2001): 329-339. Holloway writes that an enthymeme in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods are brief and pointed arguments from contraries.

suffering of Christ in flesh and the suffering in human desires, Christ showing actual suffering is the suffering a follower of Christ or a disciple has to be armed or equipped with. For it has shattered sin. Hence, the central premise shows the suffering of Jesus as the model of suffering or the source of suffering for any Christian or servant of God. In other words, the basis of Peter's argument, as stated in this significant premise, is the nature of actual suffering, which is in Jesus Christ. The next part of the enthymeme is the minor premise which asserts the consideration of the suffering of Christ as the way to live. The minor premise supports the importance of the suffering of Christ as the will of God. The enthymeme is made complete in conclusion; *You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry* (1 Peter 4:3). A conclusion to an enthymeme is usually indicated by the conjunction γαρ (for). The Greek of verse 3 shows the conjunction γαρ (for) but not in the English translation of the NRSV version. This study considers necessary the conjunction γαρ in the Greek version, for it indicates that the enthymeme is concluding.

As discussed, the conclusion of the enthymeme reminds the reader about the way of life that gave him or her the type of suffering that was time-wasting. That was suffering from living a bad life. The conclusion of the enthymeme clearly shows the contraries of the ways of life that evokes good and bad suffering. Good suffering is revealed in the suffering of Christ, which is the suffering from doing good or doing God's will. Evil suffering is the suffering of committing crimes, breaking the law, or simply not doing God's will. The enthymeme demonstrates that the meaning of suffering in doing God's will explained in the following verses, is based on the suffering of Jesus Christ. The amplification of the enthymeme in the following verses carries the understanding that

Peter's defining of suffering in becoming and being a servant of God is based on the suffering of Jesus Christ or simply the grace of God in and through Jesus Christ.

The similar emphasis on *suffering* in doing God's will or becoming and being a servant of God is revealed in the other enthymeme shown in the ending part of the unit (4:12-19). The enthymeme is shown in vv. 14-15. The central premise is *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed* (v.14a). The main premise speaks of suffering for the name of Christ or for being an excellent Christian living life according to God's will as a blessed undertaking. The emphasis of the main premise of this enthymeme is similar to the main premise of the enthymeme explained above. The minor premise follows the main premise. The minor premise is supporting information for what is mentioned in the major premise.

For this enthymeme, the minor premise is *...because the spirit of the glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you* (v.14b). The minor premise explains what the blessing is mentioned in the major premise. That is the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God. Moreover, this blessing rests on the chosen servant or *tautua*. The conclusion to the enthymeme is indicated by the use of the conjunction *gar* in verse 15: *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even a mischief maker*. The conjunction *gar* is not translated into English in verse 15. It is translated as "But." When the conjunction 'for' is added, the conclusion repeats what is mentioned in the conclusion of the enthymeme mentioned above. The conclusion shows the type of suffering that is a waste of time. It is suffering from doing bad things, such as being a thief and a criminal. Thus, the conclusion shows a contrary to the suffering of Christ. Overall, the two enthymemes show that the suffering in discipleship Peter asserts in his first letter is the suffering from God's will, not from doing bad things or living a bad life. The following

analysis of the intertexture and social and cultural textures should bring forth more understanding of suffering as portrayed in those two enthymemes.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter deals with the ideological and innertextual interpretations of the text. Beginning with the analysis of the ideological texture of the text is based on the consideration of hermeneutics as an ideology. Approaching the text is fusing the text with the ideology of *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua*. It shows that becoming and being a servant or *Avea ma Tautua* as Peter tries to describe in the beginning of his first letter is an attempt to reveal that any servant of God has inheritance. It is laying out at the beginning the sureness of the significance of becoming a servant of God or a disciple of Jesus. It is not to show that there is reward being a servant of God but to reveal that all the pain and suffering we encounter in the reality of doing our roles as God's servants is all worthy p-worthy in the sense of glorifying God. Following the revelation of becoming a servant of God relative to inheritance is application of *Avea ma Tautua*. According to the innertextual interpretation, the *Faatinoga o le Tautua mo le Atua* (Actions to be carried out for being a servant of God) will encounter pain and suffering. It is the reality of being a servant or disciple. And that suffering is suffering for doing the right and good thing. It is part of the sacrifice element of becoming a *tautua*. This is also the expectation of undertaking the *Avea ma Tautua* as described in *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics. From the point of view of a *taulealea* (young man), he sacrifices his life to serve his parents and sisters. In doing so, he endures the pain of facing difficulties in working the family lands to provide food for his family. He endures the pain of facing the hot sun or the cold night when go fishing to make sure there is fish to feed his family. Also he endures the pain of standing up to people who dare to challenge the peace and stability of his family. It is not encouraging violence but encouraging the Samoan and

Christian peaceful ways of resolving differences. Thus, the interpretation has shown that suffering in serving God or discipleship is real and that suffering as emphasized by Peter, is compared to the suffering of Christ which is the suffering of doing the right thing.

CHAPTER FIVE:

INTERTEXTUAL AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the intertextual, and social and cultural interpretations of the text. It explores the phenomena from outside the text used by the author to strengthen and entrenched the message presented in the selected text. The chapter also explores the social and cultural values reflected in the text. In doing so, the following elements of the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutic will guide the exploration: First, *Avea ma Tautua* – How is *Avea ma Tautua* as a sense of belonging to a particular community described in the language of the text? Second, *Faatinoga a le Tautua* – reflected in the description of the follower of Christ or the chosen servant emphasized in the text? How does the intertextual and social and cultural interpretation of the text show *Faatinoga a le Tautua*? Third, *Faamanuiaga o le Tautua* (Blessings for the servant) – How does the interpretations affirm the blessings are from God? Are the people explained as *Avea ma Tautua* and *Faatinoga o le Tautua* the recipients of those blessings?

5.1 Intertextual Analysis

The intertextual analysis is the exploration of how the phenomena from outside the text are used in the text to broaden the meaning and significance of suffering in discipleship as shown in the innertextual interpretation of the text in the previous Chapter. The task of this exploration is to find out how the recitations from the Old Testament are used by Peter in 4:1-19 to broaden the meaning of suffering. The passages from the Old Testament used in 4:1-19 are Proverbs 10:12, 11:31; Isaiah 11:12; Psalm 3:5, 89:50-51;

Ezekiel 9:6; and Jeremiah 25:29. The use of these recitations affirm and broaden the meaning and significance of suffering in discipleship portrayed in 1 Peter 4:1-19.

In the progression of 1 Peter 4:1-19, as a rhetorical unit, the words of Solomon from the Book of Proverbs are used in the middle part and the ending part. The middle part according to the threefold structure of the unit (vv. 1-6) is called “Suffering is humbleness (*Pologa o le Loto Maulalo*).” Peter as the author of the unit has already explained in the beginning of the unit (vv. 1-6) called “Suffering in Christ (*Pologa ia Keriso*)” suffering as an essential part of undertaking the ministry of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God as revealed in and through Jesus Christ’s ministry. Peter then elaborates on that suffering as suffering in doing the right and good in the middle of the unit (vv. 7-11). Verse 8 in the middle part of the unit says: *Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins*. Reflected in these words of Peter, the words of Solomon in Proverbs 10:12: *Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses*. The literary device of contrast is seen in the words of Solomon to bring more clarity to the significance of love.²⁴ The contrast of hatred and love in these words of Solomon emphasizes love as the hope of bringing peace and comfort to the offenders. Peter reconfigures these words of Solomon by elaborating the significance of love broadening what suffering is in the work of the chosen servant of God. According to Peter, that love is the most important aspect of enduring suffering. It maintains constant love for one another despite problems encountered by different and various relationships in the world in which the Christian community exists. More importantly, it is that love that covers a multitude of sins. It is not about covering the wrongdoing, but forgiveness. It is dealing with these difficulties and problems of life with humility. Simply, it is facing

²⁴Richard J. Clifford, “Reading Proverbs 10-22,” *Interpretation*, 63 no.3 (2009): 242 – 253; William P. Brown, “The didactic power of metaphor in the aphoristic sayings of Proverbs,” *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament*, 29 no.2 (2004): 135-154.

suffering with humbleness. Peter recites the importance of love covering the offense or sin and adds the importance of love for one another which is to be carried in and through humbleness. Reflected in the words of Peter the wisdom of Solomon the Elder reflected in the words from Proverbs. The wisdom of the fear of Lord as the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10) or the fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7). As most scholars claimed, the words of Solomon in the Song of Solomon show a young Solomon, and the word of Proverbs reveal a mature Solomon.²⁵ The mature Solomon reaching the mature age of meditation and thinking about the importance of different life experiences he encountered in his life that bring lessons for the people of Israel such as the lesson of the significance of humbleness as an aspect of suffering – as a way of carrying out what love is for one another as forgiveness. These words of Solomon and Peter’s use of that wisdom reflects the wisdom of those who have lived long – those who have learned from the many things that they did wrong. It is where the wisdom of the ability to judge and act according to God’s directives came from and such wisdom is a valuable asset for a servant of God. That wisdom is available to anyone, but its price is high. It is a wisdom originating in God, not self, and it comes by attention to the will of God. Embedded in that wisdom the righteousness of God. It shows that it is good to be wise, and it is wise to be good. Those words of wisdom as used by Peter reminds his audience that evil men suffered the consequences of their evil deeds. Thus, affirming the important theological meaning of suffering that Peter accentuates which is suffering in doing the right and good thing for God.

Seeing this interpretation from the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics, it makes sense for it is the main advice of our families’ Elders’ wisdom to keep the peace

²⁵ See Carole R. Fontaine, “Wisdom Tradition in the Hebrew Bible,” *Dialogue*, 53 no.1 (2000): 101-117; Larry L. Lyke, “The Song of Songs, Proverbs, and the theology of love” in *Theological exegesis: essays in honour of Brevard S. Childs*, pages 208-223 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999),

within the families, churches, and villages. For the Elders, part of becoming a good servant of God is able to forgive those who cause troubles and stir the peace. It is covering the wrongdoings of the trouble makers in and through forgiveness. It is application of becoming a servant or *Faatinoga o le Tautua*. It is why becoming a *Tautua* is not easy because it is role where one leaves behind his needs and does likewise to endure the safety and security of the people he or she belongs to.

The significance of the wisdom of Solomon as the Elder's wisdom is also reflected in Peter's use of Proverbs 11:31 in 1 Peter 4:17 in the ending part of the unit – the part that emphasizes the importance of blessings in suffering.

1 Peter 4:17 *For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

Proverbs 11:31 *If the righteous are repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!*

Ezekiel 9:6 *Cut down old men, young men and young women, little children and women, but touch no one who has the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the house.*

Jeremiah 25:29 *See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that is called by my name, and how can you possibly avoid punishment? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.*

The meaning of the words of the Proverbs 11:31 are reverberated in 1 Peter 4:17. It is about God's judgment of the righteous and the wicked or sinner and the judgment according to Solomon is carried out on earth.²⁶ For Peter, his interpretation of the judgment carried out on earth is that on earth is where God's judgment begins. Peter's

²⁶Beverly Roberts Garenta and David Petersen, eds., *The New Interpreters Bible: One-Volume Commentary* (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 2010), 521-522.

interpretation of God's judgment in relation to blessings in discipleship in the world is real. In other words, the reward or blessings of being a committed, loyal, and obedient servant of God, will be given beginning in this world. This means that the judgment of the wicked and the sinner also begins in this world. The wisdom shown in this interpretation is that suffering encountered by a God's servant in serving God is part of becoming and being a servant of God. This understanding is more confirmed by Peter's use of Ezekiel 9:6²⁷ and Jeremiah 25:29²⁸ as shown above. They reveal that suffering in doing the right thing for God is the suffering of the righteous and suffering in doing bad is the suffering of the wicked or sinner. So Peter's use of these words from the Old Testament affirm his understanding and experience of suffering in discipleship as part of the inheritance of becoming and being a servant, disciple, or *tautua* of God.

It is important to look at Peter's use of the words of Isaiah 11:12 and Psalm 89:50-51 in 1 Peter 4:14 as shown below for they show that in times of difficulties, are times of blessing for the chosen servant of God, with the Spirit of God to guide and strengthen the servant's heart and the soul. These Old Testament recitations show that one of the causes of suffering encountered by servants of God in serving God is the condemnation of God's servant by the words of the haters. Peter's use of these words from Isaiah 11:12²⁹ and Psalm 89:50-51³⁰ affirms that the God's chosen servants are the anointed. And that

²⁷ William L. Schutter, "Ezekiel 9:6, 1 Peter 4:17, and apocalyptic hermeneutics," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, 26 (1987): 276-284; Lane Keister, "The Man in Linen: A New and Old Interpretation of Ezekiel 9-10," *The Confessional Presbyterian*, 14 (2018): 29-36, 263-264, 277.

²⁸ John E. Hamlin, "Three metaphors for the inhabited Earth," *Proceedings*, 9 (1989): 49-58; Duane L. Christensen, "In quest of the autograph of the book of Jeremiah: a study of Jeremiah 25 in relation to Jeremiah 46-51," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 33 no. 2 (1990): 145 – 153.

²⁹ Cleotha Robertson, "An introduction and examination of Isaiah 11," *The Living Pulpit*, 26 no. 1 (2017): 4-6; Anthony Ferguson, "Isaiah 11 as Predictive Messianic Prophecy," *Presbyterian*, 46 no. 1 (2020): 75 – 89.

³⁰ Marcel Krusche, "A Collective Anointed?: David and the People in Psalm 89," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 139 no 1 (2020): 87-105; William C. Pohl, "A Messianic Reading of Psalm 89: A Canonical and Intertextual Study," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 58 no. 3 (2015): 507 – 525.

anointment with the Spirit of God shall make God's servants humble as they encounter suffering and humiliation caused by the disgraceful words of this world.

1 Peter 4:14 *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.*

Isaiah 11:12 *He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

Psalm 89:50-51 *Remember, O Lord, how your servant is taunted, how I bear in my bosom the insults of the peoples, with which your enemies taunt, O LORD, with which they taunted the footsteps of your anointed.*

Peter's entrenching the significance of understanding the reality of suffering in work of becoming and being a disciple is more embraced by the use of Psalm 3:5³¹ in verse 19 – the last verse of the rhetorical unit.

1 Peter 4:19 *Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust their lives to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.*

Psalm 3:5 *I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the LORD sustains me.*

After all the pain and suffering a servant of God encountered in his or her serving God, God's protection and guidance is guaranteed. Despite, the hardship and difficulties of trying one's best for God, God has promised his sustaining of his servants' lives beginning in this world. It also encourages God's servants that only God will give them the strength to continue on their serving of God. It makes becoming and being God's servant a rewarding and joyful service.

The intertextual interpretation as shown above, which is the exploration of the use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter 4:1-19, clearly affirm the meaning and significance of

³¹ John Kselman, "Psalm 3: a structural and literary study," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 49 no 4 (1987): 572-580; John T. Willis, "Assurance for a threatened community: a rhetorical reading of Psalm 3," *Bibbia e Oriente*, 53, no. 1 (2011): 3-18.

suffering portrayed in the first letter of Peter. It reveals that the intertexture of 1 Peter 4:1-19 is the use of the words of Solomon, the words of the Prophets, and Psalmist, to affirm the flow of the unit from the beginning to its ending. After describing the suffering as revealed in the suffering of Christ in the beginning of the unit (vv. 1-6) or *Avea ma auauna*, the middle part of the unit (vv. 7-11) applies that suffering to the life of a chosen servant of God or *faatinoaga o le avea ma auauna* using recitations and words from the Old Testament to support that application. The ending part of the unit (vv. 12-19) culminates Peter's explanation of suffering as a blessing after or *Manuia o le ola auauna* with the use of the Old Testament recitations to affirm his claim. Thus, the intertexture of the rhetorical unit is very important for it rhetorically presents the affirmation of suffering and its rewards according to the wisdom and the words of the prophets in the Old Testament. This understanding of suffering will be more broadened by the following interpretation of the social and cultural texture of the text.

5.2. Social and Cultural Analysis

The values of honour and shame were very important values of antiquity. They influence how people related to each other in the social and cultural context of the first century Mediterranean world.³² In the first century Mediterranean society, the honoured person was someone with high status in the government. He or she was born to an elite family and had abundance of land. Those considered as people with honour are recognized for their worth and standing in public according to the public, social, cultural, economic and religious expectations. On the other hand, a value called 'shame' is the

³²See, 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 Loss of Honor: The Cultural Context of the Original Makarisms in Q," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, ed. Philip E. Esler (New York: Routledge, 1995), 139-58.

reverse of ‘honour’. There is sense of negativity entailed in ‘shame’. However, it has a cultural acceptance in the Mediterranean world.³³ For example, for gender difference, the man’s place was considered as public and woman’s as private. It is an aspect of the patriarchal system regarded as a powerful system on its own whose implementation was asserted by Roman law.³⁴ As such, the woman’s role was considered carrying ‘shame’ in terms of her housework. Thus, being shameful was accepted as a normal way of life.³⁵

The values of honour and shame are social and cultural practices learned in the family unit but carried into all other levels and spaces of society. The analysis of the social and cultural texture will reveal that 1 Peter 4:1-19 speaks of suffering in discipleship as an honoured duty and role of God’s kingdom that its undertaking begins in this world. The analysis will explore the text whether the social and cultural nature of the text determine Jesus’ suffering as ascribed and acquired honour as the foundation of honour and shame in the household of the kingdom.

5.2.1 Jesus ascribed honour

The beginning of 1 Peter 4:1-19 as a rhetorical unit (vv. 1-6) which speaks of Jesus’ suffering as showing suffering as an aspect of discipleship presented Jesus as a person with ascribed honour in the first letter of Peter. Jesus from the Davidic line as described in the Gospel of Matthew qualifies Jesus as the Messiah according to the prophecies of Israel’s prophets in the OT.³⁶ In the first century Mediterranean social and cultural society, one’s honour became convincing and acceptable when acknowledged and recognized

³³ See Halvor Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh, 31-33.

³⁴ Michael H. Crosby, *House of Disciples: Church, Economics, & Justice in Matthew* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 27.

³⁵ Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” 21-22.

³⁶ See Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: WJK, 1998), 37.

publicly.³⁷ Jesus' ascribed honour became an acquired honour when the crowds he took his ministry to were amazed by his teachings, healings, and miracles. In other words, Jesus publicly demonstrates his authority to undertake his mission that culminated in his death and resurrection. In that mission, Jesus encountered suffering in the body, as mentioned in the beginning of 1 Peter 4:1-19.

For Peter, Jesus's suffering as an honoured suffering became a Christian household wisdom in the beginning of the church in the first century. How encountering suffering as an honour is shown in the middle part and the ending part of the unit. As described in the above interpretation humbleness is an aspect of suffering. It suggests that humbleness is an acquired aspect of becoming and being a disciple or servant of God. That is the love shown in forgiveness of the wicked which is the love covering the sinners. That honour is also seen in the ending part of the unit which is the blessing of suffering. It reveals that suffering for doing the will of God is an honour. Thus, endurance of pain and suffering for doing the will of God in and through humbleness and patience is an honour. Those who do not are the shame.

5.3 Conclusion

This Chapter presents the intertextual and the social and cultural analyses of the text, 1 Peter 4:1-19. It reveals that suffering in discipleship is part of doing the will of God in this world. The intertextual analysis has shown that the words of Solomon and the words of the prophets with the psalmist affirm the importance of encountering pain and suffering in becoming and being a servant of God. The words of Solomon from the Proverbs shows that humbleness in suffering is shown in forgiveness of others as love covering the wicked or the sinners. And in suffering, God's presence is guaranteed to

³⁷See Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, 130, 133-34.

ensure courage and strength is upon the committed servant of God. That servant is the honoured in the Kingdom of God as revealed in the social and cultural analysis of the text.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this study, I explained in Chapter one what I was expected to find from this work. It was an attempt to continue exploring the significance of discipleship in the reality of today's world. Moreover, one example of that reality is facing pain and suffering in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of being a follower of Christ in our world and time. Discipleship continues, and the roles and responsibilities of the so-called disciples in undertaking that task which is the proclamation of the Gospel in and through words and actions, is not easy. It is a task full of challenges.

As said at the beginning of this work, although we serve God in different worlds and contexts, far away from the lands where Jesus and the Early Church encountered the reality of becoming and being servants of God, I believe that we do face the same and similar experiences of facing pain and suffering. Thus, it was important for me to re-visit discipleship concerning the reality of suffering and pain. It is not to reveal that we are suffering but to find ways to deal with this reality in our efforts to serve God. As said, it is not to find blame but to seek more understanding of how to deal with pain and suffering in the reality of our world today.

For this study, I started from our Samoan experience and understanding how our elders in our Samoan worlds deal with pain and suffering from their blended experience of the faa-Samoa and Christianity. I consider the wisdom of our Elders in Samoan as *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* (The deep and profound wisdom of our Elders). That blended or integrated experience and understanding were used as a hermeneutic to guide the interpretation of the text, 1 Peter 4:1-19. Using this approach accentuates what is called the hermeneutical circle. The hermeneutical circle means that the parts can only be understood from an understanding of the whole, but that the whole can only be understood

from the parts. For example, as a Samoan reader of the Bible, I read the Bible from who I am (as a *tautua*) about the Elders of our Samoan community. As an individual, my *tautua-ness* can only be defined by being in the Samoan community. Without the Samoan community, where I serve my Elders as a *tautua*, I cannot understand the wisdom of the Elders in the text. Thus, it is relevant to seek in the Bible more understanding about suffering in discipleship using the wisdom of our Elders in our Samoan community about becoming and being a servant.

The next part of the study gave an overview of the background of the first letter of Peter and a literature review of the interpretations of the selected text. It set a platform upon which the exploration of the selected text was based. In the overview of the background of the first letter of Peter, I looked at the authorship, occasion, purpose, and structure of the letter. It showed that the literary structure of the letter was predominantly based on the consideration of the letter as a composite document. This tradition of the structure of the first letter of Peter was also the literary platform upon which the interpretation of 1 Peter 4:1-19 was based. In doing so, the heuristic interpretive analytic of sociorhetorical criticism was used with the *Tofa Mamao a le Au-Matutua* hermeneutics to explore 1 Peter 4:1-19, the selected text considered as a rhetorical and narrative unit. Sociorhetorical criticism has five stages, for this study focused on these four stages: ideological texture, inner texture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture.

The first interpretation of the text was the next task using the laid-out methodology. It was the ideological and innertextual interpretations of the text. The analysis of the ideological texture of the text was based on the consideration of hermeneutics as an ideology. In this way, the ideological interpretation considered becoming and being a servant of God or *Avea ma Tautua* as the opening message of the first letter of Peter. It showed Peter's wisdom in being one of the experienced disciples

of Jesus. This ideological interpretation was broadened by the innertextual interpretation, which revealed the actions to be carried out by a disciple, servant of God, or *Faatinoga*. The interpretation explained that carrying out the work of discipleship is a task of encountering pain and suffering. It revealed that suffering is the reality of becoming and being a servant of God or a disciple.

Furthermore, that suffering is suffering for doing the right and good thing. It is the sacrificial element of becoming a *tautua* or disciple. Thus, the interpretation has shown that suffering in serving God or discipleship is accurate and that suffering, as emphasized by Peter, is compared to the suffering of Christ, which is the suffering of doing the right thing.

The intertextual, social, and cultural analyses of the text, 1 Peter 4:1-19 that followed broadened the meaning of that suffering in discipleship, which is part of God's will in this world. The intertextual analysis has revealed that the words of Solomon and the words of the prophets with the psalmist affirm the importance of encountering pain and suffering in becoming and being a servant of God. The words of Solomon from the Proverbs show that humbleness in suffering is shown in the forgiveness of others as love covering the wicked or the sinners. More importantly, the text's intertextual, social, and cultural interpretation has shown that in suffering, God's presence is guaranteed to give the disciples and servants of God the courage and strength to continue being the good servants of God. In doing so, they become honoured servants in the Kingdom of God. So the implications of becoming and being a servant of God or *Tautua i le Atua* as discipleship work revealed in this study show that we cannot avoid suffering in our faith journey in this world. As shared by our Elders and affirmed by the Elder disciple, Peter, suffering is part of our serving God, and that suffering is from doing the right thing, simply forgiveness.

These are the teachings of Peter, as revealed in this study. Peter is one of the chosen disciples of Jesus. The latter has excellent experience of being a follower of Jesus from the time of Jesus' ministry to his work with the Early Church in the first century. He learned that being a disciple, one needed the courage to endure all the consequences and hardships as the challenges one faced in life.

Peter was a disciple, then an apostle, and became one of the church's leaders in Jerusalem. In his life experience with Jesus and learning from his weaknesses, he became a prominent figure in maintaining the church at the time of persecution. In doing so, he wanted to remind and advise the followers of Jesus Christ to remain faithful and not to lose hope. He encouraged the believers to have the courage to face difficulties. He showed that if we want to become disciples or a *tautua* for Jesus Christ, we must prepare to suffer. There is joy in this suffering for God, which is the reward of being and becoming a disciple. We cannot ignore suffering in our Christian journeys. We need to face it. There is no discipleship without suffering and pain.

This is also the wisdom we often hear from Elders of our families, churches, and villages in their words of encouragement to ensure we dare to face hardship in this world. Thus, we must respect their experience and understanding of life, especially their becoming and being servants of God. The lessons they pass down to us are from our ancestors, and we must respect them. We struggle, yet we have the strength to strive on. Overall, suffering is part of discipleship or serving God, and we have to have the courage to face it, for, in it, there is joy – the joy of enduring the pain for doing the right thing for God.

Glossary

<i>A'oa'o</i>	Theological Student
<i>Ala ile pule o le tautua</i>	Way to authority is through service
<i>Alofa</i>	Love
<i>Alofaaga</i>	Sending love
<i>Au Toeaina</i>	Church Elders
<i>Aulotu</i>	Samoan parish or church
<i>Autalaga</i>	Expand clearly
<i>Avea ma tautua ile Atua</i>	Becoming a servant of God
<i>E lē faigofie</i>	Not easy, hard, painful
<i>E lē tatau ona moenoa le tofa</i>	Wisdom should not sleep in
<i>E vaavaalua le talalelei ma le Aganuu</i>	Gospel and culture work together hand in
	hand
<i>Fa'aaloalo</i>	Respect
<i>Faa – Samoa</i>	Samoan way
<i>Faalautele le avea ma tautua e ola ia</i>	Elaboration on becoming a servant in
<i>Keriso</i>	Christ
<i>Faalautele le faatinoga o le tautua</i>	Elaboration on serving God
<i>ile Atua</i>	
<i>Faasinomaga</i>	Sense of belonging
<i>Faatinoga o le tautua ile Atua</i>	Serving God in actions
<i>Faatinoga o le tautua</i>	Servant in actions
<i>Faifeau</i>	Pastor
<i>Fatu-aiga-tausi</i>	Caring for family
<i>Fatu-ekalesia-tausi</i>	Caring for the church

<i>Fatu-nuu-tausi</i>	Caring for the village
<i>Kerisiano tautua faamaoni</i>	Courageous Samoan Christian servant
<i>Leai se mea e maua ma se filemu</i>	Nothing is received without pain
<i>Manuia o le tautua</i>	Blessings of being a servant
<i>Maota Tauave</i>	The house to carry
<i>Nuu</i>	Village
<i>O le Tagata manuia, le tagata pologa</i>	The blessed is the person who suffers
<i>O le tautua o le feau a le Atua e le faigofie ae matagofie</i>	Serving God is not an easy task but a joyful undertaking
<i>O le Tofa e fili ile ao ma le po</i>	Wisdom is like a sennit made by plaiting strands of dried coconut fibres that the elders weave at day and night
<i>O le tofa e teu ai le aiga</i>	Wisdom that keeps the peace and living harmony within the family
<i>O le tofa e teu ai le lotu</i>	Wisdom that keeps the peace within church
<i>O le tofa e teu ai nuu</i>	Wisdom that keeps the peace within village
<i>O le tofi o le tautua filifilia a le Atua</i>	Inheritance of the chosen servant of God
<i>Olaina o le Avea ma tautua ma lona faatinoga ile lalolagi</i>	Living the becomingness and the beingness God's servant in the reality of the world
<i>Pologa e iu ile saoloto</i>	Suffering end with freedom
<i>Pologa ia Keriso</i>	Suffering in Christ
<i>Pologa ile ave ma tautua</i>	Sufferings in becoming a servant
<i>Pologa o le loto maulalo</i>	Suffering in humbleness relating to one another
<i>Saili le tofa o loo ile tusitusiga</i>	Finding the wisdom within the writings

<i>Seu le manu ae tagai ile galu</i>	Catch the bird and watch the wave
<i>Tautua – ile – Va</i>	Serving in between
<i>Tautua</i>	Servant
<i>Tautua faamaoni</i>	Obedient servant
<i>Tautua ile Atua</i>	Serving God
<i>Tautua le faalogologo tigā</i>	Servant who does not give up easily
<i>Tautua lelei</i>	A good servant
<i>Tautua toto</i>	Blood servant
<i>Tautua tuāvae</i>	Serving behind legs
<i>Tofa</i>	Moe, wisdom, name of a fine mat for a chief
<i>Tofa Liuliu</i>	Wisdom of deep thinking
<i>Tofa Mamao a le Au Matutua</i>	Profound wisdom of the elders
<i>Tofa Mamao</i>	Deep vision
<i>Tofa saili</i>	Wisdom of exploration
<i>Tofa sasaa</i>	To pour out wisdom
<i>Tofi o le tautua filifilia</i>	Inheritance of the chosen servant
<i>Va-fealoai/Va-tapuia</i>	Samoan etiquette and protocols of relating to one another

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